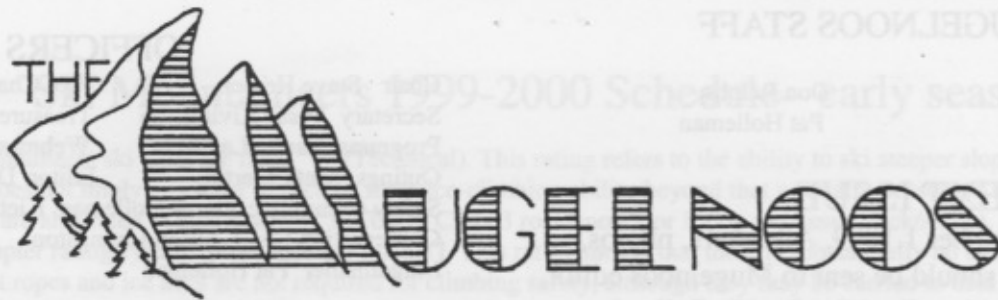


THE  UGELNOOS

RCH
11/99

November 1999

Issue # 753



SMS skiers on Big Pine Creek trail

**PALISADES GLACIER:
U & V NOTCH, WINCHELL & GAYLEY
MAY 29-31, 1999
by Reiner Stenzel**

This end-of-the-season SMS trip was probably the best one: We had nothing but corn snow, great weather, a spectacular terrain, skiing and climbing, and a fun group of eleven happy people. In the party were Greg Stach, Barbara Berne and Michael Waeiss from the Bay Area, Alvin Walter and Ellen Feeney from San Diego, and from the LA area Susan Loftus, Jim DeRose, Maciek Malish, Craig Connally, co-leader Keith Martin and myself. Almost half were on randonnee gear, Ellen was just in for the climb. We met on Sat, 5/29, 6:30am, at the hiker's parking lot a mile below Glacier Lodge (7,600'). The place was bustling with climbers, skiers, hikers and fishermen.

After packing and signing zillions of SC release forms we finally took off by 7:45am along the High Trail above the North Fork of Big Pine Creek. The packs were loaded with skis and ski boots and we were in for a long hike to the distant snow. After an hour we reached the falls, and by 10:30am we had another rest at the Second Lake (10,000') below scenic Temple Crag, including a 10 sec dip into the ice cold lake. Beyond Third lake we ascended lots of switchbacks to reach the junction where a faint trail with patches of snow leaves to Sam Mack

(Continued on page 4)

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR Don Ralphs
MUGELMAILER Pat Holleman

NEXT ISSUE

Issue deadline October 1, 1999. All letters, photos, slides, 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@attglobal.net. If you want your photos or slides returned after publication send a SASE. We can't be responsible for losses.

Next Month: the Haute Route Issue— 4 SMSers go in search of the Perfect Omlette de jambon et fromage

Editors computer melts down- October Issue circles cyberspace, never sees print— look for an additional issue in June this year. More skiing then anyway.

2000 MUGELNOOS RENEWAL DUE!!!

To renew, send a check for \$7 made payable to "Ski Mountaineers" to the Mugelmailer: Pat Holleman, 1638 6th St., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-6347. Please include your Sierra Club Membership # and email address.

Meetings

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

SMS WEB PAGE

HTTP:www.angeleschapter.org/skimt/.

Slide Show, Five years of trip reports, backcountry links and much more. Check it out.

Avalanche info for Eastern Sierra

Phone: 760-924-5500

Web: www.csac.org/Bulletins/Calif/current

For Sale

Green Scarpa T2's, Scarpa size 9 (U.S.10), like new, no kidding!
- worn only a few times lift skiing - \$150
Gerry Holleman 310-374-4654

OFFICERS

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Outings Kieth Martin	Editor Don Ralphs
Safety Committee Gerry Holleman, Kieth Martin, Mark Goebel	
Conservation Chair Susan Livingston	
Mugelmailer Pat Holleman	

Susan Livingston ?

Susan Livingston is the reincarnation of our beloved Susan Loftus who was married this summer while our presses were silent. Congratulations to her and on her recent election to Conservation Chair of the SMS.

November Meeting & Gear Swap/ Sale

The regular November meeting will be a discussion of gear and upcoming trips. Attendees are invited to bring gear that has become extra as well as any ideas for trips they would like to lead or see led by others.

NEW MEMBERS:

Barbara Berne	Lorene Samoska
Craig M. Connally	Michael Sieffert
J. Eric Lane	Maciek Malish

NEW SUBSCRIBERS:

Mark Altshule 2533 N. Carson St., #T-182 Carson City, NV 89706	E.J. Harpham 2529 S. Cabrillo Ave. San Pedro, CA 90731 310-521-8843
John Anderson 21717 Evalyn Ave. Torrance, CA 90503 310-543-1500	Maciek Malish 1906-B Suntime Lane Simi Valley, CA 93063 805-579-8107
Barbara Berne 1702 Mills Ave. Belmont, CA 94002-1925 650-631-8003	Randall K Streufert PO Box 23215 Silverthorne, CO 80498 970-468-4796
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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

Ski Mountaineers 1999-2000 Schedule— early season

All Ski Mountaineers ski tours are rated "T" (Technical). This 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 rated I (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, although they may be carried to deal with unanticipated conditions. Trips rated TM or TE require the use of ice axes and climbing equipment. Trips with an R in the code are restricted for insurance reasons to current Sierra Club members, and require a mountaineering resumé. The Sierra Club and the SMS encourage qualified leaders to lead such trips.

Nov 13-14 Sat & Sun
TI: Ski and Desert Experience & Conditioning, Kelso Sand Dunes: Practice your turns on slopes less than 37deg. Bring old skis, snakebite kit, and teflon spray for schussing and jump turn clinic in soft sand. Peak climbing ok, great potluck and fun required. Send e-mail with qualifications to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Ast: OwenMaloy.

Jan 8-9 Sat & Sun
C: Ski Mammoth/June: Help stamp out summer by preparing your skills for the backcountry. Stay with Andy or Owen. Contact Ldr: Andy Fried. Asst: Owen Maloy.

Jan 22 Sat
TI: Mt Abel (Cerro Noroeste): Intro ski mountaineering tour in local San Rafael Mtns. Mtn bike 3 mi on road depending on snow conditions, then ski to summit. Metal edged skis w skins and bike req'd. Send sase or e-mail w/ exper, phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Steve Hessen. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Jan 28-30 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 Res: Keith Martin

Feb 5 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 (see Mugelnoos or angeleschapter.org/skimt). Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Kathy Crandall.

Feb 19-21 Sat Sun
TI: Snowshelter Course. Join us for a weekend of wilderness survival techniques. Sat build igloos/snowcaves. Sun ski and practice navigation techniques for white-out cond; review avalanche rescue. No tents. Bring snowsaw, shovel, avalanche beacons, metal-edged skis, and skins. Intermed or better skiing ability required. Send experience, h&w phones, email address, rideshare info to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Ken Deemer.

Feb 25-27 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 Res: Keith Martin.

LEADERS— currently leading scheduled trips

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 Stenzel@physics.ucla.edu

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kdeemer@earthlink.net

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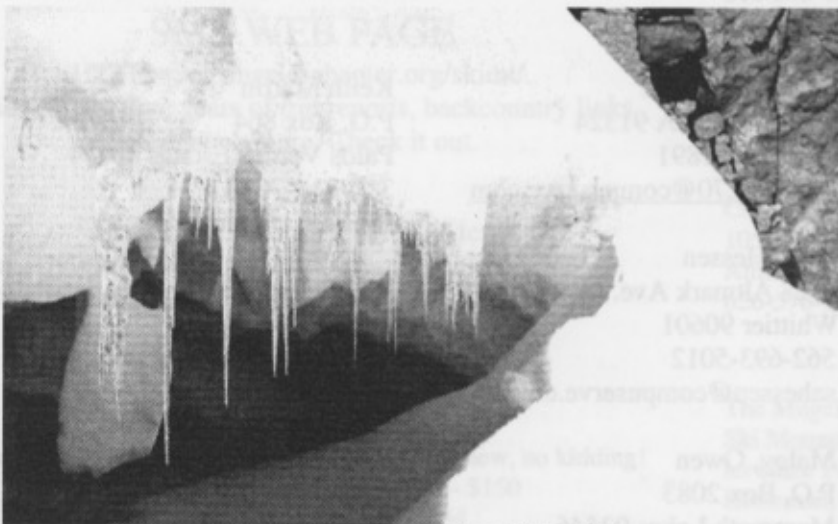
Meadows (11,100'). After regrouping we forded a stream on logs, hiked XC through a wet meadow, pushed through a thicket of willows, traversed a boulder field with patches of soft snow where one occasionally sank in to the hips. Finally, at about 10,500' the snow became continuous and we proceeded to climb on skis reaching basecamp just after noon. The group was widely spread out but we were equipped with four radios and kept well in touch.

After lunch, tent city was erected which included a two-hour precision job to erect a pyramid tent with igloo-like walls. In the afternoon sun everyone relaxed. We chatted with our neighbors, Bill Straka and Dave Underwood, and RJ Secor's CMC group passing by. Barbara and Maciek enjoyed to chat in their native language, Polish, whose s-z-c-z sounds nobody could reproduce, while they heard little difference between Greg and Craig. It was hard to attract anyone for a ski tour but by 3pm, I took off to the nearby slopes and some followed to ski the 500', 35deg chute which leads from Sam Mack Mdws to the Thunderbolt Glacier.

Dinner was at 5pm. Unfortunately, the wind picked up and dark clouds moved in so that we soon retreated into our tents. Our plan for the next day was to ski and perhaps to climb a peak. In the habit of earlier Alpine starts I called for a 5:30am rise and we skied out about an hour later. Keith was concerned about the legality of climbing the frozen 35deg chute with/without

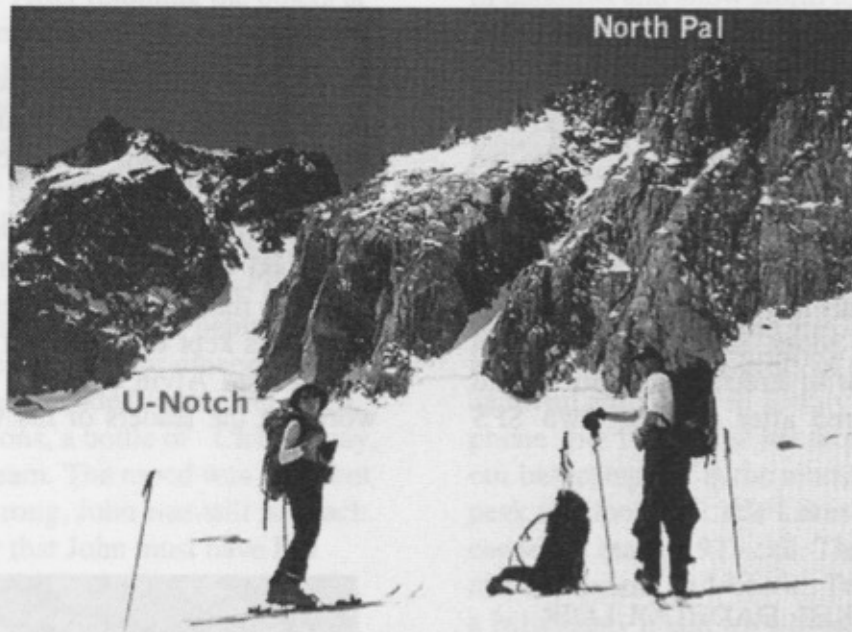
ice axe and crampons, but we simply cut and kicked steps into the snow and everyone made it up safely. Ellen stayed around camp and kept in touch by radio. The spread-out group headed to the base of Mt Winchell for our optional climb. On the way up the glacier, Greg and Michael spotted a chute North of T-bolt which had a passage across the bergschrund. They preferred skiing over climbing and took off. By 9am we gathered at the 13,000' level below Mt Winchell where the snow ended. Alvin did not hesitate to climb but Keith and I got into discussions about the legality of a high cl 3 peak climb. Keith did not want to go and as leader I was not supposed to sign out. There were haunting similarities to the previous weekend at Bear Creek Spire: deteriorating weather, one participant extremely eager to get the summit but exhausted, another had no ice axe arrest experience. To avoid another incidence, we left the mountain to our most experienced climber, Alvin, and decided on skiing the steps.

We proceeded to the Western end of the glacier and climbed into a col in the 13,000' ridge between T-bolt and Winchell. A great view opened up between steep rock walls: Dusy Basin with frozen lakes below us and a spectacular panorama of white Sierra peaks in the background. A few jump turns down the col brought us back to the T-bolt glacier. We watched the randonnee's Greg and Michael coming down their chute without falling into the bergschrund. Gravity pulled them further down the glacier to a



Bergschrund at the U-notch

little green lake at 12,000'. The same "black hole" attracted Keith and Susan who could not escape from it for a while. Rumors of Susan's sunbathing spread over the radio but could not be verified due to lack of binoculars. In the meantime the rest of us contoured around the NE ridge of T-bolt to ascend the Palisade Glacier. Now our fun really started. Miraculously, the clouds began to vanish and the spectacular panorama of 14,000' peaks above the glacier opened up in full sun-



Barbara and Jim on the Palisade Glacier

shine. Thunderbolt (14,003'), North Palisade (14,242'), Mt Sill (14,153), and Gayley (13,510') formed a big cirque separated by steep chutes such as the U-notch, V-notch, Underhill Couloir, Glacier Col, etc. At this late time of the year all major gullies were separated from the glacier by an open bergschrund.

While a happy Alvin called us from the summit of Winchell, we decided to have our own fun and ski part of the U-notch. Jim, Maciek, and I switchbacked up this 40+deg slope to the bergschrund. The sun had softened the snow in the chute but it was full of avalanche debris which meant tricky skiing. My wide crud skis were a blessing. Taking off the skins between a gasping crevasse and a 45deg slope required a careful balancing act. Then, after a deep breath, it was telejumping down the chute, an exhilarating but exhausting fun at 13,000'. After U comes V, and with a little left-over energy I climbed into the V-notch up to its bergschrund. It was still steeper and felt marginally safe with respect to wet snow avalanches on this warm day. No falls are allowed on this one! Another adrenaline rush and in a minute of quick jumps one is down the chute and gasping for air. It defies logic that this is a permissible I-rated activity while climbing Winchell is restricted.

We rested on the upper glacier, ate

lunch, took pictures, waited for Alvin, and observed other climbers. Restless Alvin did not stay for very long and took off to climb Mt Gayley. Jim signed out to return home due to an earlier commitment. Maciek, Barbara, Michael and I decided to ski the entire Palisade Glacier down to Lake 12,165. The mile-long glacier has a gentle slope (10-20deg), was completely smooth and free of suncups and by midday was covered by virgin corn snow. I paralleled on telis with the three randonnee's and we left picture-perfect tracks across the glacier. It was skiing at its best! At the green-blue glacial lake it was again picture taking time. Then we called Keith for regrouping, skinned up to the 12,500' level, and skied down the T-bolt glacier toward Sam Mack Mdw. The wonderful spring snow made downhill skiing an easy dance. Only in the 35deg chute above SM Mdw we had to watch out for possible wet snow slides at 3pm.

We had now skied for nearly 8 hrs, yet it was still early in the afternoon. Since hanging out at camp was not my style, we decided to pack up and head down to the Lakes where it was warmer, we could sleep under the stars, and had a shorter hike out on Monday. I called Alvin who was somewhere on Gayley and he agreed to follow later with Ellen. At 3:30pm we skied down the earlier described obstacle course to the main trail. Craig and Michael

chose their own XC route which caused us to wait, Greg to blow his whistle, but ended fine with a reunion at the Second Lake. There we found a beautiful campsite overlooking the lake and the vertical East face of Temple Crag. No mosquitoes, no bears, no tents, just a great night under the stars and later on the full moon. Life could not be better. In the evening, Alvin and Ellen found us as directed by radio. He did not even look tired after climbing two SPS

TREASURE LAKES, DADE COULOIR

MAY 22-23, 1999

by Reiner Stenzel

This trip was meant to be a leisurely skiing and fishing trip but turned out to be anything but relaxing. Yes, we did some skiing and fishing but we also had a nerve-wrecking search and rescue action due to a potentially fatal mountaineering accident. Here is what happened: On Sat, 5/23, 7 am, ten skiers met at Rock Creek Lake where the road was closed. There was Owen Maloy from Mammoth Lakes to assist me, Alvin Walter and Reed Moore from San Diego, Ruth von Rotz from Reno, Eric Lane, George Crosland, Danny Sommer, Michael Bratkowski, and John Kornak from the LA area, and my faithful K9, Tatanka. We hiked up beyond Mosquito Flats to find more or less continuous snow near the Lakes. By midday we made it to the Treasure Lakes (11,200') and set up a snow camp.

The Lakes were still frozen over and there was plenty of snow in the bowls and chutes below Bear Creek Spire and Mt Dade. The long haul in caused the group to be spread out but with my little Motorola radios I kept in touch with Owen in the sweep. After lunch we had three separate plans: Some wanted to relax and ski near the camp, four of us wanted to ski Dade Couloir, and three wanted to do some climbing. Since climbing was beyond the scope of the trip Alvin, Reed and John signed out for their afternoon ascent of Bear Creek Spire. Ruth, George, Danny, and I contoured around the upper Treasure Lke

peaks a day! Next morning we slept in late until the sun reached our camp. Then it was an easy hike down to the cars. We all were happy with a great weekend of skiing. We enjoyed the freedom of the mountains: Everyone could ski at their own limits, nobody was forced to march in unison between the leaders, our radios kept us in contact when spread out, experienced Alvin could do his thing without worrying the leaders or his wife at basecamp,



Basecamp at Treasure Lks with Bear Creek Spire in background

and climbed into the Hourglass (Dade Couloir). The snow was soft, a hazy sun was out, and we earned our turns by climbing this 1400', 35 degree slope up. By 4 pm the snow began to crust up and it was time to enjoy the ski down. We left some nice tracks and were

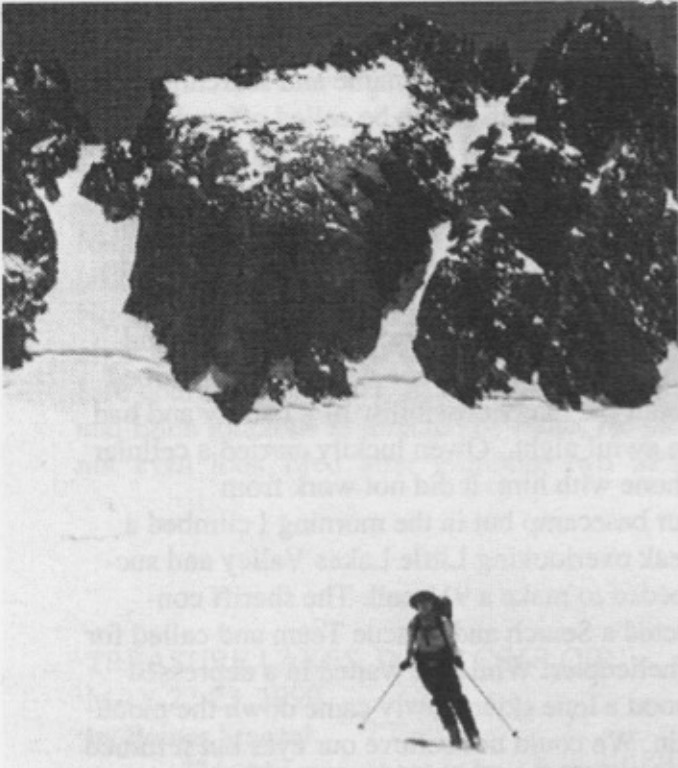
down all too fast. After rejoining the others at camp, the fishermen/women went to work and pulled two trout out of Long Lake.

The weather had deteriorated and, as predicted, localized thunderstorms were building up. By 6 pm there was hail and lightning all around us. We were wondering where the mountain climbers were. Alvin and Reed were safely back at dinner time and said that John should be just an hour behind. As the weather let up we enjoyed our dinners, the most decadent one included fresh trout, fried potatoes with onions, a bottle of Chardonnay, and frozen ice cream. The mood was great but something was wrong, John was still not back. By nightfall, new that John must have had an accident.

On their private outing, Alvin had soloed Bear Creek Spire (13,720') and described it as a challenging class 4 climb. Reed wisely turned back just below the summit, and on their way down both met John who looked tired and slow. Worst of all, John had left his pack at the skis in the snow below the ridge to make a quick, light ascent. He was improperly dressed in a cotton flannel shirt and had no ice axe or 10 essentials. They tried to talk him out of the climb pointing out the approaching storm but John brushed the advice aside and pushed forward. According to his later account he did reach the summit as the thunderstorm moved in. He was struck by the ground currents of a close lightning strike and got temporarily paralyzed, took a fall down a snowchute and could barely arrest with his hands. The shock from these events left him disoriented, he was in a whiteout, it was getting dark, and without flashlight he could not find his way back. He managed to dig a cave into soft snow and stayed all night up to avoid getting hypothermic. By nightfall we knew that we had to initiate a search and rescue action.

Since only Alvin and Reed knew John's route they volunteered to look for him. They left by 9 pm with emergency supplies retracing their earlier route by flashlight. With my Motorola radios Alvin and I stayed in constant radio contact for their own safety and in case they would need a backup for a rescue. They found his skis and pack untouched which meant he had an accident on the ridge. They followed

in darkness and snow storm to about 200' below the summit calling his name and searching in vain. The search had to be called off and Alvin and Reed returned by midnight completely exhausted. They gave John little chance to survive the stormy night at 13,700' without proper protection and possible injuries. We decided to contact the sheriff first thing in the morning to ask for a professional Search and Rescue Team. Everyone was deeply disturbed about the likely possibility of a fatality and had an awful night. Owen luckily carried a cellular phone with him. It did not work from our basecamp but in the morning I climbed a peak overlooking Little Lakes Valley and succeeded to make a 911 call. The sheriff contacted a Search and Rescue Team and called for a helicopter. While we waited in a depressed mood a lone skier slowly came down the mountain. We could not believe our eyes but it turned out to be John. He was totally exhausted but without a scratch! I rushed back to call the rescue action off, just minutes before the helicopter took off. John's first comments after returning was that he had a wonderful experience with death. Then he took out his trumpet and blew a tune into the sky. He was a religious person and carried a rosary instead of the 10 essentials. We were not sure whether to cry or to laugh. But we were so relieved about the outcome, fed him with warm fluids, packed some of his gear out, and returned to the cars by early afternoon. He called the sheriff and had to explain his actions. Understandably, Search and Rescue was upset about this entire incident. And so were we. His lack of common sense for safety and his disregard for advice got him nearly killed, required us to perform a rescue action into the middle of the night, to call a professional Search and Rescue Team which only had to be called off in the last moment, and finally spoiled half of our trip by scaring the heck out of everyone. He won't be on any other SMS trips anymore which is expressed in writing at the Safety Committee. Although John took our rescue efforts for granted, I do want to express my gratitude to Alvin and Reed for their heroic rescue effort in a stormy night on a hard mountain, for Owen's good advice, and everyone's assistance and concern. Leading trips is never dull, especially not this last one.



Barbara skiing the Palisade Glacier

It's picnic time!

The third annual Chapter Picnic, Newcomers Meeting and Outings Fair will take place 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 13, at the Crystal Springs Picnic Area- in Griffith Park.

Whether you are interested in meeting old friends or making new ones, there will be something to interest you. Representatives from the Chapters outings sections and committees will be on hand to talk about upcoming backpacks, hikes, trips and activities. Conservation activists will be there to talk about the latest Chapter campaigns. And groups will be there to tell you about the latest Sierra Club activities in your area. Newcomers are particularly urged to attend.

Picnic tickets are \$7 per person for adults and \$3 for children under 10. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome.

Tickets must be purchased in advance. To order your tickets, send a check made out to the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club and send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: FAIR, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, 3435 Wilshire Blvd., #320, Los Angeles, 90010-1904.

Mugelnoos

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