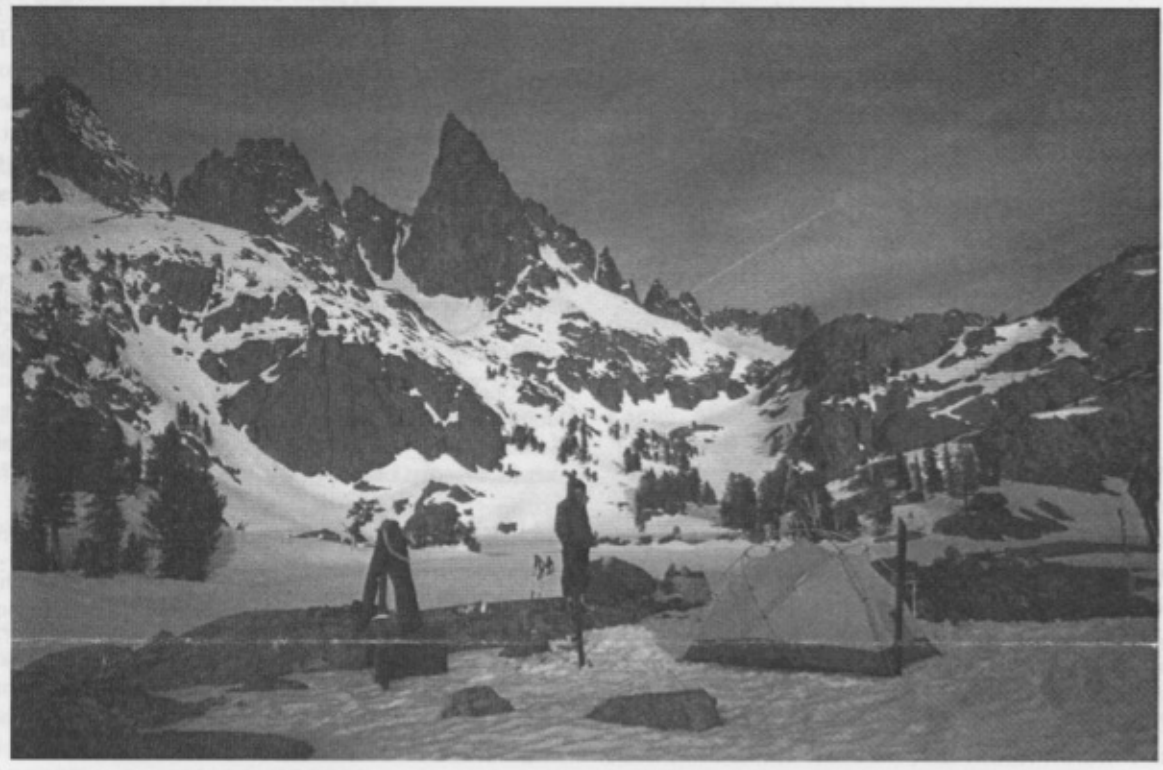


THE MUGELNOOS

February 2003

Issue # 779



Above: Morning of day 4 at Minaret Lake, South face of Clyde Minaret in background

Skiing Around the Minarets *By Rich Henke*

In April 2002, I joined 3 friends from Northern California to do a circum-ski of the Minarets. I met Hal Tompkins, Craig Taylor and Tim Hult on Wednesday night, April 10, at the Rush Creek Trailhead near the north end of Silver Lake. Our goal was a counterclockwise loop around the Minarets via Thousand Island Lake, the Banner/Davis Col, Beck Pass, back to Thousand Island Lake, and ending at Silver Lake. Two 15 min quad maps, Devils Postpile and Mono Craters, cover the route.

Day 1 - Silver Lake TH (7,225 ft) to Thousand Island Lake (9,834 ft): 7 hr 20 min. We walked the summer trail to Agnew Lake following the old tramway for the last few hundred feet. Continued to Gem Lake walking on the bare trail on the north side of the drainage. Crossed Gem Lake outlet stream below the dam and started skiing a short time later. Snow was deep and unconsolidated at first but got better as we crossed Agnew Pass (9,842 ft). We contoured to Thousand Island Lake and camped at the west end. Chopped a hole in the ice for water. We had 3 people in my Sierra Designs Stretch Dome with Tim outside in a bivi bag. Used Gaz hanging stove for everyone.

Day 2 - Thousand Island Lake (9,834 ft) To Middle Slide Creek (10,600 ft): 10hr 30 min. Tim decided to turn back due to a leaking thermarest and general discomfort about being tentless. He skied with us to the Banner/Davis Col (11,200 ft), and had a good downhill run back to Thousand Island Lake. The rest of us descended to Catherine Lake and then skied up the backside of the Banner/Ritter Col. From the saddle, it was an easy class 2 scramble to the summit of Mt. Banner (12,945 ft). The last entry in the summit register was Oct 2001. The ski de-

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NEXT ISSUE

Next issue deadline is March 10th, 2003. 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

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Eastern Sierra Avalanche Bulletin

<http://www.csac.org/Bulletins/Calif/current.html>



Happy Valentine's Day!

Upcoming Events 2003 Ski Season (*Abbreviated*)

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

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, Independence 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

Please see next month's calendar for the full schedule

(Continued from Page 1)

scent back to Lake Catherine was as good as it gets. We skied across the Ritter Lakes west of Mt. Ritter and crossed a high pass (11,700 ft) above Slide Canyon. The scenery here was spectacular. After a difficult soft snow descent using ice axes, we camped at the first flat area. We had to melt snow that night for water.

Day 3 - Middle Slide Creek (10,600 ft) to Minaret Lake (9,800 ft): 9 hr 15 min. We crossed a small col (10,400 ft), which led to Dyke Creek. We contoured around the upper part of the canyon and then descended 1000 feet before climbing toward McDonald Pass (10,400 ft). The bottom section was steep and ice axes were useful. From the pass, a long traverse got us to Beck Pass (10,800 ft). We contoured around to Deadhorse Lake, which required a steep ice ax descent and was the most difficult part of the trip. After

a short ski, we reached Minaret Lake and a great campsite next to snow-free rocks to sit on.

Day 4 - Minaret Lake (9,800 ft) to Silver Lake TH (7,225 ft): 10 hr. We followed Cecile, Iceberg, and Ediza Lakes north, skiing directly across the first two. The ski descent north of Iceberg Lake was a thigh burning experience on very steep, icy snow. We contoured north above Ediza Lake past Nydiver Lake, Garnet Lake and finally reached Thousand Island Lake. We then retraced our route back to Silver Lake.

Summary: In this very low snow year, we still had good snow coverage above 10,000 feet. The skiing was good with the exception of the area just north of Agnew Pass, where we had soft unconsolidated snow and broke through up to our chests several times. We had great weather and wonderful views of an area seldom visited by skiers.

Recent Avalanche Accidents in Canada

(Submitted by Reiner Stenzel)

Recently, two disastrous avalanche accidents occurred in Canada. On January 20, 2003, seven people were killed on the Durrand Glacier in the Selkirks. Among them was a former SMS member and professional ski instructor, Dennis Yates. Many of us knew Dennis from Bear Mountain where he gave telemark clinics together with Joe McCoy. We are deeply saddened about the loss of our good friend. The accident happened on a tour led by one of the most experienced guides, Ruedi Beglinger from SME. For the last 18 years that he skied this slope there was no avalanche activity.

The powerful avalanche which was not triggered by the skiers buried 13 out of 21 people. The group performed a professional rescue and saved six lives, but lost seven. All were trained and experienced back-country skiers. Dennis was buried under only 2 feet of snow that hardened like cement. Another skier was buried under 8 feet and rescued alive after 30 minutes. It was a freak accident and nightmare for all survivors, one of whom was our SMS member Eric Klosterman.

The second accident occurred on February 1, 2002 near Rodgers Pass, BC. A group of 14 Grade 10 students and three adults were buried by a powerful avalanche 500 to 800 meters wide that traveled a kilometer down a mountain slope. Such a massive avalanche can wipe out forests and buildings. It killed 6 boys and one girl. Some were buried as deep as three meters. How sad to lose such young lives! It was a natural avalanche presumably caused by an instability in the snow pack in this area this winter.

These accidents show that in spite of best precautions avalanches remain killers in the mountains. They are an inherent risk in our sport. Further details can be found on the web: <http://www.csac.org/Incidents/>

Mugelnoos

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