

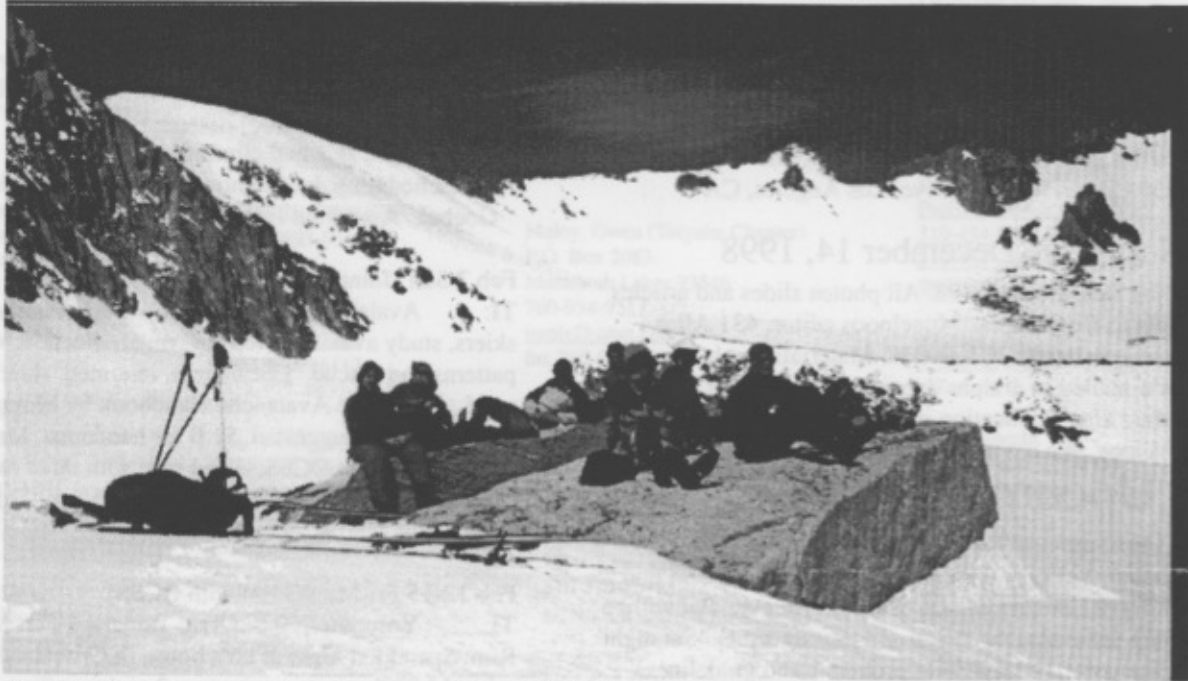
Matterhorn Peak Ski Article
by Reiner

11/98 RFB

THE INCRECIBLE HULK

November 16, 1998

Issue # 746



Taking a break before skiing Eocene Peak (rear left). The Incredible Hulk is in rear to the right

SAWTOOTH RIDGE SKI CAMP
Memorial Day Weekend, 5/23-25/1998
by Reiner Stenzel

Ten eager skiers came together for a long weekend of backcountry skiing in the Eastern Sierra Nevada near Bridgeport. These were Pat and Gerry Holleman, Maya Hostettler, Randy Lamm, Eric Watts, Richard Contreras, Duncan Livingston, Richard Geist, Ken Deemer, and myself, seven telemarkers and three on randonnee gear. Having survived the Friday holiday traffic on Hwy 395, we met on Sat 7:30 am at Twin Lakes (7,092') among many fishermen and a few fellow skiers. After obtaining parking permits for the private lot we started up Horse Creek Trail by 8:45 am. We hiked up a few switchbacks and encountered continuous snow roughly near the waterfall (7,600'). Last year when we skied Matterhorn on the same weekend there were abundant wildflowers on the trail, this year El-Nino left abundant snow. Travel through the brushy part of Horse Creek was actually quite short and easy. Nevertheless, we made good use of my portable radios where the leading group would scout for a good route and advise the rest of the party. When we reached the first steep slope (8,600'-9,200') it started to snow on us. We had a break and wondered about the weather forecast for a warm sunny weekend. Our route left Horse Creek at about 9,200' and turned West toward The Cleaver where we planned to set up our basecamp. A second steep climb got us to about 10,000'. As it got rather windy we looked for a sheltered spot among trees and found one on a ridge West of the broad gully leading up to Matterhorn Pk. It was very scenic with Horse Creek Canyon to the North, the Sawtooth Range to the South, and a finger-like peak to the West. We dug in behind trees, built a luxury kitchen, and then six of us went on an afternoon ski exploration toward the Dragtooth. Unfortunately, the clouds sank down, obstructed the view of the peaks and made skiing in flat light difficult. Thus, we took a run down into the Matterhorn Canyon and since the snow was excellent we dropped all the way down into Horse Creek, then skinned back up and were back at camp for cocktail hour at 5 pm. As we sat around the dining table and cooked dinner we wondered about to-

(Continued on page 6)

The Mugelnoos is a newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers Section 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

Mugelnoos Staff

EDITOR Don Ralphs
MUGELMAILER Pat Hollman

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 December 14, 1998

Issue Deadline December 9, 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. Carpool Fri eve. Sat will be field training for avalanche safety and touring skills. Sat 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.

Dec 30- Jan 3 Thu-Sun

T: New Years Ski at June Lake: Enjoy 4 day week-end in secluded June Lake. Stay in comfortable condo. Ski June / Mammoth or join intermediate level ski mountaineering tours. Fee includes 4 nights lodging, 3 dinners, happy hour, continental bfst. Intermediate conditioning/exper req for tours. \$30 cancel fee before 11/27. No refund after 11/27 w/o replacement. Send 2 4x9 SASE, ski exper, H&W phones, \$195 w/sc# or \$210 non-member (payable to SMS) to leader, Tom Marsh co: Pete Matulavich

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 reqired. Send sase or e-mail w/exper, phones, rideshare

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. Send a check for \$95 and 2 sase to the Ldr. Paul Harris.

Feb 6 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: Mark Goebel. 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

SMS WEB PAGE

[HTTP://angeleschapter.org/skimt/](http://angeleschapter.org/skimt/).

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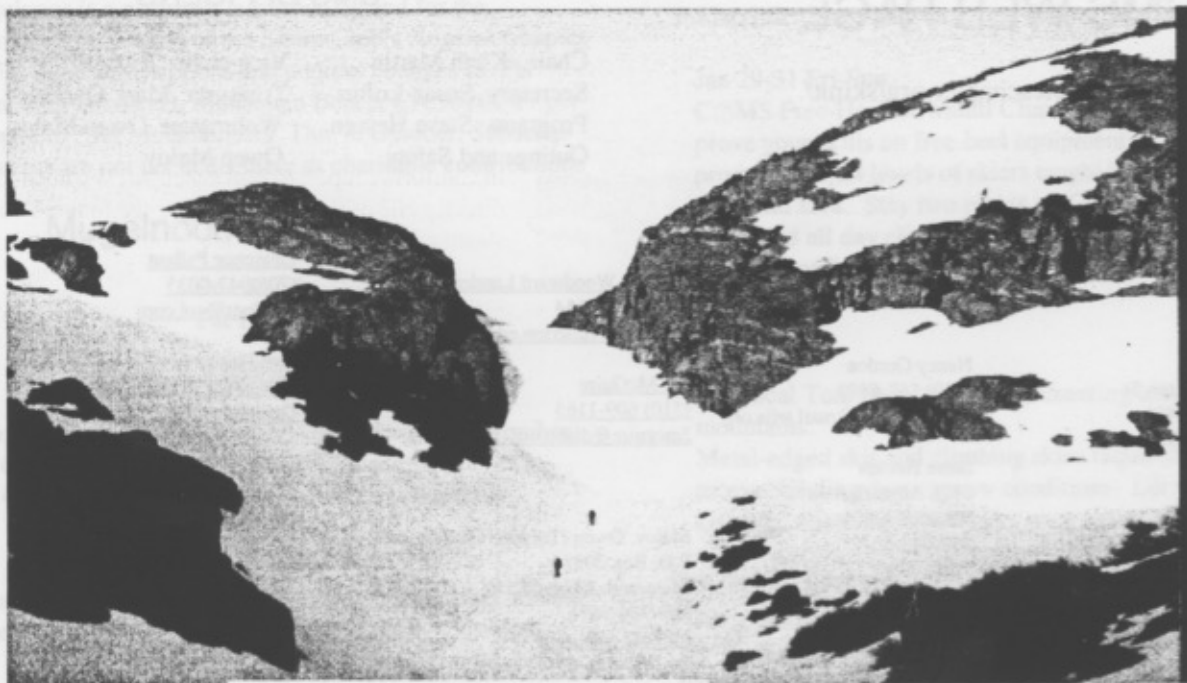
AVALANCHE TRANSCEIVERS NOW AVAILABLE

Once again the SMS has avalanche beacons available for sale. We have the SOS FI-ND beacon, manufactured by Survival On Snow Inc. of Canada. It operates on the 457 kHz frequency, and features a 90 meter range, 2 point body harness, built-in battery check, speaker, plus 3 LED light signals which give a visual clue to the signal strength to indicate direction and distance, and a Range Selector LED light which signals when to turn down to a lower range setting. For additional information, check SOS's web site <http://iwww.sos-find.com>. Price per unit including sales tax is \$156.96. Contact Mark Goebel at 714-963-9384, or at SMS meetings. Sales are limited only to Sierra Club members.

HISTORIC SMS VIDEO AVAILABLE

This video features two films, one is titled *WHITE HORIZONS* and was filmed by SMS members during the early 1960s while on tours to Pear Lake, San Gorgonio, and a number of eastern Sierra locations. The second is from 1932, was only recently discovered, and may well be the only film of Walter Mosauer skiing while teaching this new sport in San Antonio Canyon. Dr. Mosauer was considered the father of alpine skiing in Southern California, and was also the SMS founder. Naration and music have been added; and viewers will enjoy seeing the styles and equipment along with plenty of good action scenes. Last season we sold out! So order yours now by sending a check for \$10.00, payable to SMS, to Mark Goebel, 9522 Innsbruck Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646, along with your mailing address.

paid 19 Nov 98
\$7



Moonset in the Palisades

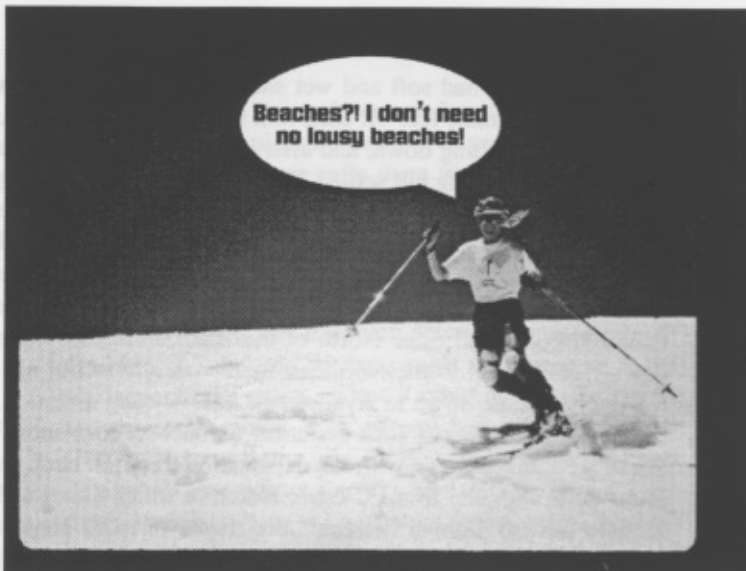
Summer Ski Mountaineering on the Palisades Glacier

July 11-12, 1998
by Reiner Stenzel

In mid July when everybody was headed for the beaches I decided to try some skiing and climbing in the High Sierra. There was still plenty of snow in July thanks to El Nino. I started on Sat, 7/11, at 6:30am, to hike up the North Fork of Big Pine Creek to Third Lake. Snow coverage started on the side trail to Sam Mack Mdws. By noon I set up camp and had lunch, talking to other climbers at this popular basecamp. Then I put on skis and headed up a nice gully toward the Thunderbolt Glacier. Lots of suncups, one to two feet deep. But the sun was strong, the snow soft, and my wide crud skis carved the cups like butter. By 4pm I was half way up on Winchell, but by now it was too late for a peak ascent. I returned and skied some of the gullies coming down from Thunderbolt. After 5 pm the suncups hardened and turning on them became a real balancing act. In the gully down to Sam Mack Mdws it became survival jumping. I relaxed with a fine dinner and watched the rise of a full moon.

On Sun, I had a 5 am mountaineering start to climb Mt Sill. And I was not alone,

some folks headed up for T-bolt, others for North Pal, on the way I met Doug Mantle who had done the Swiss Arete on Sill. After climbing rocky Glacier Notch I headed up the North Couloir on Mt Sill. It has a long 35 degree snowfield which is quite skiable, but early in the morning it was hard and required crampons and ice axe. After reaching the notch between Sill and Apex one traverses to the west face of Sill, which includes fourth class moves across an icy chute and some steep rock. Although I carried a rope it was not used up or down, just for peace-of-mind on a class 4 solo ascent. By 9:30am I was on the summit (14,153'), enjoyed the spectacular view from this mountaineers peak, signed its register, took plenty of pictures and relaxed. The downclimb stimulated some adrenaline flow. Now I missed my skis on the North couloir which had softened up. There was lots of postholing, sinking occasionally to the hips. Further down I met my neighbors who intended to climb Thunderbolt but gave up because of the exhausting postholing. No problems on skis but nobody had them. After returning to basecamp I took a hot (solar) shower, lunched, packed out and telled down to the last spot of snow. Then it was a long haul down with a 60lb+ pack, carrying skiing and climbing gear. I could not resist to add another 5lbs when I came across a lot of fresh king boletes (Steinpilze), a treat for connoisseurs of sauteed mushrooms, By 6 pm I was back at the car, by 11:30pm at home, after a great weekend in the beautiful High Sierra.



Peter Matulavich Photo Dave Baron

July On Baldy

Dave Baron and I skied the backside of Baldy on July 11th last summer, the latest I'm aware of anyone skiing there. While there wasn't a lot of snow left, what there was was in very good condition -- suncups were minimal, which is surprising as just about everywhere else in California reported bad suncups. We headed off directly NE of the summit where we found a wide swath of snow that descended about 700 feet before running out above Lytle Canyon. Surprisingly, we even found sufficient snow on a south-facing run - off of N. Baldy into the trough that separates W. Baldy and Baldy. There was virtually no snow in the bowl of course. All in all it was a great day, and we were happy to escape the 100 degree heat for a little mid-summer skiing in the local mountains.

Peter Matulavich

Going Light – Packs

Don Ralphs

Many of the articles you read and people you talk to extoll the benefits of “going light” for both uphill and downhill travel on skis. But, before you drill more holes in your toothbrush, take a closer look at some of the heavier items of your gear.

Some new stripped down packs have come on the market lately that are a couple pounds lighter than what you and I lugged to the top of the col the last few seasons. While these models may not have the bells and whistles or the sophisticated suspension systems of the packs you may be used to (and may be a little less stable on descent), you may wish you had one of these babies on your next eastern Sierra approach.

When heading out on a 4 to 7 day trip in the Sierras, most folks, at least the ones with whom I travel, generally carry a pack of about 4000-4500 cubic inches. While the Lowe, Gregory, Dana Designs packs of this size would weigh in in the 4lb 8 oz-6 lb range, Jan Sport and Wild Things make considerably lighter models.

The Jan Sport Minimalist carries 4600ci at a mere 3 lb 5 oz and has tool holders, ski slots, compression straps, a daisy chain and a generous outside pocket. The Wild Things Ice Sack (4000ci)(frameless) has all of these features and a crampon carrier while tipping the scales at 2 lb 14oz. Climbing magazine gave this

pack their “Editors Pick” award for “alpine” packs in 1998. These companies even publish honest weights for these packs as I have weighed them myself. The Minimalist sells for \$130, the Ice Sack for \$175. The North Face makes a nice looking 4300 ci pack (3lb 6oz) called Thin Air (\$240). Kelty's White Cloud (4050ci) weighs in at only 3lb 2 oz. It better be light when they charge \$ 400.

You know where to reach the big companies. Wild Things can be reached at PO Box 400, North Conway NH 03860 (603) 356-6907.

Eddie Nunez

Eddie has moved from Chicago to Denver (Better skiing). His new address is :
22 S Ogden St., #222, Denver, CO 80201
Tele (h) 303-698-0822 (w) 303-712-5194
Ski Mountaineering friends should call or come by when they are in Denver

(Continued from page 1)

morrows weather. The forecast ranged from pure sunshine to snow showers, depending on one's optimism. The latter won since plenty of stars we seen during a nature call at night.

Sun morning there was not a cloud in the sky. I had called for an early start, and indeed we were ready to ski by 7 am. Pat and Richard C. preferred to stay near basecamp, thus eight went on the planned long daytour to The Incredible Hulk at the Western end of the Sawtooth Range. We headed toward The Cleaver Notch (10,880') which was reached after a short steep climb. Once in the col we were rewarded with an outstanding view of peaks, snow-filled chutes and bowls without human tracks. To the South one could see the Dragtooth, the Doodad, one of the Three Teeth, Polemonium Pass, and to the West there was the massive Blacksmith. The ridge North of the Blacksmith was the next obstacle to overcome. With this years amount of snow we thought that by staying high we would have a chance to ski over the ridge into the next bowl but, tough luck, there was a steep rockwall to the West. Thus we skied down parallel to the ridge to find the unnamed col (10,800') described by John Moynier (p. 160). This included a fine steep descent in genuine powder snow, then a sharp turn West and a short climb into the col. Now, another vast range of snow fields opened up to the West, finally bounded by the long ridge of the Incredible Hulk. But our eyes caught on to EocenePk(11,581') which had a smooth 30-40 degree Northeast facing slope with continuous snow coverage to the summit. It called for being skied. After a snack break on a flat rock below the Blacksmith, we headed toward the Western end of the Sawtooth Range. A cliff below Eocene presented a minor obstacle due to steep snow with cracks. The snow was getting pretty soft now and on a neighboring slope the first wet snow avalanche came down. The ascent of Eocene Pk took another hour. The group was spread out widely with typically Duncan at the summit while the last were just starting at the base. Once on the summit, the view was outstanding. We sat in a wind-sheltered place with view to the South overlooking an endless range of peaks and valleys with nearly complete snow coverage. All lakes were still frozen over. The sky was clear, the sun strong, but a cold steady wind blew from the North. After a relaxed lunch and picture taking it became 2 pm and time to return. The great ski run down Eocene Pk was ahead. The Northeast-facing slope was so broad that everyone could carve his/her own tracks. I picked the most East facing

slope which was had soft and wet snow which my I 1 5 mm wide skis were made for. At each turn the wet snow slid a bit, big balls were rolling down, and after -a few turns one had. to stop to let the moving hill settle. This thrilling game of testing the snow stability went on for 1 000'. Looking back from the bottom the hill was totally carved up by ski tracks and vertical streaks from sliding snow. Of course, in a few days the slope would be as smooth as before. We retraced our steps to the unnamed col in the ridge North of the Blacksmith. Looking down from the col to the Northeast there was a beautiful narrow gully leading down to Avalanche Lake. Wrong direction, but how can one resist such beautiful untouched corn snow? Six of us plunged down with the expectation to climb back up in the adjacent gully to the Cleaver Notch to which Gerry and Richard headed without detours. We stayed in radio contact

(Continued on page 7)



Telemarker Coming down a col off Blacksmith - heading down to Avalanche Lake. Richard and Gerry ascending on left

(Continued from page 6)

all the time. The skiing down was "as good as it can get". But for so much pleasure one has to pay a price. As we turned toward the next gully there was a vertical cliff and no way down. There were two options, one was to climb out along a steep ledge above the cliff, the other one was a humiliating, long, but safe retreat. Half chose the latter option, the other half went for **the** adrenaline hike. Gerry at Cleaver Notch was informed about our progress by radio. He, in turn, told us that clouds were moving in and sinking onto the peaks. Thus it was time to get over the last pass. At about 4:30 pm we had all made it over Cleaver Notch. Some hiked it down, most skied it down. After a last fine ski run we were all safely "home" at base-camp after a 10 hour ski adventure which could not have been any better. We were greeted by Pat and Richard, who also had a fine ski day with Richard successfully skiing Matterhorn Pk. We relaxed in the community kitchen with cocktails, hot drinks and dinner. The evening sky filled with stacks of lenticular clouds, not particularly a good sign. At night the wind increased and ferocious gusts were blowing over the ridge, rattling tents and bending trees. Some time in the night the sound of snow on the tent walls started.

On Mon morning, winter had returned. The sky was uniformly grey, it was snowing and a cold wind was blowing. Nobody was eager to get up. Eventually, some joined Duncan eating breakfast in the kitchen in a snowstorm. Our plan became obvious: We had to get out asap and head for the hot springs. But easier said than done. First we had to pack up in the snowstorm, then descend two steep slopes on hard snow since not enough fresh snow had accumulated. Skiing with a full pack in 50 mph gusts was not everyone's taste, thus some hiked down, others did survival turns, while the randonneers had their day. The wind decreased in the lower part of Horse Creek, but the snow now turned into rain. Below the waterfall, it was back to hiking on the trail which got us all safely down to the cars before noon. In the sheltered valley it was hard to believe that we just came out of a full fledged snow storm. Finally, on our way home half of the team regrouped and soaked their bare bodies in a hot spring. This end-of-the-season tour had all the elements of a great ski mountaineering trip: Abundant snow, endless ski terrain, steep passes, a peak climb, summer weather and a winter storm. Our group was harmonious, had excellent skiers, and there was freedom to ski to ones limits

. Thanks to Gerry for helping to lead this SMS adventure in the Sawtooth Range.

Intrepid SMSers Rescued

On October 24th Alois Smirz, Eric Klosterman, and two climbing partners headed out for a day climb of Split Mt., south of Big Pine in the Sierra Nevada. The weather took a turn for the worse with high winds and snow falling. Three of the party turned back but Smirz continued to the summit via the St. Jean couloir. When Smirz did not return by 10:00 PM, he was reported overdue. Inyo County Search and Rescue was called out early the morning of the 25th. As the search began, Smirz walked out on his own.

Bill Livingston, of San Pedro was on the above search when he received a cellular telephone call from his girlfriend, 46 year old Susan Loftus. Loftus had climbed to the summit of Olancho Peak by herself on October 24. She encountered the same stormy conditions as the folks on Split Mt. In limited visibility conditions, Loftus had descended into an unknown canyon. Loftus climbed down onto a ledge from which she could not climb off. Using her cell phone she was able to give enough info about her position that searchers could locate her by early afternoon. Due to the steep angle of her location, a Black Hawk army helicopter was requested. After the weather cleared at about 3:00 pm, Loftus was extracted off the ledge into the helicopter by a winch. She was cold and hungry but otherwise in very good condition. Loftus had spent the night in a hole she dug on the ledge. This shelter in conjunction with her proper clothing had helped her survive the ordeal. Loftus reported seeing a mountain lion. Exciting trip!



Mid July Sierras View from the Summit of Mt. Sill

Last month's Pic was of the approach to Kearsarge Pass identified by 0 folks Send your favorite Photo !

Mugelnoos

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