

January 2001

Issue # 763

SMS Memoirs from the Last Millennium

The following vignettes about the Ski Mountaineers Section during the 1950s and 60s are provided by Walt Davie. Walt is active on the Baldy Hut Committee, and still enjoys earning his turns on Baldy.

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS

Having joined the Sierra Club as a UC Berkeley student in 1954, I gravitated to the monthly SMS Mugelnoos meetings after graduating '54 and becoming employed in aerospace engineering. The monthly meetings were held in the Arroyo Seco Park clubhouse just off Avenue (65?) on the Pasadena Freeway. These were joint RCS and SMS meetings, as the Ski Mountaineers held sway in the winter and spring and the Rock Climbers for the rest of the year. Some of the people belonged to both groups. The Matriarch and Patriarch of these meetings, as far as regular attendance was concerned, were John and Ruth Mendenhall. Ruth was the Mugelnoos editor for many years. Beginning in 1939, she resided for several years in a cooperative living group of climbers and skiers (called base camp). John and Ruth attended Mugelnoos meetings with their two grade-school daughters, Vivian and Valerie.

The meetings adhered to Robert's Rules of Order until the business of the sections was over. Then there was a refreshment break (mostly cookies and Kool-Aid) followed by spirited discussions of past and future outings. Then the evening's program followed. These were usually slide shows put on by members of the group. Occasionally there would be a 16 mm movie from the Sierra Club or other mountaineering related sources. Following this, everyone was expected to join in the stuffing and stamping of envelopes containing the fresh-off-the-mimeograph copies of the Mugelnoos.

Editors and refreshment providers were assigned in advance at the beginning of the year. Editing the Mugelnoos was a tedious assignment, as it meant providing the Mugelgrapher with the spirit masters for the mimeo machine. These were typed on a typewriter with "no ribbon" selected. If a typing mistake was made, it was necessary to roll the master out of the typewriter, apply blue correction fluid to the reverse side of the master, roll the master back down to the applicable line and continue. This behooved one to exercise careful typing skills. Input material arrived from Trip Leaders in the form of letters, postcards or telephone calls. Since the mimeo masters occupied a definite amount of "real estate" on each page, it was up to the Editor to fill in all the available space with homemade illustrations, helpful camping hints, applicable quotations, jokes or cartoons. Thus, the quality of each issue was a result of the graphics efforts of the Editor. Graphic and the Mugelnoos logo were drawn on the masters with a special ball tip stylus. All this meant long hour at the keys for the Editor of the month. The masters then had to be physically delivered to the Mugelgrapher, usually at a midnight hour at agreed halfway point between their residences.

SMS AND RCS MUGELNOOS REGULARS

In addition to the Mendenhalls, some of the regular attendees whose names come to mind were: Barbara Lilley Leo Finegold, Sy Ossofsky, myself (Walt Davie), Bert and Gen Turney, John Wedberg, Steve Wilkie, Worthie Doyle, George Harr, Harvey Hickman, Chuck and Ellen Wilts, Rich Gnagy, Bud Bingham, Tom Condon, George and Marge Shinno, Lloyd and Rosie Balsam, Roy and Jim Gorin, Miles and (Marian?) Brubacher, Mike and Natalie Sherrick, Frank Hoover. Mugelnoos Meetings were slim pickings as far as men meeting women, but a fertile field for the few single women who would attend. The constant turn-

(Continued on page 4)

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR
MUGELMAILER

Lorene Samoska
Pat Holleman

NEXT ISSUE

February issue deadline is Feb. 10th, 2001. All letters, photos, slides, or articles should be sent to Mugelnoos editor, Lorene Samoska, 701 Craig Avenue, La Canada, CA 91011. Materials can be sent by IBM disc or e-mailed to samsei@pacbell.net. Electronic photos and articles are preferred and appreciated.

MEETINGS

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

SMS WEB PAGE UPDATE

The new link is: <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/>

BALDY HUT LINK

<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/lodges/sanantonioskihut.html>

Avalanche Beacons and SMS Historic Video For Sale

- SOS F1-ND Avalanche Beacon, 457 KHZ, \$168
- SMS Video of members skiing in the Sierra in the 1960s, plus rare skiing footage of Section founder, Walter Mosauer in 1932. \$10.00 (only 3 left) Contact Mark Goebel: 714-963-9384

For Sale: Heavy-duty mountaineering boots. French, Galibier-Pentory (classics-leather). Used one summer in France. Size 10.5 M. Cost: \$225, asking \$125. Also, Swiss lightweight hiking boots. Raichie Ecolite Special, blue & gray. Size: 10.5 M. Cost: \$75, asking \$25. Richard Neal (626) 286-4697.

For Sale: Men's ice hiking/alpine boots, size 10-11. Separate liner (thinsulate) and plastic boot. MINT condition, NEVER used. Asking \$95. Please phone Mark: (310) 398-0366.

OFFICERS

Chair: Randy Lamm (310) 319-1947
Vice Chair: Keith Martin (310) 316-7617
Secretary: Jim DeRose (310) 454-7562
Treasurer: Mark Goebel (714) 963-9384
Programs: Eric Watts (562) 433-5099
Webmaster: Owen Maloy (760)-934-9511
Outings: Keith Martin (310) 316-7617
Editor: Lorene Samoska (818) 952-3665
Safety Committee: Gerry Holleman (310) 374-4654
Leader Records: Bahram Manahedgi (310) 319-0836
Mugelmailer: Pat Holleman (310) 374-4654

SMS LEADERS

Walter Boge Van Nuys H (818) 781-4576	Pat & Gerry Holleman Manhattan Beach 310-374-4654 Patngerry@earthlink.net	Pete Matulavich San Dimas H (909)599-6148 W(909) 592-2814 Anm8r1@aol.com
Kathy Crandall Granada Hills skimeup@aol.com (818) 832-0809	Scot Jamison Glendora W (818)963-4101 sjami2029@aol.com	Lawrence Pallant Encinitas H (760) 942-0035 Lpallant@aol.com
Ken Deemer Manhattan Beach 310-587-3390w 310-546-4012 h kdeemer@earthlink.net	Paulette Woodward Landers H (714) 529-8154 Planders@fullerton.edu	Don Pies Santa Barbara H (805) 967-9852 W(805) 562-4062 Dpies@gte.net
Andy Fried Northridge H (818) 993-1891 W (818) 363-6196 71237.1270@compuserve.com	Joe McGuire Concord H(510) 609-1165 Jmcguire@diab.com	Reiner Stenzel Pacific Palisades H (310) 454-9787 stenzel@physics.ucla.edu
Mark Goebel Huntington Beach 714-963-9384 goebelmj@access1.net	Owen Maloy (M) Mammoth Lakes H (760)-934-9511 Fax 760-934-9511 jom@qnet.com	Larry Tidball H (562) 424-1556 LBTidball@earthlink.net
Nancy Gordon Truckee H(530) 582-6803 Nancygordon@mail.telis.org	Tom Marsh Camarillo H (805)-388-3984 Qrtmoon@aol.com	
Paul Harris Truckee 530-587-5962 Paulharris@jps.net	Keith Martin Palos Verdes Estates H (310) 316-7617 kwmartin@gte.net	

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 "SMS." Due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

Calendar of Events

Jan 26-28 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 3 Sat TI: Local Tour: Intro ski mountaineering tour in local mountains. Check out your gear and enjoy some turns. Metal-edged skis and climbing skins required. Call leader in the prior week for location and time. Ldr: Mark Goebel, Asst: Kathy Crandall.

Feb 20 Tue Monthly Mtg: This month's meeting will feature Bud Halley, long-time ski mountaineer and ski racer, who will entertain us with a program featuring the early days of the SMS. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Feb 10-11 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers, Orange County Sierra Singles 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: Keith Martin.

Feb 23-25 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.

February 23-25, 2001 TI: Weekend at Pear Lake Hut Ski : Climb slopes around Skiers Alta and ski wonderful powder bowls. 1900' gain to hut at 9,200', possible climb to summit of Skiers Alta 11,328' Comfortable hut accommodations dependant on lottery results, otherwise snowcamp. For strong interm. to advanced skiers with heavy pack skiing experience. Metal edged skis, climbing skins, shovel, probe and avalanche beacons required. Send e-mail/sase with experience to Ldr: Randy Lamm, Asst.: Mark Goebel.

Mar 4 Sun TI: Mt. Baden Powell 9,399': Climb from Vincent Gap to summit 2,800' gain. Challenging skiing down north facing gully back to Vincent gap. Advanced skiers confident on steep slopes. Stable Telemark or Randonee gear required. shovel, probe, beacon required Weather/snow conditions may postpone trip. Send email / sase w/experience to Ldr: Randy Lamm, Asst.: Tom Marsh.

Mar 10-11 Sat-Sun TI: Baldy Ski Hut: Ski mountaineering weekend on Mt Baldy's exciting upper slopes. Come for the day or stay overnite at the Hut. Advance intermediate or better skiers. Contact leader for reservations. Ldr: Mark Goebel. Asst: Bill Lingle.

Mar 20 Tue Ski Mountaineers Monthly Meeting: 7:30pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Mar 24-25 Sat-Sun TI: Olancha Pk (12,123)': Lengthy and strenuous ski tour attempt on southern Sierra high point. Sat backpack over Olancha Pass to snow camp, approx. 7 mi, 4000' gain. Sun ski to peak and return to cars, 12 mi, 2400' gain. Metal edged, lighter weight touring gear recommended. Send recent experience, address, phone #, and ride share info to Ldr: Mark Goebel. Asst: Keith Martin.

Mar 31 - Apr 1 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers/Sierra Peaks TM: Mt Perkins: Climb and ski a classic ski mountaineers/SPS peak via Armstrong Cyn. For advanced skiers/snowboarders and SPS climbers with snowshoes, ice axe and crampons. Send e-mail/sase w experience to Ldr:Reiner Stenzel. Co-Ldr: Keith Martin

April 7, 2001. Leadership Training Seminar. Everyone desiring to lead for Ski Mountaineers should sign up for the spring seminar. Written applications with the \$20 fee are required 2 weeks before the seminar starts. Applications are available at http://angeleschapter.org/ltr/forms/ltr_application.html or send large SASE to: Don Creighton, LTC Registrar, 2235 W 25th St., #128, San Pedro, CA 90732-4130 Phone: 310-519-0364 Also see <http://www.angeleschapter.org/ltr/> for more info on leadership courses.

Apr 7-8 Sat-Sun TI: Onion Valley Car Camp: Great time for skiing this fabulous area. Option to ski Kearsarge Pass, Sardine Canyon, University Pass, etc. For strong interm. to advanced skiers/snowboarders/snowbunnies. Metal edged skis, climbing skins and avalanche beacons required. Send e-mail/sase with experience to Ldr: Tom Marsh. Asst.: Gerry Holleman

Apr 14-19 Sat-Thu Ski Mountaineers/Sierra Peaks TM: Mts Guyot, Joe Devil, Pickering, Newcomb: Ski some cl 1-2 SPS peaks south of Whitney via Cottonwood Lks. Basecamp near Rock Creek, peak climbs as day tours. Possible detour to Kern Hot Springs. For advanced skiers and SPS climbers with snowshoes, ice axe and crampons. Send e-mail/sase w experience to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Co-Ldr: R.J.Secor.

Apr 17 Tue Ski Mountaineers Monthly Meeting: 7:30pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Apr 21-22 Sat-Sun TI: Tour De Peaklet: Great shakedown tour for longer ski tours in this 10 mile exploration of both McGee Creek and Humphreys Creek drainages. Ski to the base of Peaklet and Mt. Humphreys. Approx 3,000' vertical gain. For strong interm. to advanced skiers with pack skiing experience. Metal edged skis, climbing skins, shovel, probe and avalanche beacons required. High clearance vehicles recommended. Send e-mail/sase with experience to Ldr: Randy Lamm, Asst: Tom Marsh

May 5-6 Sat-Sun TI: Dunderberg Pk (12,374'), Mt Dana (13,374)': Two excellent peaks with long, wide open ski slopes. Dunderberg on Sat, 2874' gain, and Dana on Sun, 3407' gain. Car camp Sat nite. For advance intermediate skiers or better. Send recent experience, address, phone #, and ride share info to Ldr: Mark Goebel. Asst: Tom Sexton.

May 12-16 Sat-Wed Ski Mountaineers/Sierra Peaks TM: Center, Keith, Bradley: Ski mountaineering to some cl2 SPS peaks. From Onion Valley ski via University Pass to Center Basin. Set up base camp and ski peaks with daypacks. For advanced skiers and SPS climbers with snowshoes, ice axe and crampons. Send e-mail/sase w experience to Ldr:Reiner Stenzel. Co-Ldr: Ron Hudson

May 12-19 Sat-Sat T: Yosemite High Route Trans-Sierra : Classic Yosemite High route tour from Silver Lake to Badger Pass in Yosemite National Park. Opportunity for many diversions on this 45 mile ski adventure. For strong interm. to advanced skiers with pack skiing experience. Metal edged skis, climbing skins and avalanche beacons required. Send e-mail/sase with experience to Ldr: Tom Marsh. Asst: Joe McGuire.

May 15 Tue Ski Mountaineers Monthly Meeting: 7:30pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

May 26-28 Sat-Mon Ski Mountaineers/Sierra Peaks TM: Mt Whitney, Mt Muir: Ski/climb our highest SPS emblem peak. Ski down open slopes from Trailcrest to Whitney Portal, snow conditions permitting. For advanced skiers/boarders, climbers with ice axe and crampons. Send e-mail/sase w experience to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Co-Ldr: R.J.Secor.

(Continued from page 1)

over of winter ski and summer backpack or water ski trips left little time for social life. It would be 13 years before I met a girl with enough determination and stamina to put up with this life style!

SKI MOUNTAINEERING TRIPS

The Ski Mountaineering schedule of trips was usually decided on at a special meeting of the "central committee" about October of the previous year. Weekend dates were selected with an eye towards avoiding annoying events such as the start of fishing season or school holidays. The venues included (and still include) all the favorite weekend destinations such as San Geronio, La-Marc Col, Onion Valley, Pear Lake, Maysan Lakes and of course, our own home turf, the Mt. Baldy Hut. The Hut was managed in those days by Steve Wilkie, whose professional carpentry skills were put constantly to the test. Among other things no one else could do was Steve's ability to tune up and sharpen the 6 ft long two-man saws, which were used for cutting the annual supply of firewood. Steve was a bachelor and professional woodworker. He either rode up to the Baldy parking lot with others or drove his 1936 Ford Sedan. Bachelor, that is, until a lady fell in love with him at age 65. They were forthwith married and she spirited him away to a magnificent home nestled among her grape orchards in the Napa Valley. And yes, the 1936 Ford shares the garage with her Mercedes!

Most SMS trips started out with mad Friday evening dashes to the Sierras. I usually rode with Sy Ossosky in one of his several Jaguars. Protocol demanded a quick departure from work, followed by a brief stopover at some pre-arranged meeting place to pick up such luminaries as Barbara Lilley, Worthie Doyle or Harvey Hickman. The Jaguar sedans were marvelous road cars but required constant maintenance. They came with extensive built-in tool kits, which expedited on-the-road repairs. It was wise to carry vital spare parts such as fuel pump rebuild kits, special fuses, brake fluid, hose clamps, tubing, etc. I usually found myself helping Sy during one or two weekday evenings repairing the Jaguar for the next outing! If a given part broke more than twice, Sy would look at it more critically and we would reinforce or re-design the part and proceed to make new parts in my father's home machine shop. As time went on, the vehicle became more reliable due to these efforts. I acquired such extensive Jaguar on-the-ground training that I eventually bought a Jaguar sedan because of my intimate knowledge of the marquee. Arriving near the roadhead usually in a midnight Friday time frame, we would turn off on dirt byways, gather ground sheets, air mattresses and sleeping bags before reposing for the night on the ground. Breakfasts were usually Primus Stove oatmeal, breakfast rolls

and a hot drink of choice. Then, on to the business of the trip.

SKI AND CAMP EQUIPMENT

We started out the 50's with wooden skis. These had interlocking metal edges, which were held to the ski with rows of tiny wood screws. If an edge became damaged, it could be replaced by removing the screws and installing a new section of edging. Season tune-up for the skis included making sure all the edges were sharp and the screws firmly in place. Once this was done, then last year's bottom coating was scraped or dissolved off. Then successive coats of vile green bottom lacquer were applied, after which the first coat of bottom wax was applied and rubbed down with a cork slab. As time went on, metal Head Skis were adapted. The climbing skin of choice was the Trima. Genuine stick-on sealskins were available, but on the way out, since the adhesives of the day did not last for more than one trip. Sometimes strap-on sealskins with canvas backing were used, but these tended to work loose and/or accumulate snow buildup between skin and ski. The Trima skins were fastened to the groove in the bottom center of the ski by metal plates containing a dovetail groove. The ski was provided with miniature "railroad rail" segments held to the ski by bore holes and top side nuts into the central bottom groove. The ski bindings were of the cable heel type. A downhill cable binding could be modified for touring by adding a forward set of cable retention clips adjacent to the ball of the foot. Then a "touring attachment" could be slipped over the top of the ski. This was essentially a retainer to prevent lateral movement of the boot toe. Other bindings used were the Marker cable binding with Marker "Clou" touring attachment or the Ramey (not Ramer) binding which was a "safety beartrap" This had two pivoted half shells which came together to form a conventional looking beartrap. Poles with large baskets were no problem as there were still US Army WWII ski trooper's poles on the surplus market. In the early 50's WW II Army surplus baggy ski pants and shirts were available to lift the ski mountaineer to new heights of fashion. It seemed to be an unwritten point of honor to NEVER erect a tent unless there was actual precipitation. Boots were not a problem, since the leather lace-up ski boots of the era adapted themselves readily to the described bindings. The only light weight backpack stove available was the Primus. Like the Jaguars, these worked fine when tuned. One had to be careful that a Primus reamer was on the checklist! We sometimes eschewed the Primus in favor of grocery store steaks cooked over an open campfire. A lunch favorite was miniature Eda cheeses. These came encased in an outer wax coating. Once the cheese was eaten the wax could be applied to the ski bottoms for the

downhill post prandial run! Walt Davie borrowed Leo Finegold's 16 mm Bolex wind-up movie camera, and carried the 10 pound camera on many of these trips. Consequently, a filmed record of those years was made and is now available as a video titled "White Horizons" produced by Pete Matulevich. "White Horizons" also includes footage from the previous era of 30's ski mountaineering and features some early skiers of those times including founder of the Ski Mountaineers, Walter Mosauer.

[Ed. Note: These historic videos are still available for sale by Mark Goebel. See page 2 for details.]

THE BIG WINTER OF '69

The winter of 1969 brought a record snowfall to the Sierras. I was skiing at Mammoth the day it started, which was something like Jan. 16th. At about 10 am, I was in a complete whiteout and lost in the middle of the Broadway lower run. We had a snow shovel in the car and spent some time digging away the knee high snow. We beat an early retreat about noon! All the way down the Owens Valley the rain was torrential. Old timers called it a combination of a normal storm and a "Tonopah Low." Any cars that remained in the lot for the remainder of the day were entombed until the following May when their crushed remains would be bulldozed out, one by one. A Greyhound bus was lost there and not found until the following spring. That spring (1969), John Wedberg flew over the inner Sierras, and made an 8 mm movie which showed glacier-like accumulations below most of the major peaks. Needless to say, most roads into the trailhead were blocked until June or July. So that year, the SMS decided on other venues. One of these was the East slope of White Mountain. We started from Dyer, Nevada one weekend in April. Snow conditions were great!. We noticed a couple of small planes buzzing overhead, but paid no particular attention. As we walked back to our cars, we were met by the Dyer Sheriff's Posse and were harshly challenged. That was the year the DC-3 "gamblers special" flight from Reno to Burbank disappeared. The Sheriff assumed that the unusual group of skiers had located the wreckage and were looting the remains!

CHUCK AND ELLEN WILTS

Chuck and Ellen Wilts were a well regarded '50's climbing team. On one occasion, a lady tourist was standing on the walkway at Morro Rock in Sequoia Park when Chuck's fingers grasped the last ledge of the arduous south face route they had ascended. The tourist gasped to see this apparition rise. Noticing the wedding band on Chuck's finger, she asked something like "Young man, what would your wife say if she knew you

were doing anything this dangerous?" Chuck looked down and shouted, "Hey, Ellen, somebody here wants to know your opinion of this climb!"

WORTHIE DOYLE

Worthie Doyle was a PhD theoretical mathematician who was employed in the aerospace industry to quantify the perceived Soviet threat. Worthie was a consummate and elegant skier. His selection of ski garb and gear was a throwback to earlier times. Worthie (in the enlightened era of 50's safety bindings) skied on WWII surplus wooden skis with the classical bear trap (non-safety? Danger?) bindings. His garb consisted of Army surplus baggy OD pants which were sometimes cut off as shorts. He was once observed carving beautiful turns on the Mammoth slopes using his wooden skis. One of the skis had broken off about a foot from the tip, and Worthie had repaired them by nailing on a piece of 2 x 4 lumber across the break. Worthie, while in the back country, was a master at handling difficult conditions. He was the only person we knew who could handle breakable crust with seeming ease. For this, he used his famous pole turn, in which he would plant his poles, jump entirely into the air and turn his skis to the new direction of travel before hitting the surface. Another one of his techniques was the "Manzanita Turn," accomplished in the middle of a clump of Manzanita bushes whilst on doubtful terrain. When told Worthie that he looked positively Medieval with his cutoff OD shorts and plum and full length long johns, he replied "More meaty than evil!"

Walt Davie 11/22/2000

Secret Tricks by Allan Bard

(continued from Dec 2000 Issue)

Besides ski camping tips I have a few ski touring tricks too. Putting your gloves over the pole handles to dry only works if it is pretty warm outside. Not only won't they dry on most winter days, they get cold, if not frozen. When you stop, put 'em inside your parka where it's warm. They'll dry a little but mostly stay warm. You can thaw a frozen water bottle lid with the warmth of your body under the parka faster than you can force it off.

At lunch put on a parka immediately to conserve heat, get out your food and water, and sit on your pack. Sit with your back to the wind and your face and feet in the sun. Warm the lid on your water bottle inside your parka and deposit your gloves there too. Now grab your food sack and eat. Use a plastic food sack so you can keep your hands warm in the greenhouse created by the clear plastic and the sun. With hands only moving from bag to mouth, one can eat comfortably even in sub-zero

temperatures sans gloves.

Another equipment trick question that comes to mind is what does one do with wet cold skins on a stormy powder day. Certainly if the skiing is good stopping due to skin glue failure is out of the question. The skins need to be warmed. You got it, put 'em inside the parka. I do this even on nice days. At the top of the run I slip my skins around the back of my neck like a tie and let them dangle across my shoulders and down my chest. Then I rig for powder, zip up, button down, draw cords tight, so the powder stays out and the skins stay in. At the bottom of the run remove the skins as need from the warm confines of your parka and apply them immediately to the dry sky bottom. With well-glued skins the bond will generally be good, for at least the next run.

Let's talk about everybody's nemesis, skiing with a pack. I could write much on this subject, but two things are true. One, you can only successfully ski with a pack that is properly loaded and adjusted. And two, it takes practice - you can't learn to ski with a pack without skiing with a pack.

First of all, frame packs are out. Then all soft packs, whether they are internal frame or soft frame need to be packed like a stuff sack not a suitcase. Get rid of most of your stuff sacks. Only keep a sack for your sleeping bag, first aid and repair kits, the stove (maybe) and your own personal ditty bag. The sleeping bag goes on the bottom. Put the odd shaped or hard objects like pots, stove, gas bottles, etc., in the core of the pack and stuff the soft goods like clothes and tent all around it. And stuff it, don't fold and stack.

Jam that stuff like you're trying to put all the gear in the bottom. Don't be afraid to get out of breath. The net result should be a dense solid load, one that doesn't move around with a mind of its own.

Skiing is a dance. The most important part of dances with packs is balance. Pack skiing certainly takes a bit more strength, especially when one must link recoveries, but it's not as impossible as it first appears. Use the extra weight to your advantage. It's the bigger hammer theory: a little harder to lift, but damn does it drive a nail. Basically balance the load on your hips and ski with a minimum of upper body movement. Go quietly when you ski with a big pack.

On the other end of things, we ski on our feet. The two most common problems I solve in the backcountry are blisters and cold feet. There are no excuses for blisters, except for being too stubborn to stop and fix one's feet before the blisters develop. And that's pretty silly. But cold feet happen to everyone. Usually it's a circulation problem. Maybe the laces are too tight, or one has too many socks on. I've actually removed one of the usual socks for folks and they've found warm re-

lief. I'm a one sock guy and been successfully warm at 20,000 feet in the Andes, at the North Pole, and even in Vermont. Once on McKinley my pack was so heavy it had cut off the circulation in my legs and feet. When I unbuckled my pack at a rest stop the blood rushed into my feet like someone poured hot water into each boot. That's as good an excuse for not carrying a size large pack as I know.

I like packs with pockets, but packs with pockets are cursed with a plethora of zippers, and zippers all blow out eventually. I prefer gear with coil zippers as opposed to Delrin (molded) zips because one can most often repair them in the field. They also mend themselves when the zipper splits. When the zipper no longer melds the two halves together it is because the metal closure has widened to the point that it must be gently pressed together again with pliers. When the coil teeth come apart from the cloth backing they can often be sewn back in place. Because of the inherent problem with zippers I always carry needle and thread, pliers, extra zipper pulls and when all else fails, safety pins.

There's more to it than equipment tricks, there's also trick equipment. Certainly most of the modern clothing, sleeping bags, and form fitting packs are pretty trick, but then again so are avalanche probe poles or even adjustable probe poles. Adjustables are short enough to ski the steep and deep and long enough to dispense with skins and late thyself skate free. For that matter skin glue is almost unbelievable. It sticks to ski bottoms without sticking to everything else. How does it know? Skins are pretty remarkable tools as well. They are definitely not intended just for mountain style backcountry skiing. They would be appropriate for touring in any of the ski states. Skins make short work of trail breaking, sled hauling, long hills with changing wax conditions and touring or powder skiing anywhere.

One final thing, avalanche beacons are the cheapest insurance you'll ever buy. Certainly they're not the total answer. The big picture involves learning to ski, learning something about snow and traveling in questionable terrain, learning to read mountains and learning to use an avalanche beacon and your head. Mostly the latter. Like a wise old trapper said, "Whatever you learned down in the flat will serve you no good up here. The mountains have their own ways."

Learn about them and you'll be a long ways towards staying comfortable and happy in the hills. Remember, this is your brain (docilely sitting at home, wishing you were skiing). This is your brain skiing in the backcountry. (Yahoo!!)

Any questions?

Photo Gallery



Mark Goebel skiing Alta Peak in 1982—Breathtaking! (Submitted by Pete Yamagata).



A promising looking first snowfall of the season on the SMS trip to Mt. Baldy in November, 2000. (Submitted by Craig Connelley).

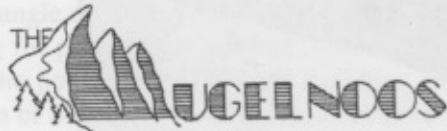
SUMMER IS FINALLY OVER AND THE SNOW IS HERE! CHECK OUT THE LOCAL TRIPS IN THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

GUIDE BOOKS AND INFORMATION

For Sale: Ski Tours in Southern California: New book on cross-country skiing in the local mountains. See www.ski.drydog.com. By Club member & Mugelnoos subscriber Dan Anderson.

Pete Yamagata's **Northern Sierra Peaks Guide** can now be accessed online at <http://www.lanset.com/pyamagata>. It contains useful information in skiing the peaks of the Northern Sierra, and vicinity.

SKI MOUNTAINEERS! I will pick you up for free from Sac Metro, with limited transport provided, should you be intent on spending time skiing the backcountry summits of the Northern Sierra. Any time of the week will be fine, although better lodging opportunities exist mid-week. Please call me anytime at (916) 444-6319, or e-mail to: 1000pks@lanset.com. Thank you! Pete Yamagata



The Mugelnoos editor is soliciting ski photos for the Photo Gallery. Submit your backcountry ski photos to: samsei@pacbell.net

Mugelnoos

Pat Holleman
1638 6th Street
Manhattan Beach,
CA 90266

Richard L. Henke
409 South Lucia
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
SMS RCS-R 2001

