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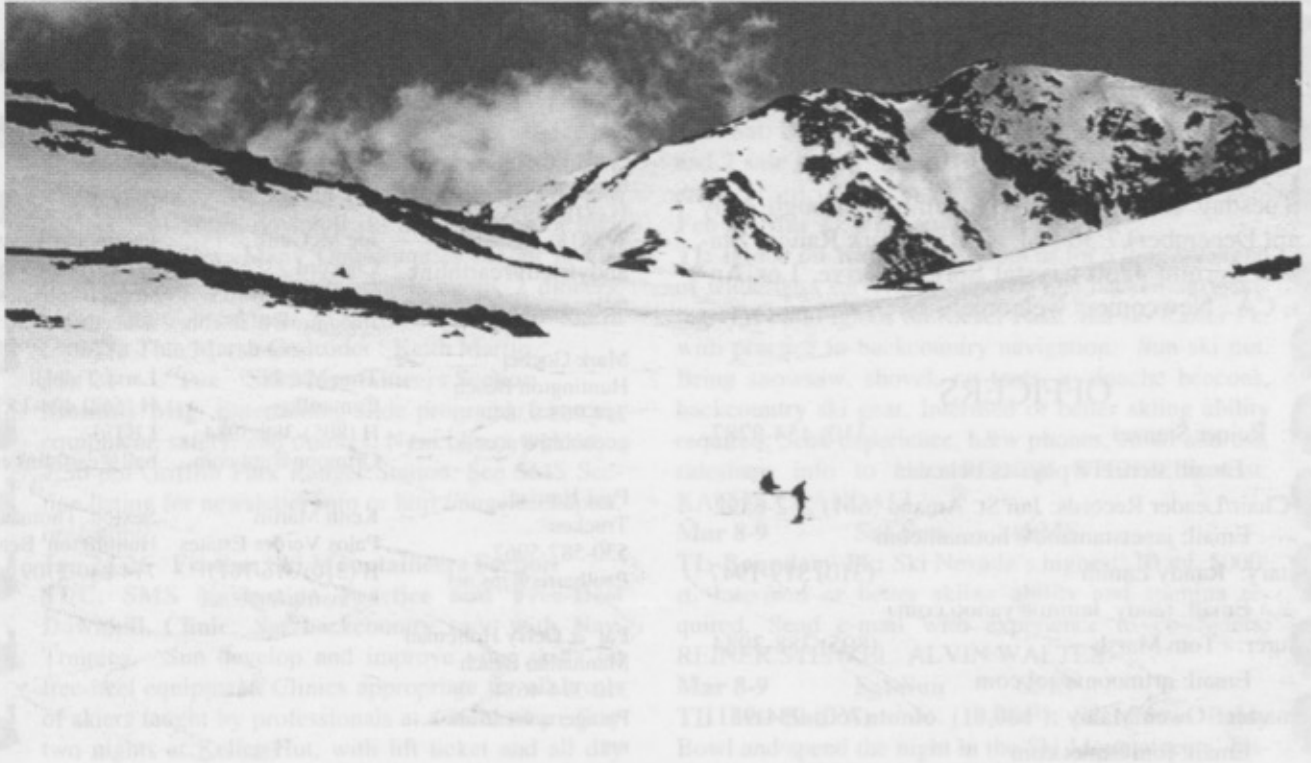
THE



UGEELNODS

November 2002

Issue # 776



Skiers carving the slopes below Excelsior

Excelsior Mountain May 18-19th, 2002

by Reiner Stenzel

This report describes a fine ski mountaineering weekend in the eastern Sierra Nevada. The original plan of this joint SPS/SMS trip was to climb/ski Dunderberg and Excelsior. But Dunderberg was not skiable and no SPSrs "needed" it so we left it for another year. Instead, we attempted Leavitt Pk, only to be blown off the ridge by an incoming storm. Here are the details:

On Sat, 5/18, 6 am, a group of 10 participants met at the Virginia Lakes trailhead. These were R. J. Secor, assisting for Randall Danta who had a sprained ankle, Ted Lenzie from Sacramento, Jim Crouch and Ted Sledzinski from San Diego, Joy Goebel, Diann Fried, Leslie Hofherr, Chris Lohman, Maciek Malik and myself from the LA area. We hiked up the dry trail past the Virginia Lakes (9,800') and hit skiable snow above 10,000' near the Frog Lakes. Switchbacking up a great snow slope we left the trail where it descends northwest toward Summit and East Lke. We headed southwest toward a second ridge 0.5 mi northeast of Peak 12,126'. The east facing slopes had excellent snow coverage but on the ridge and on southwest facing slopes it was hiking time. After climbing a third slope we reached the 12,200' ridge north of Excelsior and scrambled up to the summit (12,446'). It was a pleasure to sign the register

(Continued on Page 6)

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MUGELMAILER Pat Holleman

NEXT ISSUE

Next issue deadline is December 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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Announcements

If you'd like to preview the "Outings Leader Handbook," you may view and print it at the website below (it's in the left-hand column):

<http://mitchell.sierraclub.org/outings/GCO/index.asp>

The Angeles Chapter received five copies from the national office--maybe enough copies for the Iowa chapter but not for us! Our own "Leader's Reference Book" is still an excellent resource, especially in the new (15th) edition, which has added material on trip planning and leader "soft" skills, as well as all new illustrations. But you may wish to look at the national book on-line. You may certainly print it from the extranet site, but if you want the book and want to save your printer's ink, the order form is also to be found on the website.

submitted by Randy Lamm

Calendar of Events 2002-003 Ski Season

Jan 11 Sat Ski Mountaineers Section

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. Leader: Mark Goebel, Asst: Kathy Crandall.

Jan 17-20 Fri-Mon Wilderness Adventures, SMS, OCSS

I: Ski Yosemite National Park: Join us for three days of skiing and/or hiking for MLK weekend. Stay in comfortable cabins at Wawona near Yosemite's south entrance. XC ski in the Mariposa Grove and Badger Pass areas, downhill ski Badger Pass, or hike Yosemite Valley. Many Opportunities for all levels. Cost includes 3 nights comfortable cabin, 2 dinners, happy hour, breakfast. \$175 (made payable Sierra Club) to Tom Marsh Co-leader : Keith Martin

Jan 21 Tue Ski Mountaineers Section

Monthly Mtg: Entertaining slide programs featuring equipment, safety, and outings. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station. See SMS Section listing for newsletter info or <http://angeleschapter.org/skimt/>.

Jan 24-26 Fri-Sun Ski Mountaineers Section

TI/C: SMS Navigation Practice and Free-Heel Downhill Clinic: Sat backcountry tour with Nav. Training, Sun 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 Sun. High quality rentals available at \$12. Sat. Dinner. Reserve early. Send a check for \$95 and 2 sase to Res: Keith Martin, Asst Reiner Stenzel

Feb 1 Sat Ski Mountaineers Section

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. Leader: Mark Goebel, Asst: Kathy Crandall.

Feb 8 Sat Ski Mountaineers Section

TI: Thunder, Telegraph and Timber: Ski the 3 T's in the San Gabriel mountains. Intermed or better skiing ability required, not for beginners. Metal-edged skis w skins req'd. Send experience, h&w phones, email address to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst. Ldr. Randy Lamm

Feb 18 Tue Ski Mountaineers Section

Monthly Mtg: Entertaining slide programs featuring equipment, safety, and outings. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station. See SMS Section listing for newsletter info or <http://angeleschapter.org/skimt/>.

[org/skimt/](http://angeleschapter.org/skimt/).

Feb 22-23 Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI/C: Local Tour and Free-Heel Downhill Practice: Sat intro ski mountaineering tour in mountains near Keller Hut. 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. Option to stay two nights at Keller Hut, with lift ticket and all day clinics on Sun. High quality rentals available at \$12. Sat. Dinner. Reserve early. Send a check for \$95 and 2 sase to Ldr: Keith Martin, Asst Ldr Kathy Crandall

Feb 28-Mar 2 Fri-Sun SMS

TI: Igloos on Kaiser Pass: Join us for a long weekend of wilderness survival techniques and backcountry skiing. Fri build igloos on Kaiser Pass. Sat ski Kaiser Pk. with practice in backcountry navigation. Sun ski out. Bring snowsaw, shovel, no tents, avalanche beacons, backcountry ski gear. Intermed or better skiing ability required. Send experience, h&w phones, email address, rideshare info to Ldr: REINER STENZEL. Asst: KATHY CRANDALL.

Mar 8-9 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Boundary Pk: Ski Nevada's highest. 10 mi, 5000' rt. Intermed or better skiing ability and stamina required. Send e-mail with experience to co-leaders: REINER STENZEL, ALVIN WALTER.

Mar 8-9 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Mt. San Antonio (10,064'): Ski classic Baldy Bowl and spend the night in the Ski Mountaineers' historic San Antonio Ski Hut. Intermediate or better skiing ability required, not for beginners. Metal edged backcountry skis with skins required. Overnight hut fee:\$10.00. Send experience, H&W phones, email address to Ldr: KATHY CRANDALL .Asst: TBD

Mar 15-16 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: San Gorgonio Mtn. (11,499'): A 10.8 mi rt, 4300' gain overnight ski tour with a snow camp in the San Gorgonio Wilderness. Leave No Trace snow camping techniques will be demonstrated and practiced. Metal edged skis with climbing skins required. Send experience, H&W phones, carpool info, email address to R.J. SECOR. Asst: ALVIN WALTER

March 22 Sat Ski Mountaineers Section

O: Conditioning hike. Moderate to fast-paced hike to Echo Mountain (5 mrt, 1300 ft elev. gain). Weather and group interest permitting, continue to Inspiration Point (additional 4 mrt, ~1700ft). Be prepared for rain, wind and cold weather, bring lunch and water. Meet at top of north Lake Ave. and Loma Alta in Pasadena at 8:30AM. Ldr. LORENE SAMOSKA, Asst. MARK GOEBEL.

Calendar (continued)

Mar 22-23 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Mt. Mary Austin (13,040'): ski and climb one of the few Sierra peaks named after a woman. Route will take us up the Baxter Pass trail or into Little Onion Valley, depending on snow conditions. Metal edged skis with climbing skins, avy beacons, shovels and snow camping gear required. E-mail experience, address and h/w phones to Prov. Ldr: Mike McDermitt; Asst Ldr: Reiner Stenzel

March 22-23 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Mammoth Weekend: Ski the Mountain on Sat., Sun Ski Mt., or local tour.

Ldr: Andy Fried Asst. Ldr: Gerry Holleman

April 12-13 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Sardine Cnyn, and Slopes of Onion Valley, Independendance or Kearsarge Peaks: Day tours/Car Camp. For Strong well conditioned Skiers with Metal Edge skis, Skins, beacons and shovels. Leader: Randy Lamm, Asst: Tom Marsh

April 12-20 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Northern Sierra Peaks: Ski and climb Mt Rose, Tallac, Freel, Castle, Granite Chief, Tinker Knob. For experienced backcountry skiers. E-mail experience, address and h/w phones to Ldr: REINER STENZEL; Asst Ldr: TBA .

April 25-27 Fri-Sun SMS

TI: Convict Lake Drainage: Join us for this three-day basecamp in the spectacular Convict Lake drainage. For Interim. Skiers with Metal Edge skis, Skins, beacons and shovels. Leader: Tom Marsh Asst. Randy Lamm

April 25-27 Fri-Sun SMS

TI: Rock Creek Intro Trip: Ski the slopes around Little Lakes Valley from Base Camp. Practice low impact snow camping. Metal edged skis, skins, beacon, 0 degree sleeping bag and backcountry gear req'd. send lg. SASE with eperience, address, H & W phones + email if avail. by April 1 for carpool and further info." Leader: MICHAEL DODSON, Asst: KEITH MARTIN

Apr 26-May 4 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TMR: Yosemite Border Tour; Electra Pk (12,442'), Foerster Pk (12,057'), Merced Pk

(11,726'), Red Pk (11,599'), Gray Pk (11,573'): A 47 mi, +12,933', -13,002' trans-Sierra ski tour along Yosemite NP's SE boundary and the Clark Range. Leave No Trace snow camping techniques will be demonstrated and practiced. Metal edged skis with climbing skins, ice axes, crampons, avy beacons, shovels, and snow camping gear required. Send experience, H&W phones, carpool info, email address to R.J. SECOR. Asst: REINER STENZEL.

May 10-16 Sat-Fri SMS

TI: North Lake to Rock Creek: Join Joe and I on another section of the Sierra High Route. Opportunity for many diversions on this 35-mile ski adventures. 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 17-18 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Mts. Stanford-N (12,851'), Morgan-N (13,005'): Climb two Sierra peaks from base camp in Hilton Lakes area, enjoy two 2000+ foot descents on spring corn snow. Metal edged skis with climbing skins, avy beacons, shovels and snow camping gear required.

E-mail experience, address and h/w phones to Prov. Ldr:Mike McDermitt; Asst Ldr: Reiner Stenzel.

May 23-26 Fri-Mon SMS, SPS

TI: Taboose Basecamp: Ski and climb Cardinal, Striped, Gooddale, Split, Vennacher Needle. For experienced backcountry skiers. E-mail experience, address and h/w phones to Co-Ldrs: REINER STENZEL; ALVIN WALTER.

May 24-26 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Buttermilk Base Camp: Day tours/Car Camp, Wahoo Gulleys- Mt. Locke, Basin Mt. , Elderberry Canyon For Strong well conditioned Skiers with Metal Edge skis, Skins, beacons and shovels. Leader: Randy Lamm, Asst: Tom Marsh

June 15-22 Sun-Sun SMS

TI: Oregon Volcanoes: Ski your hear out on Three Sisters, McLoughlin, Batchelor, Broken Top, Jefferson, Hood, St Helens, etc. Day trips, car camps, long days of driving, skiing, and fun. Advanced backcountry ski skills required. E-mail experience, address and h/w phones to Co-Ldrs: REINER STENZEL; TBA.

SKIING THE STEENS

By Rich Henke

The Steens Mountains in Southeastern Oregon are a surprise to most people. Rising to above 9,000 feet with a snow covered crest extending for 40 miles; the Steens protrude impressively from the desert below. The range is a fault block, formed by an uplift, which resulted in a steep 5,000-foot high escarpment down to the Alvord Desert to the East.

For years, I had wanted to ski the Steens. From the West, a gentle loop road from the town of French Glen climbs to the south end of the crest. This road can be easily skied or as is more common in this area, traveled by snowmobile. But the total crest, extending from south to north, sees little activity. I found only one reference to a ski trip in the book "The Best Ski Touring in America" by Steve Barnett, published in 1987. But that effort did not follow the entire crest.

After several calls to the Burns BLM office and to Lou West, the owner of a private ranch at the south end of the range to get permission to cross his property, Armando Menocal and I drove to the Steens in mid-March 2001. We parked one of our vehicles at the north end of the range 40 ski miles from where we would start and then drove south along the good road that parallels the escarpment on the east. We drove to the ranch where Lou was kind enough to give us a ride in his truck to the end of the road. The elevation was 4400 feet. Armando's and my packs were 36 and 41 pounds respectively. We had enough food for 6 days. We carried our skis for about 2 miles but from that point on, we had continuous snow for the remainder of the tour. We skied north up Wildrose Canyon for the rest of the first day in poor visibility, but route finding was not a problem since the canyon was wide

and obvious. The 2nd day, the weather was worse, but we continued up a very steep headwall to above 9400 feet in whiteout conditions to within one half mile of the highest point of the range at 9723 feet. High winds and no visibility kept us from bagging the peak. Instead we continued along the crest, navigating by compass, occasionally seeing signs of the snow-covered loop road from the West. Night 2 was spent just before the crux of the trip, a traverse along a knife-edge ice covered ridge above Kiber Gorge, which needed to be negotiated to reach the more gentle Northern section of the tour.

When we woke on the morning of the 3rd day, the weather was better but it was still windy and cold. It would have required crampons and the better part of a day to negotiate this very technical ridge. Looking to the North, the snow cover was sparse which would have required a significant amount of walking at the end of the 40-mile route. So we bailed! We skied west following the loop road and the many snowmobile tracks toward the small town of French Glen. By the afternoon of day 4, we had reached the end of skiable snow and after walking for several miles; we were lucky enough to catch a ride with Mary, the BLM Ranger whom I had talked to via telephone several weeks earlier. She had been skiing along the loop road. She offered to give us a lift back to our car, which was a big help since our aborted route resulted in us being 50 miles by road away from the vehicle parked at the end of the trip.

The Steens Crest remains unskied. To finish the route will require a better than average snow year plus some technical gear to negotiate the knife ridge. It might be a great trip.

as the first group in 2002. However, judging from old ski tracks, others must have been on the summit without signing in. A cold wind blew over the top and we huddled in the rocks on the lee side. The views were superb: Blue Mono Lke, white Saddlebag Lke, endless snow slopes and peaks in Yosemite and further south. With some imagination we could see our fellow SMS'rs ski False White Mtn below us. By 1 pm we retreated from the summit and started our ski run down on mostly corn snow. A few places of unconsolidated snow did not stop the fun. But on the lower slopes the sunbaked snow was soft and balls began to roll and grow when turning. It was time to get off the slopes. By 3 pm we were back on the trail which disappeared from time to time under the snow. Another hour later we reached the cars, looking back at the nice slopes where we left many visible ski tracks. Everyone had enjoyed the day. Since brown Dunderberg was no match for the next day, we relocated to Sonora Pass with the goal of doing Leavitt Pk on Sunday. We camped just below the pass where Sardine Creek crosses Hwy 108. Happy hour, fondue dinner and a good Chardonnay made a fine end of the day.

On Sun we got up at 5 am, packed and drove up to Sonora Pass to start climbing by 6:30 am. The day started with a bloody red sunrise, high winds and low clouds over the ridge. A storm was forecast for Monday but seemed already on its way. Two participants joined in the last moment, Ruth von Rotz and Angel Ocana. We ascended the ridge on hard frozen snow which turned R. J. back. Only those with ski crampons could ski this snow. On the dry ridge it was hiking time. We proceeded along the ridge to Pk 11,245'. From there we could see Leavitt Pk (11,569') drifting in and out of the clouds. Since it was probably another 2 hours to the summit, dark clouds to the west indicated snow at any time, and we had lost one leader it was time to call it quits. We waited for the sun to soften the east facing slopes and enjoyed skiing the bowls below Pk 11,242'. The energetic team had several runs on eventually fine corn snow. More skiers came up to this popular telemarking terrain. We skied till noon, then packed up and went on our long drive home. High winds turned Owens Valley into a dust bowl. Thanks to R. J. for assisting again. We all had an adventurous ski mountaineering weekend.



Above, Left: Ted ascending slopes above Virginia Lakes

Above, Right: Group picture on way to Excelsior

Left: Ruth retreating from stormy ridge leading to Leavitt Pk

From the San Antonio Ski Hut Chair:

Dear San Antonio Ski Hut User:

The Harwood Lodge is currently in the process of updating their windows. As a result, they have reached out to the various Sierra Club Chapters, for donations to help offset the expense.

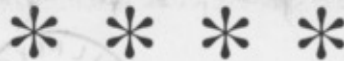
Windows cost approximately \$800 each, and the Harwood is seeking sponsors for every window replaced. For the amount of \$500, the Harwood will place a plaque under the window, commemorating the sponsor by name, i.e.: San Antonio Ski Hut.

In the sense of being a good neighbor, the San Antonio Ski Hut would like to participate. Unfortunately, due to the Hut's own needs and modest budget, contributing this amount from our own funds is not an option.

We instead are asking for donations, from you, our hosts and active Hut users. If we can acquire 25 donations of \$20, each, it will equate to \$500, which can be used to sponsor a window. We will ask the Harwood to include each contributing persons name on the plaque.

Should you wish to participate in this fundraising event, please email me with your contribution. We appreciate your consideration.

Gil Estrada, offpiste1@aol.com
SASH Chair



OBITUARY

SMS Member Norman Kingsley died 26 Aug, 2002. He and his wife had moved to Whitefish, MT but are still Mugelnoos subscribers.

NORMAN KINGSLEY, 72, was born on March 25, 1930, in Nuremberg, Germany, as Werner Kissinger. He survived Nazi aggression against German Jews via the Kindertransport in 1939, and lived in London and Lisbon, Portugal before emigrating to the U.S. in 1941.

He served briefly in the U.S. Navy, then enlisted in the Marines in 1948. He served with the 3rd Marines in North China, 5th Marines on Guam, and was picked to join the select 1st Marine Brigade under then-Brig. Gen. Ed Craig that turned the tide of the Korean War in 1950. He earned the Purple Heart, bronze and silver stars in Korea. He served as Presi-

dent of the Los Angeles regional chapter of the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association and was an active member for many years.

Norman owned and operated Tool Components International and Export Kingsley Company for 30 years, based in La Canada, Calif. He was an avid mountaineer, authored "Ice Craft," a comprehensive book on ice climbing in 1975, and passionately loved the outdoors.

He loved big-band jazz, good food and a cold beer after a long hike. He also recently taught personal financial management at Flathead Valley Community College.

He is survived by his wife, Anna-Lisa Kingsley of Whitefish; and his daughter, Gabrielle Kissinger, and son-in-law, Greg Kehm, both of Hallowell, Maine.

Announcements

Link for Current Snow Pack in the Sierra: (*from the California Department of Water Resources*)

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/current/snow/>

East Side:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/current/snow/pillowplots/OwensMono.html>

Official Web Site for the San Antonio Ski Hut:

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

* * * * *

Trip Leaders and Officers:

Please check that your scheduled trips and contact information is correct and up to date. For any changes, please inform the Editor.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Mugelnoos

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