

KLH 11/98

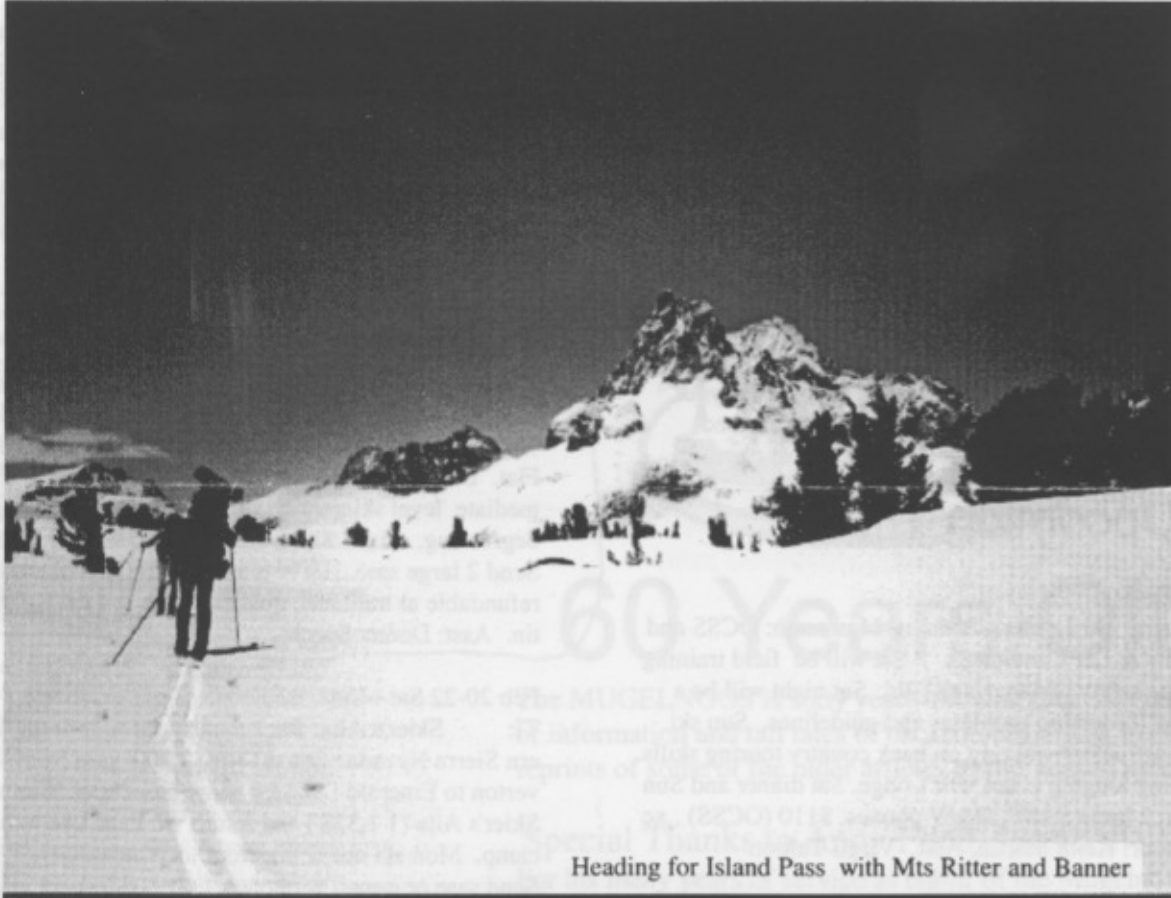
SMS WEB PAGE

Mugelnoos



October 1, 1998

Number 745



Heading for Island Pass with Mts Ritter and Banner

Tioga Pass to Mammoth Mountain Ski Tour May 11 - 15, 1998

By Tom Marsh

"An aggressive Pacific Storm, with record cold temperatures, and continuation of storms every two days." This was the description given by the NWS for the Sierras for the next few days - just as we were to begin a 6-day trip from Mammoth Mountain to Lee Vining. With that, Mike Rector, Gene Serabyn and myself ventured into the Sierras with some trepidation and a sense of adventure. The original intent of this trip was to ski the San Jouquin ridge to Thousand Island Lake, than proceed over a series of passes to Lyell Can-

(Continued on page 6)

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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 Street, Manhattan Beach, CA. 90266 \$7 per year payable to "Ski Mountaineers" Due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

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MUGELMAILER

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MEETINGS

3d Tuesday each month - November - May (except December)
7:30 PM Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium
4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles, CA

Next Issue: November 10, 1998

Issue Deadline November 1, 1998. All photos slides and articles should be sent to Don Ralphs, Mugelnoos editor, 431 Alma Real Dr, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Materials can be sent by IBM disc or e-mailed to dralphs@ibm.net. If you want your photos returned after publication include a self addressed stamped envelope. We are not responsible for lost photos.

Upcoming Trips

Dec 11-13 Fri-Sun

TI: Backcountry Ski Leaders Training-Mammoth: OCSS and SMS ski Ldrs & Ldr Candidates. Sat will be field training for avalanche safety and touring skills. Sun night will be a discussion of leadership problems and guidelines. Sun ski with PSIA instructors working on back country touring skills. Cost including lodging at the Ulir Lodge, Sat dinner and Sun clinic. Send 2 large SASE, H&W phones, \$110 (OCSS), xc ski level to Ldr: Keith Martin, Asst. Virgil Talbot.

Jan 9 Sat

TI: Local Tour: Intro ski mountaineering tour in local mountains. Metal-edged skis and climbing skins required. Subject to rescheduling due to snow conditions. Ldr: Paul Harris. Asst: Walt Boge

Jan 24 Sat

TI: Mt Abel (Cerro Noroeste): Intro ski mountaineering tour in local San Rafael Mtns. Mtn bike 3 mi on road depending on snow condtns, then ski to summit. Metal edged skis w skins and bike required. Send sase or e-mail w/exper, phones, ride-share info to Ldr: Steve Hessen. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Jan 29-31 Fri-Sun

C: SMS Free-Heel Downhill Clinic: Develop and Improve your skills on free-heel equipment. Clinics appropriate for all levels of skiers taught by professionals at a local area. Stay two nights at Keller Hut, with lift ticket and all day clinics on Sat. High quality rentals available at \$12. Reserve early. \$95 and 2 sase to the Ldr. Paul Harris.

Feb 6 Sat Intro ski mountaineering tour in local mountains. Metal edges and skins required. Ldr: Mark Gobel Asst: Paul Harris

Feb 7 Sun (Joint with OCSS)

TI: Avalanche Awareness: For backcountry X-C skiers, study avalanche terrain, route selection, weather patterns and rescue. Locale mtn, intermed. skier, limited to 15. Text: The Avalanche Handbook by Mountaineers. Beacons suggested. \$10 for handouts. Make check payable to OCSS. Send sase with three extra 32 cents stamps, address, phone # to Ldr: Virgil Talbot. Asst: Keith Martin.

Feb 12-15 Fri-Mon (Joint with OCSS)

TI: Yosemite XC Ski Trip Tamarack Flat [at/North Rim]: Spend 1st night at ldr's house in Groveland. Ski 7 mi and 1000' gain to snowcamp 2 nights at Tamarack Flat. Day tour to North Rim of Yosemite Valley. Intermediate level skiers with ski pack exper, metal edges, 0 degree bag, skins. Share cleaning expenses at house. Send 2 large sase, H&W phones, \$20 (payable to OCSS) refundable at trailhead, qualifications to Ldr: Keith Martin. Asst: Donna Specht.

Feb 20-22 Sat-Mon

TI: Skier's Alta: Backcountry ski tour in the Western Sierra Nevada. Sat ski 4mi, 2,300' gain from Wolverton to Emerald Lake for snow basecamp. Sun ski to Skier's Alta (11,328') and return via Pear Lake to basecamp. Mon ski out with detour to Watchtower (8,973'). Send sase or e-mail w phones, exper, rideshare info to Ldr: Steve Hessen. Asst Reiner Stenzel.

Feb 26-28 Fri-Sun

C: Free-Heel Downhill Practice Weekend: Clinic and or free-ski with us. Develop and improve your skills on free-heel equipment. Clinics appropriate for all levels of skiers taught by professionals at a local area. Stay two nights at Keller Hut, with lift ticket and all day clinics on Sat. High quality rentals are available at \$12. Reserve early. Send a check for \$95 to include clinics, or \$65 without, and 2 sase to the Ldr: Paul Harris

sent ad
for keller hut
19 Nov 98

SMS WEB PAGE

HTTP://angeleschapter.org/skimt/.

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Outings and Safety Owen Maloy

Programs

Nov 17 Ski Mountaineers
Monthly Mtg: Entertaining slide programs featuring equipment, safety, and outings. New-comers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.



60 Years Old

The MUGELNOOS is sixty years old this year. 745 issues of information and tall tales of backcountry travel. Look for reprints of some of the older articles as this season proceeds

Special Thanks to Andy Fried !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
For his many years of service as editor of the Mugelnoos. Andy turned over the typewriter last Spring after taking the publication to a new level of quality. Instead of a watch, Andy was given a certificate for a solid gold (twelve poundGPS unitGPS unit.

SMS Annual Potluck

SUNDAY October 18 – see enclosed flyer for details

For Sale

Original K-2 Tele boot, used 40 times good condition
Size 9 1/2 euro, 10 1/2 US \$100 Larry (310) 395-4855

*Email Pat
9 Nov 98 → To add E-mail address*

EVEREST at the IMAX

This long awaited film opens on October 16 at the California Science Center on the USC campus. The film was produced and directed by David Breashears with help from Ed Viesturs and Jamling Tensig Norgay, son of the man who first ascended the mountain with Edmund Hillary. Call (213) 744-2014 for info.

HANGIN AT 33,000 FT. IN A T-SHIRT WITH ONLY 15 MINUTES TO ACCLIMATIZE

The following story was reported by the Los Angeles times
A man hiding inside the landing gear of an Iberia Airlines jet survived a flight from Honduras to Miami, officials said. Emilio Dominguez, 23, was found by mechanics checking the aircraft, who turned him over to authorities. Dominguez, who appeared to be in good condition, was airborne inside the DC-9 for more than two hours." When you get that high (33,000 ft) there is no oxygen, and temperatures reach below zero, so almost everyone dies when they attempt this," a Miami airport spokesman said. Dominguez, who made the trip wearing only a short-sleeved shirt and pants is to be returned to Honduras

Keller Hut Repair Planned

Those of you who have been by the Keller Hut lately know that some repair is in order. The hut was built by the Ski Mountaineers back in 1938 and has served its members well since. The cost of the necessary repairs is estimated at \$5000. The SMS is contributing \$1000. Here are your dues hard at work for you.

Historic SMS Video Available

This old footage takes one back to the days when men and women were men and women, skins were skins, and skies were made of hickory. People climbed mountains to ski because that was about the only way to get to the top of a run. You'll see that you don't really need all that fancy equipment to look like a Norwegian. \$10 each. Call Mark Goebel (714)9639384

Ski Mountaineering Manual

A committee is being formed to put together an update of this venerable publication, last updated back in 1966. It is expected that there will be a separate author for each chapter. Those interested in contributing should contact R.J. Secor at (818) 795-5520

Safety Gear For Members

In an effort to disseminate as much safety gear to it's members as possible, the SMS has made a special purchase of a number of avalanche beacons. They are available to our members at cost, about \$170. We are also looking into the purchase of radio transmitters of the Motorola type that have appeared on the scene lately. Call Mark Goebel (714) 963-9384

Angeles Chapter Picnic October 4 10:00-3:00

At the Crystal Springs Picnic Area In Griffith Park. Come find out about the activities of other Sections.

Blue Couloir and Virginia Lakes

May 23-25, 1998

Leaders: Keith Martin, Owen Maloy

Saturday we skied up to the Blue Couloir (permanent snowfield above Sky Meadow next to the "Blue Crag"). Above 10,500 there was some heavy snow from the recent storms. The road was not plowed past Twin Lakes and time got short, so only Reed Moore went all the way to the top to ski the funky snow. There were snow showers while we were there, and visibility was poor for a while.

The scenery in the area is awesome. Coming down we skied a steep chute full of heavy snow and your correspondent entertained the party with a triple somersault ending (of course) with skis sticking into the snow. This tour was about 8 miles, 2200' of gain. Some USFS types told me that the road was not plowed because the Town Council felt that "There's nothing to do up there."

Sunday the weather cleared and we skied Virginia Canyon and left tracks on top of those left the previous day by the Loma Prieta ski touring Section led by Andy Hudson. There was perfect corn below the pass. Two people went up to Excelsior, where the snow was heavier. In spite of the *very* gradual pitch much of the way we heard no

complaints. We came flying around one corner and noticed the slope didn't seem exactly, well, continuous. There was a 20-foot cornice. Nobody seemed to want to go for Big Air, so we sideslipped by the end of it. There was one steep bowl with avalanche debris in it. When we skied it nine days later it slid while we were looking at it.

Monday it was raining in Mammoth. People were scattered in several houses and condos, and only a few hardy souls went out briefly for a light tour before heading home. Tuesday morning we had about 4 inches of fresh snow at my house (8300').

People from five Sierra Club chapters participated: Larry Bigler, Andy Fried, Joy Goebel, Paul Harris, Bahram Manahedgi, Keit eles); Kathy Crandall (Mother Lode); Tani Barbour, Reed Moore, Alvin Walter (San Diego); Mike McDermitt (SF Bay); Owen Maloy (Toiyabe). Richard Orloff of June Lake also came along. Two were randonee skiers, the rest telemarkers.

Contributions to the
Mugelnoos needed !!!
This space could house your
Drawing, photo, essay, or
part 1 of the first great
American ski novel.

yon and Tuolumne Meadows. The participant list for this trip changed substantially from the original start date of mid-April. Because of El Nino, the April time period was rated as high avalanche danger from wet snow slabs. May appeared to be a better time.

After finishing a tour of Lamarck Col the previous day, the thought of knee deep powder and cold snowy weather was less than appealing. Based on that report, Gene Serabyn and I decided to do the trip in reverse. This would allow us access to the Tuolumne Meadows ski hut for the duration of the storm.

After meeting Gene in Mammoth, we dropped my truck off at the Mammoth Mountain Lodge and proceeded to drive up to the closure gate of the Tioga Pass road. The Lee Vining Ranger, a few days earlier, had postulated that the gate would be closed near the Lee Vining ranger station for quite some time. The thought of walking, with packs and skis, the 11 miles up the road to the pass was also less than appealing. Well, to our delight, the road was open all the way up to Tioga Pass (Turns out that the gate was opened for the first time, the previous Friday). At Tioga Pass, we met up with Mike Rector. There were at least 12 feet of snow at the pass when we made our descent to Tuolumne Meadows. We coasted the 8 miles to the hut in a little under two hours. Upon entering the hut, we discovered just three bunks left.

The next day dawned bright and sunny. This was contrary to the reports coming out of San Francisco and Sacramento. After a short discussion, we decided to take this opportunity to ski up the 9 miles of Lyell Canyon before the deep powder made the going much slower. Therefore, with much trepidation, we said our good-byes to our hut mates and preceded up the right hand side of the Tuolumne River.

The initial route was difficult and slow through the tree welled forest. The aggravation did create some soul searching about the

decision to leave the comfort of the hut. Especially at the advent of the snowstorm. Upon reaching the Rafferty Creek footbridge, we discovered that it took 1.5 hour to go only 1.1 miles. The tree welled forest was giving us precious little progress. Coupled with the increasing snowfall, this was most discouraging.

After a short climb without skins, we decided to have lunch under the best tree shelter around. Huddled in the cold eating meat and crackers, the snowstorm started to let up. The visibility opened up into a serious of long flat meadows. Encouraged by this change of fortune, we quickly shouldered our packs, shedded the extra layer of cloths and plodded into the white meadowy void. At that point, our progress improved greatly. Although, it was like Heaven and Hell as we alternated between tree welled forests and long flat meadows. The Tuolumne River was flowing with large broken slabs of ice. After about 7.5 hours, we finally reached the end of Lyell Canyon. Snow continued as we erected our three-man shelter and readied for the night.

Day three got off to another late start (9:30am), as we were all tired from the previous day. It was partly sunny as we ascended the last part of the Tuolumne River. The snow was powdery dry, but changed to transitional by mid-morning. It was a hard climb through the six plus inches of snow. The pushing got even harder with the ascent and the discovery of less consolidated snow.

Upon attaining a bench on the route up to Donohue Pass, we witnessed a bear and her cubs making a decent down a distant snowfield. Reaching Donohue Pass was a pleasure. Although the visibility was not great, it gave us the first glimpses of the Minarets and the Donohue Peak Divide. In addition, it was the first time in two days that gravity was in our favor.

The top of Donohue pass provided some good

tele turns in less transitioned snow. After a short distance, any turn was next to impossible in the deep heavy snow. The skiing did get much better lower down as we descended the last part of the drainage between Donohue and Island Pass. We found a nice camping spot next to a pool of water. The sign buried a foot down on a tree read "no camping on this Island". Obviously as a result of the confluence of many intertwining streams. Confident that we would do little damage to the landscape over 7 feet of snow, we decided to stay.

The next day dawned without a single cloud in the sky and no wind. We took our time getting ready as we basked in the morning sun. We finally got off at about 10 am with another trudge up to Island Pass. Upon reaching the pass, Gene and I decided to take the South-facing run on the hill next to the pass. Spectacular 360-degree views greeted us at the top as we ripped off our climbing skins and enjoyed telemark turns down to our pack site. Gene went up for one more run as Mike and I enjoyed a leisurely lunch. After that, we started up the ridge toward Agnew Pass. After a couple-uncomfortable traverses, we decided to drop down to the outlet of Thousand Island Lake. The South facing descent was very enjoyable on wonderful corn snow. Upon reaching the outlet, we discovered the need for route finding around cornices and drainages. At the point we had to put skins back on and make the push up to Agnew Pass, I realized my binding was loose. Luckily, Mike had the right tools to tighten the binding. We did ski repair under the warm sun. It would be the last sun we felt that day. Clouds and fog quickly encased us as we arrived at our camp spot on Agnew Pass.

The last day of our tour started out with clear blue skies and the promise of good West facing corn snow for this exposed route along the San Joaquin Ridge. The day before, the route was shrouded in clouds after 1 pm. Therefore, we agreed an early start would be advantageous. Unfortunately, this required climbing the steep exposed ascent to the ridge on very firm snow. Our skis would barely dent the sur-

face as we went from safe haven to safe haven behind trees. At one point, we were forced to side step up a very precipitous section. Much to my dismay, the Velcro of my water bottle holder gave way and the bottle jettisoned down the slope at ever increasing speed before blasting into a tree some 500 feet below. By 10:30 am, to our relief, we attained the shelf and softer snow. The firm base made for very fast moving as we passed San Joaquin Mountain. After that, Gene made the ascent to the top of the "Two Teats". He found the telemark decent to be fabulous in the steep corn. Concern over my loose binding convinced me not to join Gene.

The next section was the steepest of all, although it seemed almost "matter of fact" in the soft corn snow. Skiing down to Deadman's Pass was somewhat confusing through existing tracks. Luckily, Gene's knowledge of the route led us to the easiest route. Upon climbing out of the pass, deep unconsolidated snow banks greeted Mike and me. Gene had a better route right up to the top. At that point, we were in day skiers distance to the end point. We enjoyed the last few telemark turns before descending the Minaret Summit road to our waiting shuttle.

In conclusion, the trip ended up being a delight despite the weather predications. The smaller group size and the ability and experience of the group was instrumental to this positive experience. On the other hand, we were deep into some fabulous skiing territory. One or two more days would have given us the opportunity to ski many great slopes. Unfortunately, weather does tend to drive your agenda. We were looking at another weather system the next day. In retrospect, it was probably a good decision. Mammoth was completely socked the next day. Oh well, there are always potential for fun and adventure. It's the time off from work that gets in the way.

Thanks to both Gene and Mike for making this trip possible. Special thanks to Gene for route finding on the San Joaquin Ridge and Mike for the use of his self arrest grip and tools and to Maft Doody for the excellent dinners.



Toward what Pass are these folks heading ?
Write or e-mail the editor. Fame and recognition in the next issue
Awaits the winners. Also send me Photos for future contests.

Mugelnoos

Pat Hollman

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11/98

sent in E-mail
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**** Time to RENEW ****

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SMS RCS-R 1998