

THE MUGELNOOS

March 2003

Issue # 780



Group on summit of Kaiser "Junior"

Kaiser Peak Trip Feb 28-Mar 2, 2003

By Reiner Stenzel

Eight brave souls went out in wintertime to spend two nights in the snow without tents. All survived and enjoyed the experience of living in igloos. The participants, who came from Sacramento, LA, and San Diego, were Leslie Hofherr, Jim Crouch, Wally Drake, David Baron, Steve Stewart, Thomas Johansson and Jason Rivera.

Here is what we did: We met Friday morning at Huntington Lake at the beginning of the Kaiser Pass Road. Half of us had to find a place to buy the required CA Snowpark permits. By 9 am we were ready to leave, first walked a short distance, then skied up the snow-covered road. After two switchbacks we went XC up the Potter Creek drainage. Since it had snowed the days before we had break trail in 5-10 inches of new snow. Every 10 min the lead person was exhausted and we switched to the next one in line. We skied through forested terrain trying to find open routes through the trees. Switch-backing uphill with full packs in deep snow took its toll and it took us till 1:30 pm to get close to Potter Pass. The clouds were rolling in as we selected our campsite on the summit of Peak 9149' just east of Potter Pass. The upper layer of snow was unconsolidated powder, useless for cutting blocks, but below there were at least 5 feet of settled snow. After a short break we went to work with our snow saws

(Continued on Page 4)

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR Lorene Samoska
 EDITOR'S ASSISTANT Michael Seiffert
 PRINTING Keith Martin
 MUGELMAILER Pat Holleman

NEXT ISSUE

Next issue deadline is April 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!

OFFICERS

Chair: Reiner Stenzel (310) 454-9787
 Email: stenzel@physics.ucla.edu
 Vice Chair/Leader Records: Jan St. Amand (661) 252-6592
 Email: janstamand@earthlink.net
 Secretary: Randy Lamm (310) 319-1947
 Email: randy_lamm@yahoo.com
 Treasurer: Tom Marsh (805)498-9580
 Email: qrtmoon@aol.com
 Webmaster: Owen Maloy (760)-934-9511
 Email: jom@qnet.com
 Outings: Keith Martin (310) 316-7617
 Email: kwmartin@gte.net
 Editor: Lorene Samoska (818) 952-3665
 Email: samsei@earthlink.net
 Programs/Cons: Kathy Crandall (818) 832-0809
 Email:skimeup@nwc.net
 Mugelmailer: Pat Holleman (310) 374-4654
 Email: Patngerry@earthlink.net

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.

SMS LEADERS

Walter Boge Van Nuys H (818) 781-4576	Randy Lamm Santa Monica, CA H (310) 319-1947 randy_lamm@yahoo.com	Lawrence Pallant Encinitas H (760) 942-0035 Lpallant@aol.com
Kathy Crandall Granada Hills skimeup@nwc.net (818) 832-0809	Bill Lingle Thousand Oaks. 805-241-7979 whlingle@cs.com bill.lingle@atk.com	Don Pies Santa Barbara H (805) 967-9852 W(805) 562-4062 dpies@verizon.net
Ken Deemer Manhattan Beach 310-546-3042 w 310-546-4012 h kdeemer@earthlink.net	Owen Maloy (M) Mammoth Lakes H (760)-934-9511 Fax 760-934-9511 jom@qnet.com	R.J. Secor Pasadena 626-795-5520 rjsecor@earthlink.net
Andy Fried Northridge H (818) 993-1891 W (818) 363-6196 andyfried@earthlink.net	Joe McGuire Palo Alto H(650) 473-6813 joejam99@ix.netcom.com	Reiner Stenzel Pacific Palisades H (310) 454-9787 stenzel@physics.ucla.edu
Mark Goebel Huntington Beach 714-963-9384 goebelmj@access1.net	Tom Marsh Newbury Park, Ca H(805)498-9580 Qrtmoon@aol.com	Larry Tidball H (562) 424-1556 LBTidball@earthlink.net
Paul Harris Truckee 530-587-5962 Paulharris@jps.net	Keith Martin Palos Verdes Estates H (310) 316-7617 kwmartin@gte.net	Sexton Thomas J. Huntington Beach 714-840-2709
Pat & Gerry Holleman Manhattan Beach 310-374-4654 Patngerry@earthlink.net		



Left: Maggie Filmore climbing toward Mt. Issac Walton (See story page 6-7.)

Calendar of Events 2002-003 Ski Season

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

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 experience, 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 heart 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.

(Continued from Page 1)

and shovels. Teams of two partners shared the work of cutting blocks and layering them into an inclined spiral. Size matters: If the igloo is too big, the chances of closing the roof are slim. Two igloos had to have their roofs covered with a tarp. One igloo was slightly too small for its 6 foot inhabitant and needed subsequent remodeling, the fourth one was just right. It took from 3.5 to 4.5 hours to build our homes. After that we were pretty exhausted from cutting and lifting at least 50 blocks. We converted the block-quarry into a community kitchen and cooked dinner as darkness fell. Occasional snow flurries came down but luckily there was no wind. After a hot meal we disappeared into our igloos. Inside it was quiet, warm (about 32 F) and bright when several candles were lit. Of course one had to find a compromise between warmth and moisture: With 6 candles lit, our igloo started to drip and we had to cool it down again. It was warm and comfortable inside the igloo which one appreciated especially after a nature call at night. After a long winter night in tight quarters it was nice to see daylight again, especially sunshine in the morning.

On Saturday, we had breakfast, packed and headed out for a day tour to Kaiser Peak. Before leaving we had a beacon and radio check. The tour started with a wonderful powder run down a steep forested slope leading to the Lower Twin Lake. The rear party radioed equipment problems: David decided to stay in camp to fix his bindings. Jay had problems with his split snowboard and his radio, and lack of communication got us concerned until he eventually caught up with us. We proceeded to the Upper Twin Lake, contoured north of it and climbed up to George Lake. What seems an easy hike on a summer trail was a workout in deep and sticking snow. Southwest of George Lake is a steep chute leading into a hanging valley that ends at the corniced Kaiser Peak Ridge. After some soul searching we decided to try an alternate route north of the hanging valley. Jim and Tom turned back. The

rest succeeded to climb the ridge without encountering cornices. The view from the ridge was exciting: Clouds swirled around the peaks, in the distance one could see Lake Edison and some High Sierra peaks, the Joaquin Valley was buried by clouds, and the corniced Kaiser Ridge dropped off nearly vertically to the east. We ascended the first obvious peak to the north (Peak 10,156'), only to be disappointed since my GPS indicated the real Kaiser Peak (10,310') was about 0.5 mi away in the clouds. I had announced that our turn-around time would be 1:30 pm and we had already exceeded it. When the clouds lifted temporarily, Kaiser Peak became visible. It would have been another hour round trip, probably no visibility on the summit, and a likely return by darkness. Thus, we called it off and were happy to have summited our 150'-lower Kaiser "Junior" Peak. After a snack we peeled the skins off and started our descent. A white rabbit crossed our path and disappeared in a hole. We found an excellent powder slope that dropped us into the hanging valley. From there we had little choice but to continue the steep gully down to George Lake. But because of the soft snow the steepness presented no problems and we all made it down safely. Jay had a great time with his snowboard. Then we followed our tracks, which made our return much faster than anticipated. After an arduous last climb we reached our basecamp by about 4:30pm and were welcomed by David with a nice campfire. Clouds were rising again from the west. Happy hour followed with snacks, hot fluids and finally dinner. The fire pit vanished into the snow and had to be dug out repeatedly. We enjoyed the warmth of the fire till after darkness. When the wind picked up and the feet got cold it was time to retire into our igloo homes.

On Sunday we awoke to bright sunshine, blue skies and temps in the teens. We had a relaxed breakfast in our kitchen. David climbed to the top of his solidly frozen igloo. Then we packed and started by 9:30 am to ski

down into Potter Pass. For variety we picked a different route down to Kaiser Pass Road. It first followed a roller coaster terrain through forest, then descended into the Midge Creek drainage, which steeply dropped down to the road. It was a challenging tree skiing experience with full packs. On the road, we waited to regroup, and had a chat with a ranger on his snow mobile. After a long, thigh-burning ski run down the KP Road we were back at the cars by 1:30 pm. We all agreed that it was a great weekend in the mountains, fun to live in the snow, ski all sorts of terrain, and to be in a group of very fine people. Last but not least, the drive from snow country down into the green valley with wild flowers and blooming trees was a real delight.



Ski run down Kaiser Ridge to George Lake



Wally in front of his igloo

Silver Divide Ski Tour

By Rich Henke

The Silver Divide is not well known. Located just south of Mammoth, it extends for 20 miles from east to west between two major drainages; Mono Creek and Fish Creek. Silver Peak and Sharktooth Peak are landmarks at the far west end of the divide and are nearly 12,000 feet in elevation. I organized a 4-day trip there in 1996 starting and ending at Convict Lake. However, bad weather and large group size kept us from reaching the end. We settled for a shorter loop that year via Tully Hole, Franklin Lake, and Pretty Pass.

In May 2002, we tried again, this time starting from McGee Creek and finishing at Mammoth. Gus Benner, Maggie Filmore, and Harlan Suits drove from Berkeley while I drove from LA. We met on Friday morning May 3, at the Tamarack Lodge parking lot where we left my car. We drove Gus's car to the McGee Creek TH, packed up, did the customary pack weighing, and started walking west. Pack weights varied from 29 to 36 pounds. Our goal was to ski west along the divide to Beetlebug Lake at the head of Long Canyon. The route would then descend to Fish Creek and to Mammoth via Duck Pass. A description of different variations of the route can be found in Moynier's 1st edition of "Backcountry Skiing in the Sierra", on page 76. We used three 15 min maps: Mt Morrison, Mt Abbot, and Kaiser Peak.

Day 1 – McGee Creek TH (7,800 ft) to Tully Lake (10,500 ft) 10 hr 15 min Walked along the summer trail carrying our skis for about 3 miles before reaching skiable snow. Easy transition from walking to good snow. During a rest break, we saw 2 white ptarmigans, a first for all of us. Crossed Big McGee Lake (10,500 ft) and climbed to McGee Pass (11,800 ft) in windy

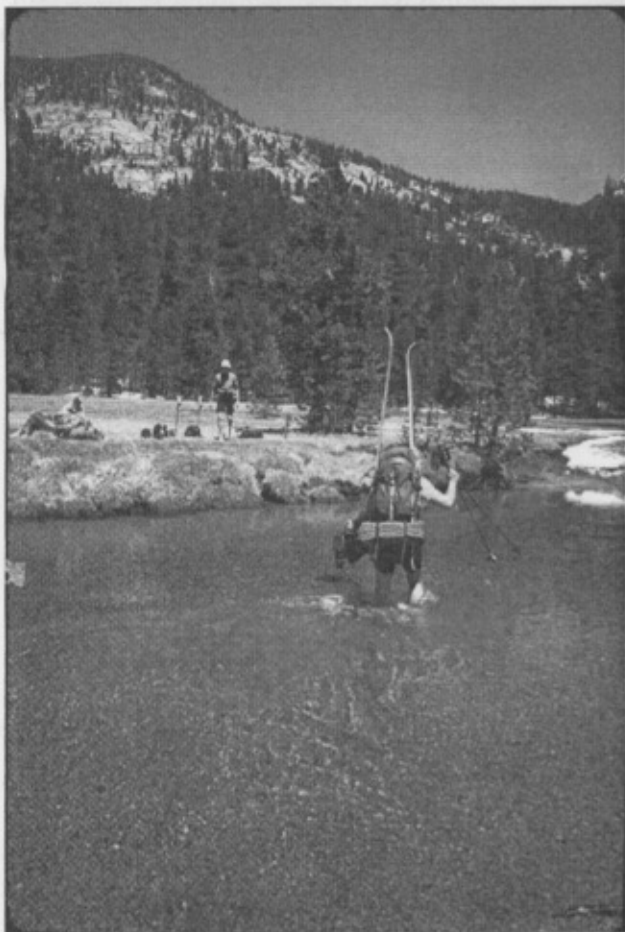
conditions. Skied to Tully Lake in mostly breakable crust although we occasionally made some nice turns. Camped near water and slept and cooked in Gus's comfortable 4-person Stevenson tent.

Day 2 – Tully Lake (10,500 ft) to Wilber May Lake (9,800 ft) 10 hr Left camp at 8 am. Crossed icy Rohm Pass just north of Bighorn Lake. Kicked steps on steep hard snow through the notch south of Isaac Walton Peak, traversed west through the notch north of peak 12,221 (11,600 ft) and crossed the John Muir Trail near Warrior Lake. From Papoose Lake (10,300 ft), we climbed to Goodale Pass (11,000 ft) before trying to traverse along the north side of the Silver Divide toward Peter Panda Lake. We ended up kicking steps down a long steep bowl before skiing to Wilber May Lake where we camped. We chopped a hole in the ice for water. This was our toughest day both for difficult terrain and weather. We had snow flurries for 2 to 3 hours during the day but clear skies at night. We had reasonable skiing on our descents. The area west of Goodale Pass is extremely rugged!

Day 3 – Wilber May Lake (9,800 ft) to just west of Duck Lake (10,200 ft) 11 hr 15 min Skied toward Peter Panda Lake but found the terrain to be confusing and difficult. We finally gave up and skied north reaching Minnow Creek, a tributary of Fish Creek. Skied most of the way to Fish Creek walking the summer trail at the end. We had to wade the cold waters of Fish Creek (8,400 ft) before walking up the summer trail towards Purple Lake. After a short stint on skis, we walked along the John Muir Trail where it is south facing, clear of snow, and easy to follow. Again on skis, we camped at the first water along the stream

just below Duck Lake.

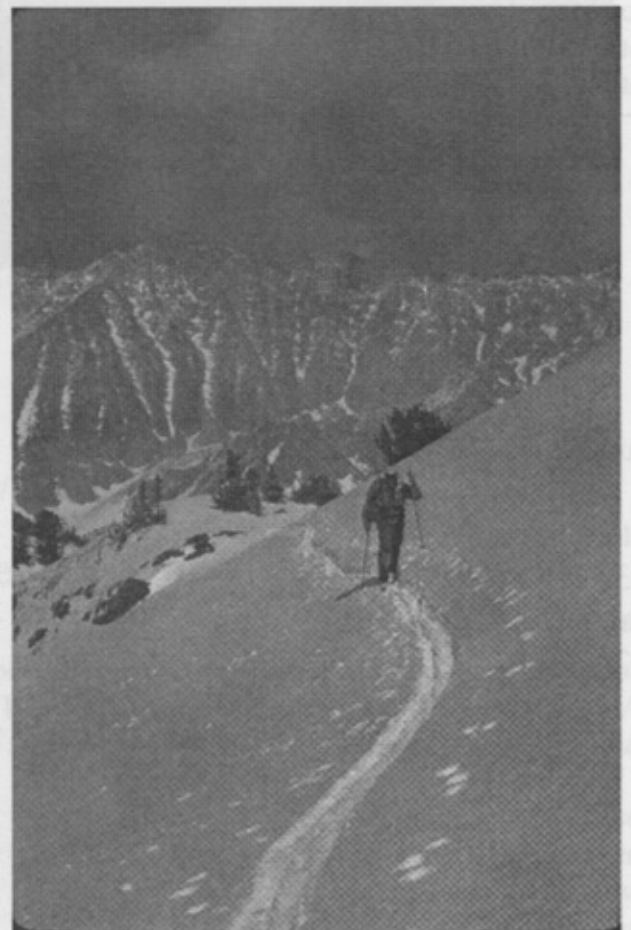
Day 4 – Below Duck Lake (10,200 ft) to Tamarack Lodge (8,700ft) 4 hr 15 min Today would be a short ski out. Maggie needed to be home early so we couldn't afford another 10-hour day, which is why we stopped short of Long Canyon on day 3. We climbed up icy snow to Duck Lake (10,427 ft) where we watched a coyote walk across the ice. We skied across the lake, up to Duck Pass (10,800ft) and had good snow descending the pass and back to Tamarack Lodge. We saw



Harlin Suits crossing Fish Creek

ducks near Duck Pass which seemed very logical. We skied to within 200 feet of our car. But the road was being plowed while we were there. Spring had arrived.

Summary: We walked less than expected in this low snow year. When the snow cover gave out we found the summer trails, so there was little bushwhacking. Still to be decided is whether we will make a 3rd attempt to reach Long Canyon and Silver Peak on a future ski tour.



Gus Benner skiing up Mc Gee Creek

Angeles Chapter Leadership Training Seminar

Last chance to sign up for the Leadership Training Seminar for Spring 2003.

The next Leadership Training Program seminar to start candidates on their way to becoming leaders will be held on Saturday, April 5. The deadline to get completed applications in is Saturday, March 22. Send applications to Ann Kramer, registrar.

For applications and more information, see the Angeles Chapter Schedule or check out the following link:

<http://www.angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc/schedule.html>

Links to Local Snow Conditions

Mount Pinos Area:

<http://www.frazmtn.com/fmcoc/snowcond.htm>
Includes several webcams around Pine Mountain Club and Lockwood Valley and shows snow levels.

Southland Ski Server:

<http://www.skisocal.org/>
Lists southern California downhill and cross-country ski area status (open, terrain) and links to snow reports submitted by skiers. Gives a link to Mt Waterman Ski Patrol: <http://www.mtwatermanpatrol.org/> with local road and weather conditions. Also has links to Rim Nordic XC area, and all other resorts in the southern California area.

Mugelnoos

Pat Holleman
1638 6th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA
90266



Richard L. Henke
409 South Lucia
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
SMS RCS R 2003