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THE MUGELNOOS

January 34, 1999

Issue # 748

9008 GOTTIC AVE.
N. HILLS CA 91343-4127
818 920-0600



Emergency Shelter Construction at the Ski Leaders Training

BACKCOUNTRY SKI LEADERS TRAINING (No time for moonlit hikes, hot tubs or hayrides)

December 11 - 13, 1998

Joint Orange County Sierra Singles/Ski Mountaineers Outing

Trip Report by Keith Martin

Saturday morning we all got up early for a long day of training. Copious amounts of coffee were prepared by Donna Specht and by 8 am we were all wide awake and participating in the discussion portion of the training led by Virgil Talbot. Virgil is an E rated leader who has been instrumental in maintaining the longtime mountaineering tradition of both the OCSS and the Sierra Peaks Section. He conducted a map reading and navigation exercise to coincide with the anticipated day's training (which incidentally is another requirement of the Sierra Club Ski Mountaineering Test). At 9:30 we all drove to the trail head. The day was glorious: blue skies, little breeze and warm sun. Soon we were skiing with Virgil demonstrating proper group management and protocol for skiing in deep snow. Participants were shown the technique of having the leader ski in second place with participants alternatively used to break trail. Virgil also emphasized the importance of having the assistant always remain in

Continued on page 6

Mugelnoos Staff

EDITOR
MUGELMAILER

Don Ralphs
Pat Hollman

Next Issue Feb 24

Issue deadline Feb 20 (editor out of town until Feb 17) All letters, photos, or articles should be sent to Mugelnoos editor, Don Ralphs, 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 please send a SASE. We are not responsible for lost photos.

SKI SELF ARREST CLINIC APRIL 3-4 SAT – SUN Leadership Training Committee/ Ski Mountaineers

Clinic to improve self arrest and self belay skills for Ski Mountaineers. Two day clinic with AMGA/PSIA rated guide Tim Villanueva. East side Sierra location TBD. Limited group size, preference to Ski Leaders. Metal edged skis with skins, ice axe, crampons, shovel, avalanche transceiver required. Intermediate (4th class) or better skiers. Send large SASE, ski experience, check for \$80 (made out to SMS), SC#, H&W phones to Leader: Keith Martin, P.O. Box 864, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274. Phone: 310-316-7617.

Asst. Brad Jensen. Agenda:

Self Arrest ,Team Arrest

Snow anchors and belay

Basic rope work

General avalanche awareness

Route finding ,Track Setting

Down Skiing Strategies

Beacon rescue scenarios

Mountain safety/risk management

Last day for sign up is March 3, after that the trip will either be full or canceled. Once you have signed up no refunds after March 3 without a suitable replacement.

Trip is a restricted trip, you must be a Sierra Club Member.

The Mugelnoos is a newsletter 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

MEETINGS

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

SAFETY ALERT YOSEMITE / TAMARACK FLAT

It has come to the attention of the leader that someone within the SMS has been widely describing this trip as a Flat Nordic Style tour on which the participants do not have to meet minimum SMS standards. All potential participants should be aware that this is incorrect. Participants must meet the minimum requirements for SMS tours or OCSS intermediate tours, namely the 4th class ski test, If you have questions concerning your suitability for this contact the leader.

Kieth Martin

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FORMED

Pat Holleman, Reiner Stenzel, and Don Ralphs have been named as the three members of the Nominating Committee of the SMS. Candidates for the Central Committee of the SMS may be nominated by the Nominating Committee or by any active member by communicating with any Nominating Committee member prior to the March Mugelnoos deadline. The names of the candidates will be published in the March Mugelnoos. The members of the Central committee will be elected by a secret ballot mailed with the April Mugelnoos.

Letter from the Board re recent private letter to the membership from a concerned SMS member.

In mid December many of our members received a letter from SMS member and leader Pete Matulavich, in which he expresses his concerns about joint SMS and Orange County Sierra Singles "OCSS" ski outings scheduled this winter and last; and reduced trip fees for leaders of outing with costs associated with group transportation, lodging, and/or for training. Pete argues that these joint outings will compromise the reputation and high standards of our section; however, as a 27 year member of the SMS, I can assure you that joint trips present no such threat. In actuality, these outings can be a benefit to our members and the section as a whole, and are right in line with our Bylaws. Reduced fees for leaders are appropriate, are recommended by the Sierra Club, and are approved by the applicable group or section

First some OCSS background. They have the largest outings program in the Angeles Chapter, and publish their own schedule. Not all of their outings appear in the Angeles Chapter schedule. Their varied outings program is well attended, and is responsible for many new Sierra Club members, XC skiing is a large part of their winter program, and while it includes low angle Nordic style tours, they also lead more advanced tours. In fact, they have adopted the Sierra Club 4th Class Ski Test (the same that our Qualifying Test is based upon) as a minimum standard for intermediate skiers. Last season there was one joint outing, a backcountry ski leaders training weekend which was repeated again this season. Both were located in the Mammoth Lakes area, and included one day of ski training with professional ski instructors/guides. There are 2 additional outings this season, one is a multiday tour and snow camp to the north rim of Yosemite Valley. Participants must be able to meet the above mentioned level of skiing ability. This outing is certainly not a flat track XC tour, and since it involves snow camping, the level of difficulty is at least similar, if not greater, than past SMS tours to Ostrander Ski Hut! The third outing is an avalanche safety course led by Virgil Talbot an E rated leader, and assisted by Keith.

So, why should the SMS have a joint tour with another group's qualified skiers? Section 1 of our Bylaws, under the Purpose of our Section, states in part, "to promote interest and ability in ski mountaineering by scheduling and leading ski mountaineering tours", and "To provide instruction

in ski mountaineering ...". With the training outings, we combine forces to improve skills, and to obtain the economic advantages available to a group outing. With the Yosemite tour there is the opportunity for participants to learn about the SMS, ski mountaineering and related backcountry skills, and we have an excellent opportunity to attract new members. Do we need new members? Yes, very much so. Our 1998 roster lists just under 100 members. but about 30% live outside of the Angeles Chapter area and many of those in the area are no longer active. Without new members, how do you maintain sufficient leaders and other volunteers to keep the Section going with an attractive program? The work falls to fewer and fewer people. As an example, this season's schedule contains 21 outings, led by 9 different individuals. However, of these 9 leaders, 4 are leading 76% of the outings. Clearly, we can't just depend on gaining new members from people with advanced skills. Frequently they already have their network of skiing buddies, and do not need a group such as the SMS. Therefore, we need to also attract new entry level skiers as well. Having a joint outing with other backcountry skiers (of which we have a low percentage), is entirely appropriate, smart and good for the SMS.

Finally, reduced trip fees for leaders: OCSS and other groups led many popular outings with fees for bus transportation, lodging, etc. The leaders go at reduced rates for organizing and leading the trips, and this is an approved Sierra Club practice. The outings program within the Angeles Chapter is quite varied, with something for almost everyone. No one expects that every outing will be attractive to every member. Within the SMS, trips with fees have been very limited, just a few hut trips, and some training outings. Leaders, instructors, and other volunteers on our telemark training outings do not pay a fee. On the recent trip, each leader went for half price, a reasonable discount for organizing this valuable outing. Such outings involve a lot more time and effort than you can imagine, and I challenge anyone who thinks otherwise to step forward and volunteer their time.

We welcome input from the membership, along with constructive suggestions for an active and prosperous SMS.

Mark Goebel

Tom

Scott
Diane Corvica
Use?

SMS OFFICERS

SMS Web Page

HTTP:www.angeleschapter.org/skimt/
Slide Show, Five years of trip reports, back-country links, and much more. Check it out

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NEW TELEPHONE DIRECTORY COMING OUT NEXT MONTH

Please contact Mugemailer Pat Holleman 1638 6th Street , Manhattan Beach , CA 90266,310-374-4654 , 72763514@compuserve.com , to advise us of any address , e-mail or tele # changes , especially those bothersome area code changes that seem to happen every few months. We especially need need to hear from you leaders out there.

AVALANCHE TRANSCEIVERS STILL AVAILABLE

Once again the SMS has avalanche beacons available for sale. We have the SOS F1-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://www.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. Narration 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.

Upcoming Trips

Meaning of Ratings:

All Ski Mountaineers ski tours are rated "T" (Technical), even if easy. A resort trip with no tours is rated C (conducted), and does not require two leaders. The T rating refers to the ability to ski steeper slopes in the backcountry. It does not imply any level of rock or snow/ice-climbing ability beyond that normally possessed by an experienced skier. Tours are also (Intermediate), M (Up to Class 3 rock/snow), or E (Up to Class 4 rock/snow), according to the Angeles Chapter rating system. Most trips are rated TI. This rating means that there is substantially no climbing except on skis, and that ropes and ice axes are not required for climbing safety. Trips rated TM or TE are restricted trips which require qualification for mountaineering insurance coverage. The Sierra Club and the SMS encourage qualified leaders to lead such trips.

Feb 6 Sat Ski Mountaineers

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

Feb 7 Sun Orange County Sierra Singles - Ski Mountaineers

TI: Avalanche Awareness. For backcountry X-C skiers, study avalanche terrain, route selection, weather patterns, and rescue. Local 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 Talbott. Asst: Keith Martin

Feb 12-15 Fri-Mon OCSS-Ski Mountaineers

TI: Yosemite XC Ski Trip Tamarack Flat/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, intermed. Level skiers with ski pack exper, metal edges, 0 degree bag, skins. Share cleaning expenses at house. Send 2 lg sase, H&W phones, \$20 (payable to OCSS) refundable at trailhead, qualifications to Ldr: Keith Martin. Asst: Donna Specht.

Feb 26-28 Fri-Sun Ski Mountaineers

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

Mar 6-7 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Avalanche Awareness Training: Two-day course in avalanche awareness taught by noted instructor Norm Wilson. Snowcamp in Sherwin Bowl area near Mammoth. Sat ski in, instruction. Sun more instruction and tour, ski out. Must have appropriate gear including transceiver. Send \$60, 2 sase, H&W phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Steve Hessen. Asst: Ken Deemer

Mar 13-14 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Dare the Shit and Zen, Mt Baldy: Challenging chute skiing in Baldy Bowl, not for the faint-hearted. Spend the night at San Antonio Hut. Weather/snow conditions may postpone trip. Stable telemark or randonnee gear reqd. Send e-mail /sase w experience to Ldr; Reiner Stenzel. Asst:TBD

Mar 20-21 Sat Ski Mountaineers

T: Mt. San Jacinto (10,804'): Intro snow camping trip. Ride up tram from Palm Springs, ski from Long Valley to snowcamp near Mt San Jacinto. Metal-edged skis, skins, and intermediate or better skiing abilities reqd. Send sase w/ experience, h&w phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Ken Deemer. Asst: TBD.

Mar 26-28 Fri-Sun Natural Science Section O: Winter Ecology Workshop X-Country skiing in the Mammoth area, study of wintering plants and animals. This trip, open to intermediate skiers, satisfies the natural science requirement for Sierra Club Leaders. Participants can stay with local Sierra Club members (cost expected to be \$60) or at a condominium for an additional cost. Saturday and Sunday breakfasts and lunches are provided; Saturday dinner is a potluck. Group limited to 12. Cost payable by Feb. 1, 1999. For reservations, send 2 sase to Ginny Heringer, 245 San Miguel Road, Pasadena, CA 91105. For more information, call Ginny at 626-793-4727. Leaders: SHERRY ROSS, GINNY HERINGER

Mar 27-28 Sat-Sun San Antonio Ski Hut/SMS

ATI: Ski Mountaineers Section Weekend: Enjoy steep and challenging skiing in Baldy Bowl and surrounding slopes. Hike 3 miles, 2200' gain to Hut early Sat., another 1800' to summit. Stay at Hut Sat night. Advanced intermediate or better skiers only. Come for one day or both. Call leader for meeting time and other info. Ldr: Mark Goebel. Asst Ken Deemer

April 3-4 Sat-Sun Leadership Training/SMS Self Arrest Clinic

Clinic to improve self arrest and self belay skills for ski mountaineers. Two day clinic with AMGA/PSIA rated guide, Tim Villanueva. East side Sierra location TBD. Limited group size, preference to Ski leaders. Metal edged skies w/ skins, ice axe, crampons, shovel, avalanche transceiver required, intermed, or better skier. Send lg sase ski experience, check for \$80 (made out to SMS), SC#, H&W phones to Ldr:Kieth Martin. Asst:Brad Jensen

April 10-11 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Clouddripper (13525'): Ski Mountaineering tour to the Inconsolable Range. Sat ski from Pacher's Camp 3 mi., 1700' to basecamp above Green Lake. Sun climb/ski Clouddripper and return (2,300,-4000.6 mi.) For advanced skiers. Send e-mail/sase w/ experience to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Tom March

April 17-18 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Mt. Wood (12,650'): One of the big ski descents of the eastern Sierra: it has been described as never ending. Sat climb and ski Mt Wood's huge eastern slope. Sun following a car camp, we will tour at another location depending on conditions and interest. Must be an advanced skier and confident on steep slopes. Send sase and skiing experience to Ldr: Mark Goebel. Asst: Reiner Stenzel

May 1-2 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Mt Morgan (13005') One day ascent and ski via hidden Esha Canyon from McGee Creek. (5300' gain. 3.5 miles. This route follows a series of steep benches and meadows to the east facing cerc and the summit. Sat car camp. Sun ski depending on interest and conditions Must be an advanced skier and confident on steep slopes.. Send sase and ski experience to Ldr:Mark Goebel, Co-ldr: Dan Richter.

May 8-13 Sat-Thu Ski Mountaineers

T: Eastern Sierra Tour; Join us on this adventurous backcountry ski tour in the Eastern Sierra Location Route dependent on conditions. Intermed or better only. Metal edged skies with skins, shovel, avalanche transceiver required.. Send 2 lg sase, ski experience, H&W tele #, to Ldr: Tom Marsh. Asst: Joe Maguire

May 15-16 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineer.

TI: Mammoth area day tours: Sat ski Blue Couloir off the Mammoth Crest Sun 13000' Mt Dana above Tioga Pass. intermed or better skiers; metal edges, skins required. Send SASE and experience to Ldr: Gerry Holleman. Asst: Paul Harris.

May 22-24 Sat-Mm Ski Mountaineers

TI: Tioga and Sonora Pass Ski Camp: Car camp near Tioga and Sonora Passes. and ski bowls and chutes in the Tioga Pass and Sonora Pass area. Possible ski one day at Mammoth. Metal edged skis with skins, shovels, avalanche transceiver required. Intermed or better skier. Send lg SASE, ski exper, H&W phones to Ldr: Owen Maloy. Asst: Kathy Crandall.

May 22-24 Sat-Mon Ski Mountaineers

TI: Palisades Glacier: Skiing and mountaineering in the Palisades Glacier area. Sat ski/hike to basecamp near Sam Mack Mdws (6 mi, 2,000'). Sun ski glaciers, chutes, and/or ski/climb Mt Winchell (13, 7751). For advanced skiers. Send e-mail or SASE w experience to Ldr; Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Keith Martin

May 29-30 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Treasure Lakes. Dade Couloir: Joins for a weekend of corn-snow skiing and ice fishing in Upper Rock Creek. Intermediate or better skiing and fishing skills required. Appropriate tools reqd. Send SASE or e-mail to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Owen Maloy.

the back so that should there be an emergency, the assistant would be in the best condition to go for help. Since I was the assistant, I heartily supported this policy. After skiing for several hours, including breaks for demonstrations and explanations, we reached a suitable location for Virgil to conduct the major portion of the training. We had all wondered why he was carrying a 5000 cubic inch pack which appeared to be full and which had broken parts of skis sticking out of it. We soon found out!

Virgil began taking portions of skis with broken bindings, broken skies, stripped screws and missing bales. He then broke participants into work parties. To the group of potential SMS leader candidates consisting of Tony Bird, Tom Brogan, Pat Orris and Tani Barbour he gave a ski pole which was missing the bale, the strap and which was broken in the middle. How such a combination of damage could occur to the same pole Virgil did not explain. The ingenious participants opened their packs pulling out all sorts of tools and accessories. Soon each problem had been solved and the groups rejoined to each demonstrate their resourcefulness. We were all very impressed with the results. Virgil then assigned to the groups a series of scenarios involving injured or hypothermic skiers. Again all participated enthusiastically with reasonable and knowledgeable solutions.

As a final exercise, Virgil assigned each group the task of preparing for an unanticipated overnight bivouac using only what they had brought out for a day tour. A resourceful array of shelters was prepared using only the surrounding materials and snow. As Virgil pointed out, there is no excuse for knowledgeable Ski Mountaineers not to survive a night in the open. Snow is an excellent insulator which only needs to be molded into the proper shape. Interestingly, Virgil commented that the most dangerous time to be caught in the mountains is in the fall when there is no snow on the ground and yet you are exposed to freezing temperatures at night. The only real defense is a hot fire which must be started well before you are too hypothermic to light a match and prepare kindling.

By 3 pm the shadows were drawing long and we prepared for our return ski to the car. Shortly after starting we faced a real emergency as one of the participants fell and suffered back spasms due to an old back injury. I was well behind the group with the injured skier, but I was able to contact Virgil using the Motorola Talk About Radios which both Virgil and I carried. Soon members of the group returned, and we were able to assist the injured skier in self evacuation. What could have been major incident easily resolved itself into an additional exercise using the strengths of the group to help a fellow member in need. By 5 pm we were all back at the Ullr, enjoying hot showers (sorry separate bathrooms) and then enjoying happy hour in the lounge. Urmas and his wife Becky, Tom Peterson and Owen Maloy along with Tani's friend Richard all joined us. At 6pm, Rex arrived from Mats'u's and by 7 pm we were all stuffed and giving away surplus food to other guests of the Ullr.

Starting at 7pm Donna Specht and I respectively gave presentations on the requirements of leading trips with the OCSS and SMS. Owen offered his insights.

Following the discussion on the requirements for leadership, the group participated in a scenario in which participants discussed appropriate responses to problems created during the ski trip from hell. I was first introduced to this concept when I took the written test required for completion of the requirements for the M rating. I have since introduced it as part of the Leader's Training with very interesting results. Most of the scenarios have no obvious correct answer. They probe the judgement of the leader during crisis, forcing the participants to define what are the priorities and how these priorities should be met. It is interesting the different slants one gets on a problem when many experienced leaders add their contributions, frequently from experience. This year's scenario had an uncanny resemblance to an incident recounted by Norman Clyde in an essay entitled "A Tragedy in the Sierra". (You can read the story in the recently published book "Close Ups of the High Sierra" by Norman Clyde, edited by Wynne Benti.) By 10 pm the discussions were winding down and we all headed for bed.

Sunday morning we all again awoke to hot coffee and scrambled eggs prepared by Donna. By 8 am we were joined by Urmas, John and Tom who prepared us for the days lessons. Urmas took the middle group with John handling the advanced group learning to ski straight down the fall line in deep snow between the trees. Tom took that portion of the group generally interested in flat touring skills. Urmas had scouted out the Mammoth area during the week before we arrived. He had found near perfect snow conditions in a tree covered slope above the cabins at the south end of Lake Mary. Soon the advanced group consisting of both SMS and OCSS members, were developing skills for challenging the fall line in backcountry conditions. After practicing all morning, and eating a bit of white stuff, we ate lunch under the darkening skies of an approaching storm. After lunch we skied up and over the ridge and back to the road around Lake Mary. By 3pm we were all back at the cars and ready for the long drives back home.

I would like to thank all the participants who took the time to join Virgil and me for this training. The participants were: Janet Nemmert, OCSS Ski Committee Chair, Halsey Green, Susan King, Woody Brown, Alex Brainard, Ernie Hockenstein, Phylis Dodson, Donna Specht, Gwen Sharp, Nonnie DeSura, Roger Massoud, and Susan Harris with OCSS. Pat Orris and Tom Brogan prospective SMS, Bob Meador and Michael Dodson with both OCSS and SMS. Tony Bird and Tani Barbour with SMS.

Restaurant Review

By Kieth Martin

While driving up to the outing Friday night, Tony Bird introduced me to a hole in the wall restaurant in Olanca called "Still Life Cafe". It is located on the east side of 395 just south of the turnoff to 190. From the outside it looks like a broken down 1930s era gas station. Inside you discover you have entered a charming roadside cafe in the best French tradition. Run by the husband and wife team of Malika and Michel Patron and assisted by her two sisters, the cafe serves reasonably priced authentic French cuisine. Tony and I both had the lamb sausage which was delicious. Many more stops are in order to sample the other items on the menu. The wine list also looked quite extensive, though we did not partake.

NEW YEAR'S JUNE LAKE TRIP

Eleven skiers turned out for a Wilderness Adventure Section New Year's condo trip to June Lake, Dec 30 - Jan 3. The trip was lead by SMSers **Tom Marsh** and **Pete Matulavich** and included fellow members, **Mike Bratkowski**, **Matt Doody**, **Diann Fried**, **Randy Lamm**, and **Susan Loftus**. The other four were Paulette and Gary Landers, Calvin Hecht and Leah Lee.

The emphasis for most of us was on backcountry, and while the shallow snow depth was something of a disappointment, it did work to our advantage on one tour. We were able to drive to a 9,000' snow line to start a tour into Virginia Lakes. Normally, the road would have been closed at 395. This tour began in biting gale-force winds but the majestic winter scenery made it all worthwhile. We climbed to just below the pass and, since it was getting late, decided to return. Conditions were a veritable smorgasbord, perfect for character building. **Randy** showed us how the Randonees do it. Sure, he looked great, but he missed out on most of the character building. On the way back to the condo we stopped at the Travertine hot springs out of Bridgeport and enjoyed skinny dipping with the locals. That

evening we celebrated New Year's in typical Sierra Club fashion, by going to bed promptly at ten o'clock.

The next day we tried Duck Pass out of Mammoth. We had no real goal, other than to appreciate the stunning beauty of the area, and after a couple of thousand of feet of gain, decided to call it a day. On the way down, we found somewhat better conditions than we did at Virginia Lakes and we even ran into pockets of three-week old powder in the trees. This time we sampled some hot springs south of Mammoth.

We had a division of interest on the third day. Some wanted to try skating at Tamarack, while others wanted to work on downhill technique at a resort. Mammoth and June were reporting boilerplate conditions, so **Randy**, **Mike** and I got up at 5 a.m. to drive the couple of hours to Kirkwood, just south of Lake Tahoe. It was well worth the drive, as Kirkwood had considerably more snow than Mammoth and it was in better condition. **Diann** reports that all the skaters took a lesson and, by the end of the day, had made dramatic improvement.

The biggest challenges of the trip were encountered back at the condo as **Tom** force-fed us a high cal, high fat, high cholesterol diet which included lasagna, chocolate cheese cake, and a variety of cookies, cakes and pastries. We told Tom he could simplify things next time by just bringing up a couple of buckets of lard. He said he would consider it.

Pete Matulavich

BEWARE ! CO2 EMISSIONS AT MAMMOTH

Heidi Waters, writing for the Mammoth times in articles on Nov 5 1998 and Jan 14, 1999, reports that Inyo National Forest (INF) officials and scientists with the US Geographical Survey (USGS) are warning people of the very serious danger posed by the carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions coming out of the ground in certain areas near Horseshoe Lake and on Mammoth Mountain.

Mammoth has closed off a couple of areas near the ski runs. One is on one of the lower curves of Roadrunner before it crosses under Chair 12. Another is near an electrical vault building above the top of Chairs 11 + 27, beginner ski lifts coming out of the main lodge.

The INF is also educating the public with signs and warnings at various locations at Tamarack cross-country ski area, which includes the Horseshoe Lake area where most of the CO2 venting is occurring.

The CO2 emissions were first detected in 1990. But the geologic unrest began in 1980 with a series of 6.0 earthquakes. Scientists believe that quakes occurring deep beneath Mammoth Mountain have penetrated a large reservoir of ancient gas about 30,000 feet underground causing venting to the surface. In 1990, trees began dying at Horseshoe Lake, and scientist later attributed it to the CO2 venting. They later discovered concentrations of CO2 in some low spots to be so high at times as to be fatal to people and animals. Last winter they discovered that the CO2 was collecting in the snow itself and that a mere faceplant could lead to unconsciousness or death, depending on the concentration of CO2. Concentrations fluctu-

ate with weather conditions, especially wind. CO2 makes up about 20-95% of the gas content of the soil; soil gas normally contains 1% or less.

John Rogie, with the USGS said that while the gas poses no danger at "head level"-that is if you are upright on raised land, it can become lethal in low lying areas of the terrain, in tree wells, in depressions near buildings and in the buildings themselves where there is no air movement.

Last May, the death of a skier in the area could have been caused CO2 poisoning. It was listed as one possible, though not definitive, cause of death in the coroner's report. The day after the man died, Rogie measured the CO2 gas content of the snow in the area where the body was found to be 70%, an amount that is lethal in seconds.

Read the whole article at www.mammothtimes.com

Ski the new Bardini

Karhu the ski company has a *new* ski called the "Bardini" in honor of Allan Bard. A portion of sales goes to the Bardini foundation.

The ski is made in Italy by TUA, so it's well made.

Ed Cereda, long time ski mechanic and world class race waxer, says "the ski is good". Ed used alpine bindings on these skis and liked the Bardini very much. With a three pin binding mounted on these skis, this set-up would probably come very close to the ideal backcountry ski. I know we have heard that phrase so many times. But think about it. Allan had worked with Karhu on this ski for quit a while. He spent much of his ski time out in the Sierra wilderness snow. He liked lighness. A simple binding on these skis may be the ideal rig.

The great Bardini may be smiling and speaking to us from the heavens:

"Hey partner, the fringen ski's got my name on it, it's got to be good. Would the right reverend lie?"

Jim Valensi

Here comes the Snow !

The following are excerpts from John Moynier's Eastern Sierra Avalanche Bulletin:

January 21, 1999-

We finally have something to talk about again, as a couple of very strong storms have moved through the area over the past three days. Some areas at high elevations have received three feet or more of new wet snow, coupled with...

January 25, 1999

It finally started to look like winter around here, as strong storms continued to hit the area over the weekend. Once again the higher elevations received up to three feet of new snow, the difference this week is that the snow is of very low..

February 1, 1999

Another short, but intense weather system passed through the area over the weekend, leaving up to a foot of new snow at the higher elevations....

You can view Moynier's (usually) twice weekly avalanche report on the Web at www.csac.org/Bulletins/Calif/current/html or you can subscribe to the reports by e-mail by contacting the Cyberspace Snow and Avalanche Center at www.csac.org. They are a nonprofit group and will ask for a small contribution to remain on the subscriber list.

John Moynier has a new book out on the subject called *Avalanche Aware, Safe Travel In Avalanche Terrain*. It is published by Falcon and runs \$6.95.

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