

5/02

THE MUGELNOOS

April 2002

Issue # 774



Lost Arrow, Pear Lake Trip 2002

2002 SMS Pear Lake Trip, Feb 22-25, 2002

By Randy Lamm

This year we there were seven of us: John Anderson, Wally Drake, Angel Ocana, Bahram Manahedgi, Pat Orris, Mark Goebel assisting, and I as the lead. In contrast to last year we had fine weather with a high pressure system over California. On this trip we encountered conditions ranging from wet crust, to heavy powder, to superb corn snow on the south and west facing slopes. Everyone met up Friday at the Wolverton trailhead at 7:30 am for an 830 departure. Due to the good weather and well worn track we made it to the hut in good time arriving at about 1:30 taking the high traverse from Heather Lake. Arriving at the hut we were greeted by our new neighbors from Fresno and Mendocino who were overlapping our stay for one night. After everyone picked out a bunk, unpacked and had a snack, we headed up to take a few runs down the hut slopes. The snow was crusty in the sun, but the east facing slopes still had skiable powder. Saturday morning we headed up to Skiers Alta, climbing the 2000 feet of vertical in about 2 hours.

Just about the time we got up to the top, the fog that we had watched boiling up from the San Joaquin Valley finally reached us, and we peeled skins and headed down in between intermittent white outs. We head down some draws on the west side of the ridge separating the table lands from the Skiers

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NEXT ISSUE

May issue deadline is May 10th, 2002. 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!

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SMS WEB PAGE

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

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.

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LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Leadership Training Navigation :

May 19, Grinnell Ridge, Freimanis and Bradshaw, Practice and checkoff.

Please see the *Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities* or the LTC website for more information: <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc/>

FOR SALE

For Sale: 190 cm Tua Excalibur MX [90-70-80] with Emery Altitude LX Randonnee bindings [French—releasable toe, Look Nevada turntable heel—ski crampons]. VG condition. \$325. Call Bruce @ (310) 375-0776

Calendar of Events

April 20-6 Sat-Fri, Ski Mountaineers TI: North Lake to Rock Creek: Join Joe and Tom on another section of the Sierra High Route. Opportunity for many diversions on this 35-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

Apr 27- May 4 Sat-Sat Ski Mountaineers & Sierra Peaks TMR: Trans-Sierra Ski Tour. From Taboose to Cedar Grove along the Cirque Crest, trans-Sierra or loop tour depending on road/snow conditions. Optional climb of State Pk included. For this restricted trip you must be a member of the Sierra Club and have suitable mountaineering experience. Metal-edged skis, skins, beacons, ice axe, crampons, strong skiing abilities and stamina req'd. Must have skied with leaders before. E-mail climbing/skiing experience, address, h/w phones and SC# to Co-Ldrs: REINER STENZEL; R. J. SECOR.

Apr 27-28 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers/Sierra Peaks TRM: Mt Rixford (12,887'): Sat hike/ski over Kearsarge Pass depending on snow conditions, 3000'+ gain from Onion Valley. Drop over pass to camp Bullfrog Lake area. Climb Rixford up class I south slope from lake. Ski down if conditions permit. Restricted to SC members w/ cross-country skiing, ice axe and crampon experience. Mail SASE w/detailed snow ski & climbing experience, H&W phones, email, recent conditioning/experience, rideshare info to Ldr: SCOT JAMISON. Co Ldr: LARRY TIDBALL

May 18-19 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers/Sierra Peaks TI: Dunderberg and Excelsior. Climb/ski two fine SPS peaks in two day trips with Sat carcamp. Metal-edged skis w skins req'd for backcountry skiers, experienced snowshoers and boarders also ok. E-mail experience, address

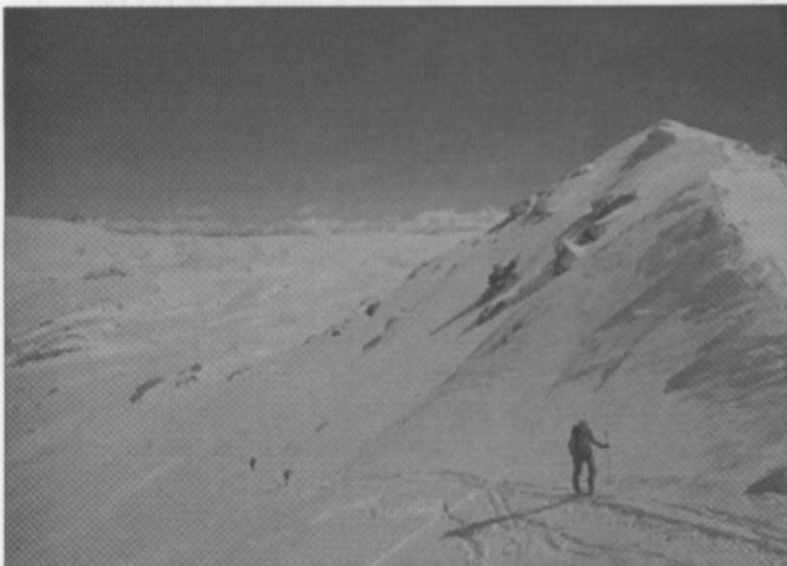
and h/w phones to Co-Ldrs: REINER STENZEL, RANDALL DANTA

May 18-19 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers TI: Bishop Area. Sat day ski up beautiful Bishop Creek drainage from South Lake with option to climb/ski Mt Goode (13085'). Sun ski Lamarck Col (12,700') from North Lake. Strong intermediate skiers w metal-edged backcountry skis & skins req'd. Send experience, h&w phones, email address to Leader: GERRY HOLLEMAN. Assist: TOM MARSH

May 21 Tue Ski Mountaineers Monthly Meeting: Newcomers welcome. 7:30pm Griffith Park Ranger Station. Bring your election ballot if you haven't mailed it in!

May 24-27, Fri-Mon, SMS-SPS, joint LA & SD Chapter trip. TMR: Mt Brewer. Climb and ski an SPS emblem peak over Memorial Day weekend. Cedar Grove to basecamp at Sphinx Lks, day tours to climb/ski Brewer's south face, the North Guard-Brewer cirque and/or slopes of South Guard. 30mi rt, 9,000' gain to summit, cl 3 climbing, black-diamond backcountry skiing. Trip restricted to SC members with advanced skiing/snow travel ability. Ice axe & crampons requ'd. Send experience, phones, e-mail address to Co-Ldrs: REINER STENZEL, ALVIN WALTER. This trip is tentative pending Angeles Chapter Safety approval.

May 25-27 Sat-Mon Ski Mountaineers TI: Sawtooth Ridge Ski Tours: The slopes below Matterhorn Pk and the Sawtooth Ridge provide reliable late spring skiing. Sat backpack approx. 4 mi, 2000' gain to camp on Horse Cr from trailhead at Twin Lks, near Bridgeport. Sun tour and explore slopes beyond Cleaver Col. Short tour on Mon before packing out. Must be a seasoned backcountry skier. Send experience, address, and phone # to Ldr: MARK GOEBEL. Asst: RANDY LAMM.



Wally on the descent (Above)

Mark ascending Skier's Alta

Alta – Alta Peak ridge. Most of the time we were skiing in the fog so it was kind of hard to see what we had skied. We skied down another draw which curved to the east for a few hundred feet and then bottomed out, where we traversed to the west and wound up on the east ridge of the slope running down to the marble fork of the Kaweah River that runs up to the table lands. As we put our skins on and headed up to the tree in the spring basin for lunch the clouds cleared. After eating we all headed up again. Angel, Wally and I headed back up to Skiers Alta for another run, while Mark, Pat, John and Bahram went up to bench above the middle bowl run above the spring, but below the start of the diagonal ramp to Skiers Alta. On the way down we found good snow on the east facing slope to skiers left below Skiers Alta, and then a little grabby, but still good snow down the middle bowl above the lunch spring. When we got back to the hut, we met our new neighbors, a couple of doctors, and their friend, all from Fresno.

Pat got on the list late so she had to camp out the first nite, but got to move out of her Bivler and into the hut Saturday and Sunday nite when a member from the second group did not show. After dinner on Saturday nite, I pondered goals for Sunday. I felt like I wanted to try something other than more runs down Skiers Alta. On the way in, I noticed the 10,000' ridge separating Emerald lake to the east, from Heather Lake on the west. It looked like it could have some good east facing snow. But on Sunday morning it felt like a bright warm spring kind of day, and thought maybe there would be good corn snow on south and west facing slopes, so I decided we should head up to the Table Lands. As we progressed up the marble fork drainage, the snow felt like it was "coming up." We topped out on the north side of the tablelands and had lunch near a protected rock wall. After a quick lunch we decide to go up the slope above us facing north. Proceeding from Tableland north peaklet at 10,695, we headed up to the pass to the east of Peak 11,462. Mark had said "he always wondered what was up there..." What we found

was a very steep vertical cliff facing the north. Off in the distance about 100 miles away were Ritter and Banner. But closer was a huge jagged rock spire sort of resembling Lost Arrow Spire in Yosemite (the picture does not really show how dramatic the spire and cliffs were). Mark commented – "doesn't really show up on the map". We were careful not to get too close to the edge when we snapped the pics. After the pics and skiing down some not quite cooked snow, we met up with Pat, who decided to wait at the lunch spot. Mark, Pat and Bahram skied back down the way we came on what they said was some excellent corn snow. Wally, Angel and I decided to do a big traverse from the Tablelands along the ridge which goes by Moose Lake and connects to the Alternate to Skiers Alta. This was a great tour which took us across some billard table smooth south facing corn slopes. We climbed up the ridge which looks down on Buck Creek Canyon and followed in south in the general direction of Farewell Gap towards Mineral King. About 4:30 we topped out on the Alternate to Skiers Alta. We checked in on our radios with the hut and had one big ski run down to the Marble Fork, around the pass below the Matterhorn and down the west facing slope to the hut. Tired, we cooked our dinner, played trivial pursuit and relaxed with the stove cranking out the heat.

The next morning we cleaned up the hut, packed, and had a quick 3 hr ski out. As we got closer to the trailhead the warm weather had already melted a few bare spots in the tobogan track. A much lower snow year than last year. We estimated about a 7-8' snow pack at the hut. After loading and cleaning up we reconvened at Alejandras restaurant at 314 W. Main St. in Visalia where Wally had Rum with his Flan, and we all had some good Mexican food. Another successful trip to Pear Lake where we found great corn snow, had nice hut neighbors, and expanded our knowledge of the area with a grand traverse from the tablelands to Skiers Alta.

AVALANCHE SAFETY COURSE - March 23-24, 2002 by Mark Goebel

Our SMS arranged class began Saturday morning in Bishop, on the back porch of the Bardini House with a refresher quiz. Can you name the four components of the avalanche triangle*, or find a buried beacon in less than 4 minutes? Our instructor, Tim Villanueva, an AMGA certified guide and chief avalanche instructor for the Bardini Avalanche School asked these questions plus a few more. After about 2 hours of lecture, we drove up to Mammoth Lakes for an afternoon of fieldwork where we encountered falling snow, wind, and about 8 inches of new powder. Following a short tour beyond the end of Old Mammoth Rd.; Tim dug a pit and demonstrated techniques for evaluating snow stability. It quickly became apparent that the new snow was not bonding well to an underlying icy surface, and would slide easily when pressure was applied. As the temperature dropped, we were eager to warm up by tromping around in the snow searching for our partner's buried beacon. Clearly we needed more practice to bring our times down.

On Sunday the sun began to come out, and Tim lead us on a short tour below the base of Mammoth Rock and the large Sherwin Bowl avalanche path looking at avalanche signs such as broken trees, limbs, and small slides. In a protected area we spend much of the day digging our own pits, and taking turns performing the shovel shear test, compression test, and the Rutschblock test trying to assess snow pack strength. We then broke in to teams and finished the day working on beacon drills, plus using probes to finalize the location of a buried pack with a beacon inside. Those who used a digital beacon such as the Tracker, were impressed how easy they were to search with. Analog beacons with lights that light up in addition to louder beeps also worked well.

By the end of the weekend we had gained new skills important to safe travel in the snowy backcountry, and were very much aware of the need for frequent practice searching with a beacon. Participants were: Mark Goebel, Kathy Crandall, John Anderson, Jennifer Iceland, Tae Kim, Dan Jamieson, James Crouch, Chris & Lucy Best, and Ed Lulofs.

* terrain, weather, snow pack, & human factors.

AVALUNG RESCUE

Here is more information on the Avalung avalanche rescue reported last month. For full details, please see <http://www.avalung.com/flash/ava-ca-e.pdf>

Interview with the victim/survivor of the avalanche conducted by Product Group Manager Jordy Margid of Black Diamond Equipment, below:

Time of burial: 35-45 minutes according to the helicopter pilot.

Burial Depth: 6 feet (1.8 meter) at hip.

Position: semi supine, head up.

Avalung model: A2 (gift from his girlfriend).

Age: 44.

Height: 189 cm

Weight: 88.5 kg

Physical conditioning: excellent

Accident Report:

Victim had just skied a pitch and stopped at the bottom with others in the guided group. He looked up and saw the slide coming at him and put the AvaLung in his mouth (he had practiced with the AvaLung on a regular basis prior to the trip). He was hit by a large slide and was buried instantly -he struggled to stay on the surface but could not. He tried to keep his hands over his face and mouth, but as the slide set up, his hand were torn away. When the slide set, he had little, if any, pressure on his chest, but he was completely unable to move. Snow was packed in his ears and nose, but his mouth stayed clear due to the mouthpiece. He said it was not at all difficult to keep the mouthpiece in his mouth. He first thought, "I am breathing and I'll be fine. I am just going to relax and wait to get dug out." As time went on, he started thinking that his entire group could have been buried and that there would be no one on the surface to dig him out. As more time went on, he started thinking he was going to die and tried to figure out how he was going to die. He went unconscious for the last part of his burial (he thinks about 5 minutes but does not know for sure). As soon as he was dug out, he came to. Dr. Colin Grissom MD, who conducted all the test burials during the development of the AvaLung believes this is due to hypercapnia, breathing too fast due to panic. The victim said that he and others in the rescue party attribute his survival to the AvaLung.

(submitted by RJ Secor)

Ski Mountaineers Peak

April 6-7, 2002

by Reiner Stenzel

The Ski Mountaineers Peak on the Thompson Ridge used to be a favorite goal for our section. The trip has been lead many times, especially by Gerry Holleman, but nine years have passed since it was summited last. Since I like to improvise trips I decided to do it with friends as a private trip. After contacting eight SMS members one joined, Susan Livingston. We started Sat at 7 am from Parchers Camp (road closure), hiked 1 mi to South Lake and since the ice was partially open we decided to take the high trail toward Bishop Pass with turnoff to Treasure Lakes. Except for a few dry spots it was all skiable terrain. The XC route traverses north of Hurd Pk, drops steeply into the drainage from the Treasure Lks and, after an 800' climb, leads to an 11,500' plateau 1 mi north of Mt Gilbert. By 2 pm we had found a nice campsite and set up our two Bibler tents next to flat, dry rocks. The views over endless peaks with snow slopes were great. We spotted three skiers in the distance. Clouds moved in spoiling the afternoon ski fun with breakable crust. Then it got worse: The sky darkened and it started to snow, ruining our happy hour. During a break we cooked dinner and wondered about next days ski plans. But these were only April showers and next morning the sky was clear again. During the night the waterbottle froze inside the tent.

On Sunday we started at 7 am (6 before daylight savings time). We skinned up the east slopes of SM Pk. Ski crampons were very helpful on switchbacking up the slopes. Gradually the sun did its job of softening the snow. By 10 am we reached the 13,323 ft summit which involved a short rock scramble. There was a small plastic box with a peak register which we signed as the second party this year. The SMS had two entries in 1992 and '93. The view was outstanding. To the southeast was the Palisades Range, to the west the Evolution peaks. Just east and near us was Powell and Thompson which we skied two years ago. Earlier we discussed the idea of traversing 0.4 mi along the ridge to Mt Thompson, but a cl 3 scramble in summer becomes a cl 4 adventure with snow and we wisely did not attempt it. By 11 am the snow had ripened and it was time to ski down. The upper slopes just below the summit are a bit challenging but most of the east face is a very pleasant 30 deg slope. With spring snow it was telemarkers heaven. But at 12-13,000' elevation even downhill ski-



ing is an effort. In no time we were back at base-camp. By noon everything was packed and now we had to turn with that counterweight on the back. April snow can be as finicky as the weather: Where the sun did not hit the slopes straight on there was breakable crust with all its consequences. Then there were hidden Sierra crevasses: Patches of rotten snow which collapse under the weight of a skier. After sinking in to the waist it is not easy to get out with a full pack. A fun stream crossing was also included. Our short-cut down to South Lke turned out to be as much of a workout as the longer route back up to the trail. But eventually we were on safe terrain, i.e., on lake ice which collapsed on the shores of South Lke as it got drained during winter. We reached the cars before 3 pm, got a temperature shock in 80 deg Owens Valley and were home in foggy LA by dinner time. Conclusion: The Ski Mountaineers Peak makes a great ski trip, almost a "must" for SMS members since named after our section.

Herding Cats and Experiencing Geology on Mammoth Mountain

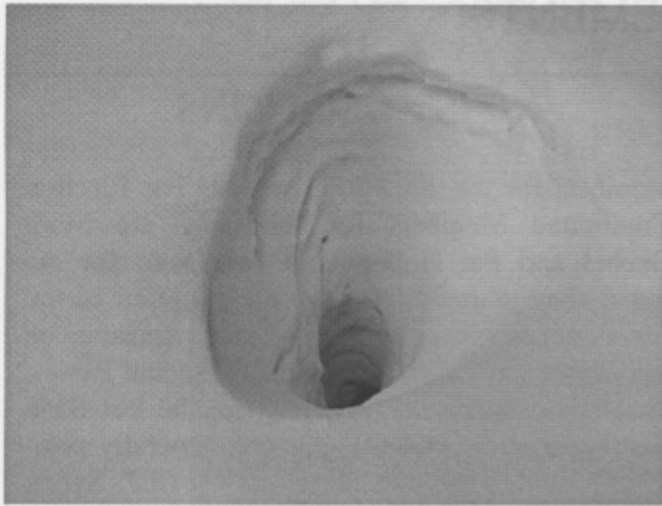
March 9-10, 2002

Owen Maloy, Andy Fried

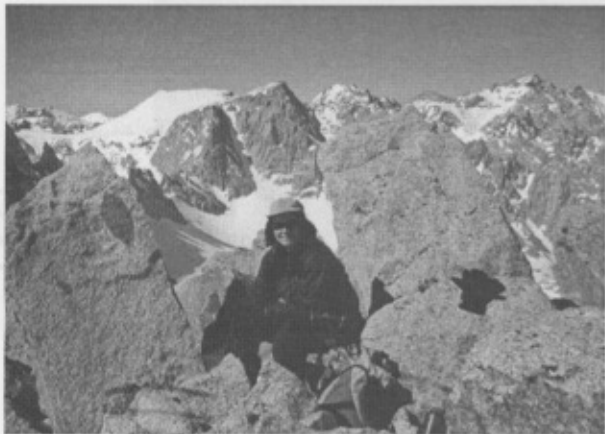
Eleven SMS members showed up this weekend to ski the lifts and tour one day if conditions were favorable. People stayed at Andy's and Owen's, no need to snow camp. All eleven met at Canyon Lodge and managed to stay together to the top of chair 5 -- that is, for one run all the way from Chair 16 to 5, 200 vertical feet or so. One half wanted to ski the top and the other half wanted to stay out of the high wind. And so we split, meeting for lunch at the Mill Cafe at the bottom of Stump Alley. After lunch there was more fragmentation. We met for dinner at Andy's for pizza and oriental take-out.

Sunday it was snowing and blowing. Only a few people skied the mountain, and some went to the Tamarack. Owen, Jonathan, and Reiner toured up above Owen's house to Chair 21 and skied back through the woods. It was a short tour because everybody wanted to get home early in view of the weather.

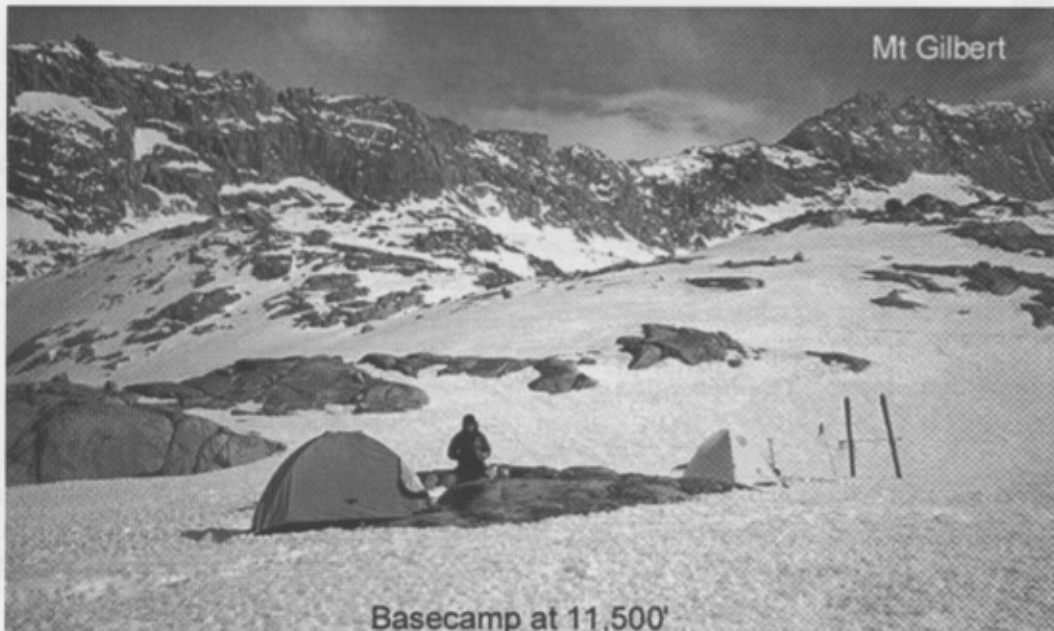
As we skied up, we discovered a vent (see photo) from which some steam was rising. A month later (April 10), Walt Hill of the USGS examined this vent. It had become inactive and was partly full of snow. Dr. Hill thought that the actual source of gas might be farther up the slope, and that the gas moved under the snow through the fragmented rock as long as there was a deep snow layer.



Steam vent in Mammoth Lakes



On top of Ski Mountaineer's Peak



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOOKS

Last month we listed a new ski book—here is more information on how to order it!

"Pray For Snow -- The History of Skiing In Southern California." This new book on the local skiing scene is now available and it may be ordered directly from the author, Ingrid P. Wicken, P.O. Box 273, Norco, CA 92860. Cost is \$30.00 + \$2.33 (tax) + \$4.25 (shipping). Send either a check or money order with your return address. Ingrid will autograph your copy upon request. An entire chapter is devoted to the Ski Mountaineers Section, and there are many photographs by early SMS members.

SMS ELECTIONS

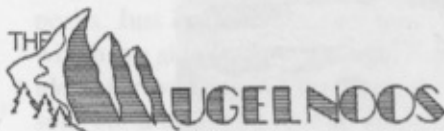
It is time to vote for new Central Committee Members for the 2002-2003 season. The Election Committee Members for this year are Mark Goebel and Pat Holleman. Please **vote for no more than 6 candidates** on the enclosed ballot. Also, please vote for the ballot measure on whether to have an SMS List of Peaks and Passes. The List concept was discussed at the last SMS meeting with a response that was generally positive. A committee has been formed (R.J. Secor, Reiner Stenzel and Steve Hessen) to come up with a specific proposal by the end of the summer.

Please mail the ballots so they arrive before May 18th (or bring them to the May 21st meeting) to:

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SMS RCS R 2002

