March 2001

Issue # 765



THE WAY IT WAS

By Ethel Van Degrift

Long before the advent of a ski lift, Mt. San Antonio had been beckoning hardier skiers

This article appeared in the February 1965 issue of Westways magazine. The author and her husband were active members of the Sierra Club and operated a sporting goods/ski shop located in downtown Los Angeles in the 1940s. Probably the only local shop in those days. (This article was used with permission of the Automobile Club of Southern California.)



In these days of luxurious ski resorts, ski lifts of every variety, ski schools with bells that ring for classes every day at ten and two, man-made snow when nature fails, it is hard to believe that not so very long ago there were no lifts at all, and seldom were there more than half-a-dozen skiers on any slope.

It was all just beginning in the 'thirties. Changes came fast, but we had no way of knowing how big this new-old sport was going to be. It was a time of discovery and exploration and wonder in a new world, high, white and silent.

There were so few of us that everyone knew everyone else. Skis were our introduction. We learned to ski by trial and error, cheered each other on, applauding every passable turn and every no-fall run, brushed the snow off each other after spills, coached one another as well as we could, gleaned our rudiments of technique largely from books and pictures. Occasionally we received instruction from an Austrian, Swiss or Norwegian who had learned to ski in Europe.

Even before Alpine skiing—downhill running and turning such as we were trying to do—the Nordic type of skiing had been going on for some time in our mountains. A few Norwegians explored on their cross-country skis and built skijumps at Lake Arrowhead and Big Bear for competition. In the late thirties the largest jumping hill in the entire country was at Big Pines near Los Angeles. Once a year the Los Angeles

(Continued on page 4)

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EDITOR MUGELMAILER Lorene Samoska Pat Holleman

NEXT ISSUE

April issue deadline is April 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@earthlink.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!

WELCOME, New Members: Dan Anderson, Paul Kirste, and Greg Scarich!

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SMS WEB PAGE

The link is: http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/

FOR SALE

For Sale: This year's Big Easy Tua telemarking skis brand new 170 cm. \$399. (retail \$475+tax). Petzel ski-alp AT binding \$150 like new. Koflach AT boots mens size 5 1/2 \$75. Tyrolia AT bindings \$75. Snowboard 147cm with Burton bindings and Sorel snowboard boots \$125. E-mail Ruth: mtngoat@gbis.com

For Sale: Tua Escape S (waxless) 210 cm, telemark binding, used 5 times. Retail over \$345, sell \$95. Tua Transalp 197 cm. New, never mounted. Retail \$270, sell \$125. Dynastar Telmark 205 cm, telemark binding, like new. Retail: \$345, sell \$95. Dynastar Gaurou Alpine snowboard 163 cm, Original Sin LOFO alpine bindings, like new. Retail \$645, sell \$175. Fischer Country Crown (waxless) 210 cm, telemark binding. \$30. Dynastar CrossComp Alpine 205 cm, Marker M48 Titanium bindings. \$90. Leki Poles: Super Extreme-3 Section, new: \$65. HI TEC Alpine 50 in. & 48 in., new: Retail \$100, sell \$70. Excel touring pole 150 cm: \$30. Synergy internal frame pack. \$50. Al Tapia (661) 242-2205. Email: mtnbiker@frazmtn.com

(Continued on back page)

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/ltc/forms/ltc_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/ltc/ 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. Rich Henke - Obscure "lite Wt" BC Tours in the Sierra and possibly elsewhere.

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 12-13 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

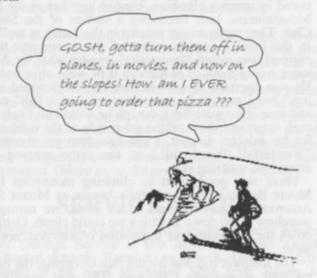
May 12-19 Sat-Sat T: Yosemite High Route Trans-Sierra: Classic Yosemite High route tour from Silver Lake to Badger Pass in Yosemite National Park. Opportunity for many diversions on this 45 mile ski adventure. For strong interm. to advanced skiers with pack skiing experience. Metal edged skis, climbing 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. Bahram Manahedgi will be showing slides from his ski mountaineering trips to Mt. Damayand in Iran.

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.

CELL PHONES and AVALANCHE BEACONS

A note to consider from the USFS (included as part of their latest Avalanche Bulletin) — URGENT NOTICE regarding avalanche beacons and cell phones: Some new information is out. It appears the cell phones that are turned on *do* impair the function of avalanche transceivers. It is recommended that all cell phones be turned off if you are wearing an avalanche beacon.



(Information supplied by R.J. Secor)

(Continued from page 1)

Junior Chamber of Commerce sponsored a jumping tournament there which drew competitors, mostly Scandinavian, from distant places. Most of the spectators did not know there was any other way of skiing than flying through the air. The stock question we always heard when we mentioned we had been skiing was: "How far can you jump?"

Our equipment was strictly makeshift. There were no ski shops, but we managed to find the essentials, and were gloriously happy with anything that would get us started. Clothing ranged from hiking breeches to fuzzy snow suits which picked up the snow when we tumbled and made us look like snowmen. We were not very chic

or sleek, but we had enthusiasm.

Precious as our ski things were, we had no hesitation about leaving them unguarded anywhere. When we grew warm we hung our parkas and sweaters on a limb. Our knapsacks, cameras and all, were stashed under any

tree. Times have changed in many ways.

At lunch-time, or when we were hungry, we sat on a log or rock and ate an orange, a chocolate bar, or some raisins and nuts. Restaurants were few and far away, and who could take time out of a shining day to leave the slopes? We needed every moment for practice. Sometimes we kept on skiing until the moon came up

and then skied by moonlight

Since there were no lifts we had to climb for every foot of downhill running. It cost us perhaps twenty minutes of climbing for every minute of descent. It follows that we tried to make the most of the descent by squeezing in as many turns as possible. I, for one, have had difficulty overcoming this habit, even though reason tells me it is no longer sensible to be economical of elevation when there is a ski-lift waiting to whisk me back

to the top-of the run.

We didn't confine ourselves to climbing practice slopes. We took on whole mountains. A great exponent of this kind of adventure was a Viennese professor at UCLA, Dr. Walter Mosauer, whose enthusiasm for skiing and mountains was infectious, and who exerted a tremendous influence on California skiing in the later thirties. He and a group of UCLA students, all experienced in summer climbing, banded together as the Ski Mountaineers, later becoming a section of the Sierra Club. They made winter ascents in the Sierra as well as in the local mountains. One of the mountains they climbed was called Mammoth. I wonder what Dr. Mosauer would think of Mammoth if he were alive today. He was opposed to what he termed "mechanized skiing," but I suspect he, too, would accept a "lift" now and then if he were here, though he would be likely to seek untracked snow on the other side of the mountain for his jubilant descent. I can hear him yet shouting, "Wonderful! Wonderful!," as the snow sprayed up around his waltzing skis.

There was good sport in climbing mountains like Mount Baldy, more respectfully known as Mount San Antonio. Inexpert as most of us were, we managed somehow to ski down anything we could climb. Getting down the mountain was a question of survival, not of

style.

The toughest trip was Mount San Gorgonio, the highest peak in southern California. This was usually reserved for spring because the snow lingered there longer than elsewhere. There were no accommodations or shelters; we drove to the end of the dirt road and hiked sev-



The author, one of the initial members of the Ski Mountaineers, signs the register atop Mount Baldy after ascending on skis.

eral miles to the slopes, often carrying our skis two or three miles before reaching snow. It was a long, arduous trek, and one group solved the problem of remaining overnight near the best snowfields by building a rude, secret (and illegal) shelter which was invisible until you were almost upon it. It was torn down some years later. Others carried sleeping bags and camped near the snow. I remember sleeping in a snowbank one chilly night high on San Gorgonio. Fully dressed, even to mittens, I shivered all through the night, scarcely daring to move lest a breath of icy air creep in some seam. But above me there was a bowl of stars, and at dawn, after a quick breakfast cooked over a Primus stove, I thawed out enough to continue the climb on skis.

I have another memory of San Gorgonio . . . the day I lost my face. It was June: 5, and the combination of hot sun and reflection of the snow burned off the top layer of skin. In due time I emerged from layers of gauze with

a face. Still, it was worth the pain.

It was a time of "firsts." We loved things as they were, but used to wonder, rather wistfully, whether we would ever have *teleferiques* such as we saw in pictures of the Alps, or whether there might some day be a string of huts through the Sierra so that we could tour from hut to hut as they did in Europe.

The Ski Mountaineers, with incredible labor and unquenchable enthusiasm, built a beautiful little hut at 6,500 feet on Mount Baldy, at the foot of their favorite

skiing slope. On their own backs they carried all the material for the building up two miles of steep, rough trail. Only for the heaviest items like the stove were pack animals used. They were supervised by a stern but beloved European professor, one George Bauwens, whose "Get to work, you lazy loafers!" became a byword. Within a year the hut burned to the ground, but the group rebuilt it immediately, and there it stands today. I like to remember that I pounded a nail or two into it, however crookedly.

Before long ski lifts began to sprout on the most popular slopes. There was a rope tow at Snow Valley. Then a chair lift was built on Mount Waterman, the first in southern California. Ski schools were organized. Probably the oldest in California is at Yosemite, where a warming house was built at Badger Pass. There a contraption know as the "Up ski" transported ecstatic loads of skiers up the hill on two boat-like sleds known as the "Leviathan" and the "Queen Mary." A blast from a whistle warned passengers when they were about to take off.

A rope tow was built on McGee Mountain, north of Bishop, and the first race ever held on the east side of the Sierra took place in the spring of 1937 under the sponsorship of Cortlandt Hill. There weren't many skiers but the event had class. Prizes were handed out by Claudette Colbert, who had just completed a picture in Sun Valley, then in its first season. One of the racers was a young man named Dave McCoy; another was a young lady named Roma Carriere. Dave married Roma, and began the long, hard task of building his ski empire on Mammoth Mountain.

Ski resorts are becoming more and more elaborate and luxurious. Not long ago I stood on top of June Mountain where a magnificent development has sprung up, and looked across to the slopes of Mammoth Mountain, only six air miles distant, where the patterns carved by skiers were plainly visible through the clear air. Here in the heart of the Sierra, once deserted in winter, thousands are skiing. And thousands more will come, and more and more lifts and hotels will be built. Great skiing complexes, like those in the Alps, are in the making. Perhaps today is still just the beginning.



Baldy Notch after one of the recent winter storms.

Mount Waterman Tour 2001 -Springtime in February

By Mark Goebel

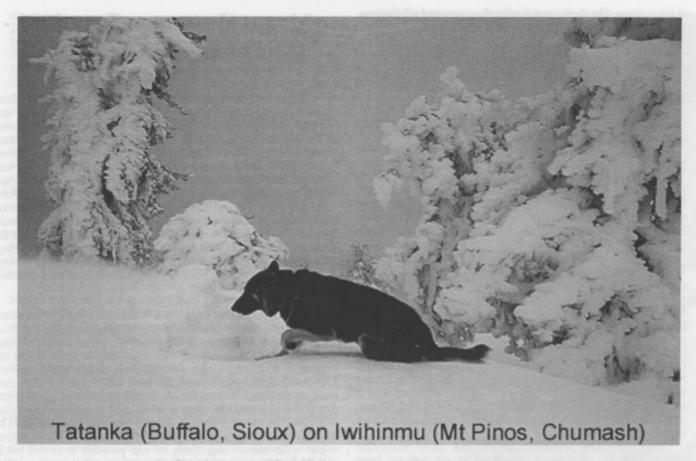
What a difference a week makes. On Super Bowl weekend a major storm hit our local mountains, and some who were out in it told about knee deep powder. The following Saturday, February 3rd, the temperatures were hitting 80 – 90 degrees in town, while 16 skiers turned out for a local tour up and down Waterman's east ridge. The crowd included myself as leader, Kathy Crandall assisting, and SMS veterans, Mike Seiffert, John Anderson, Jim Valensi, Gerry Holleman, Bahram Manahedgi, Richard Geist, and eventually our Chairman, Randy Lamm who slept late and caught us on the summit. The remainder, many on their first SMS outing, included Lousia Bonnie, Greg Scarich, Keith Himes, Dan Anderson, Paul Kirste, Stephen Bates, and Jennifer Iceland.

As is usually the case on a Waterman local tour, snow conditions were changeable and challenging. At least most major obstacles were covered, except when I mistakenly led the group on a quickly aborted run down the peak's southern slope resulting in some stone grinds. Overall, I believe it was the best coverage for this date since El Nino. Everyone made the summit in good form, and we enjoyed not only a warm and sunny day, but also a clear view of Catalina Island and the LA basin. The snow was very soft and heavy for much of the descent, but with occasional spots of old powder or wind pack. All clearly designed to challenge even the veterans. We traversed the ridge eastward, passing the Buckhorn Ski Club's rope tow which was operating. The rope tow skiers remarked how old fashion we were to be climbing for our turns, and we thought much the same of them for their antique tow. After a couple ups and downs along the ridge, we were pleasantly surprised to find a fairly consolidated and consistent surface for our final downhill run to the cars. Most of the newcomers passed our basic check-out tour requirements, and hopefully they will be attending future tours with the Section.

As an addendum, the next day, Sunday, Russ Haswell and I attempted to ski Mt. Baldy only to find that snow cover in the bowl and above for the most part was too thin and soft for skiing. We forced a few turns on the west side of West Ridge, but encountered mostly manzanita and breakable crust. Leaving skis behind, we slowly slogged to the summit through the soft snow obtaining another rare but clear view of the southland and the offshore islands. The descent on foot was equally challenging. Hopefully more snow will come before the Baldy weekend. (More snow did arrive since this writing.)

SERVICE AWARDS

Reiner Stenzel, long-time SMS leader, is being honored for Outings Service at this month's Annual Angeles Chapter Awards Banquet on March 18th. An active leader of the most aggressive SMS trips, Reiner has served as Outings Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of the SMS and has led the snow-shelter training course. The M-rated leader is a master emblem holder with the Sierra Peaks Section. Congratulations, Reiner!!



Storm on Iwihinmu Feb 10, 2001

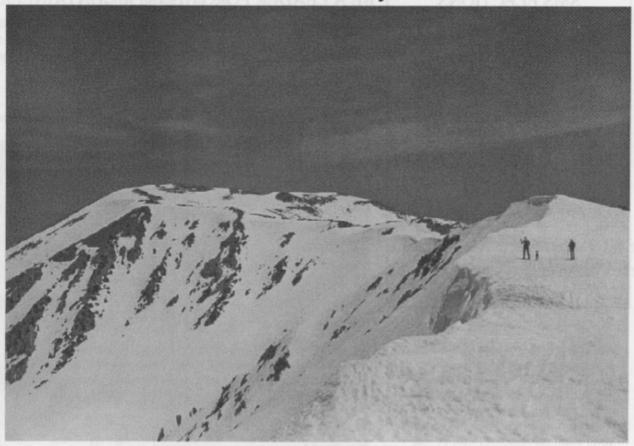
by Reiner Stenzel

I like wild weather, and I got it on Feb 10. It was the weekend of our scheduled SMS snowshelter course which fell victim to a winter storm over the Southland. All participants bailed out. Fri night it poured, but Sat am there was a short break in the clouds. Skiing after a storm is usually the best, so I quickly packed and headed for Mt Pinos, lucky to find the mountain roads all open although deeply snowcovered. At 11 am, the mountain weather was no more Mr. Nice Guy: A uniformly gray sky with steady snowfall and winds in the open terrain. The trees were all snow covered and it was a winter wonderland. Visibility dropped to 100'. No ski tracks or people in sight, something unusual for this popular XC terrain. Had a snack on Iwihinmu (8,831') where the Chumash lived in harmony with nature before white man erected a microwave tower. Not so easy to harmonize on a day when a winter storm was moving through. After a snack I continued toward Sawmill Mtn. Nice powder skiing on the northwest side of Pinos where one drops down a few hundred feet to a saddle and reclimbs along a forested ridge. It's easy touring on a fine day but one has to be careful in a

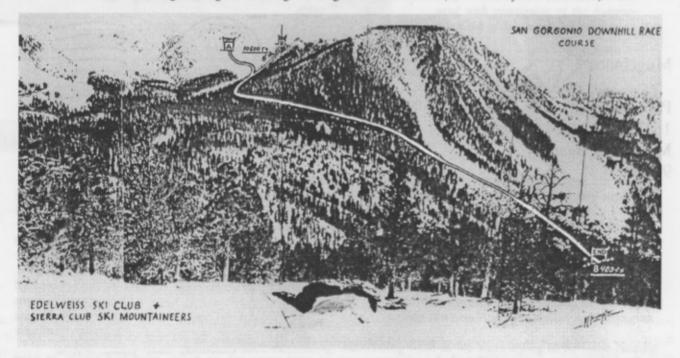
whiteout. Every quarter mile I put a waypoint into my GPS to retrace my way later on.

Ski tracks filled in within 30 min and were useless for returning. It is possible to get lost in Condor country. By 2pm I had lunch on Sawmill Mtn (8,818') but not for long since the weather was deteriorating. The sky was gloomy dark, a cold wind blew lots of snow from the northwest. On a fine day one can see the Sierras 100mi away, but now I was happy to see trees 50' away. Our local mountains are considered benign but that is not the case in a winter storm. I retraced my route enjoying some fine turning in excellent powder. It takes some practice to ski with a GPS which shows direction only when moving >2mph. At Mt. Pinos I saw a group of Boy Scouts setting up a winter camp among trees. What a spirit - what happened to the SMS? The run down through the forest to the parking lot was a pleasure: Fresh tracks in untouched powder, not the usual struggle with breakable crust. Home at 6 pm, I felt this was a worthwhile trip because we don't have this winter weather too often. Heard with delight that another storm is on its way.

Photo Gallery



Skiers and dog heading to San Gorgonio. Big Draw is at the left. (Submitted by Dan Anderson)



This is an old photo from Robert C. Frampton. Route of the Third Annual San Gorgonio Downhill Race, 23 April 1942. The course started at the top of Little Draw, at 10,600 feet, and finished at South Fork Meadows, at 8400 feet. Muir Dawson won with an astounding time of 2:55.0. The race was sponsored by the Edelweiss Ski Club and Sierra Club Ski Mountaineers. (Submitted by Dan Anderson)

SMS ELECTIONS

It is time to elect new Officers to lead the Ski Mountaineers Section for next season. This year's Election Committee members are:

Reiner Stenzel: Lorene Samoska: Mike Seiffert: stenzel@physics.ucla.edu samsei@earthlink.net samsei@earthlink.net

All SMS members: Please email your nominations for next year's officers to the addresses above, or mail to the address below by April 10th.

SMS Nominations c/o Lorene Samoska 701 Craig Ave, La Canada, CA 91011



BE A LEADER FOR THE SKI MOUNTAINEERS

The first step is to sign up for the Leadership Training Course offered in Griffith Park on April 7th. Applications are due two weeks prior to the course. Please see the Calendar of Events for details on how to sign up.

FOR SALE

For Sale: Skis: Black Diamond 190 cm Resolution + Sooperloop bindings with climbing bails. Highly rated BC and area ski (92-65-91). Executive driven one season, never base ground, never cornice jumped more than 75 feet, good condition, \$160. Ascension skins for same \$40. Crampons: Grivel G10 New-Classic. Light but sturdy 10-point. Easily attached to 7-13 mid-weight hiking to rigid mountaineering boots w/o tools. Used once (Thompson & Powell). No mixed routes, no parking lots. Excellent condition. REI wants \$95; steal 'em for \$50. Craig 626-705-6099 or sprocket_toil@hotmail.com.

For Sale: Heavy duty tire chains; fit tire sizes 205-14 thru 205/65R16. Class "S" for low clearance vehicles. In very good shape. Paid \$80, asking \$45. Also, have two other sets for smaller vehicles (Acco models 1122 and 1130). E-mail Dennis at dlandin@aol.com or call (818) 543-1241.

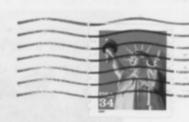
WANTED

Wanted: Avalanche Beacon, Probe, Snow Saw, Adjustable (snap-lock) Ski Poles, Climbing Skins (65mm). Ron Haky, 310-545-1602, email haky@earthlink.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