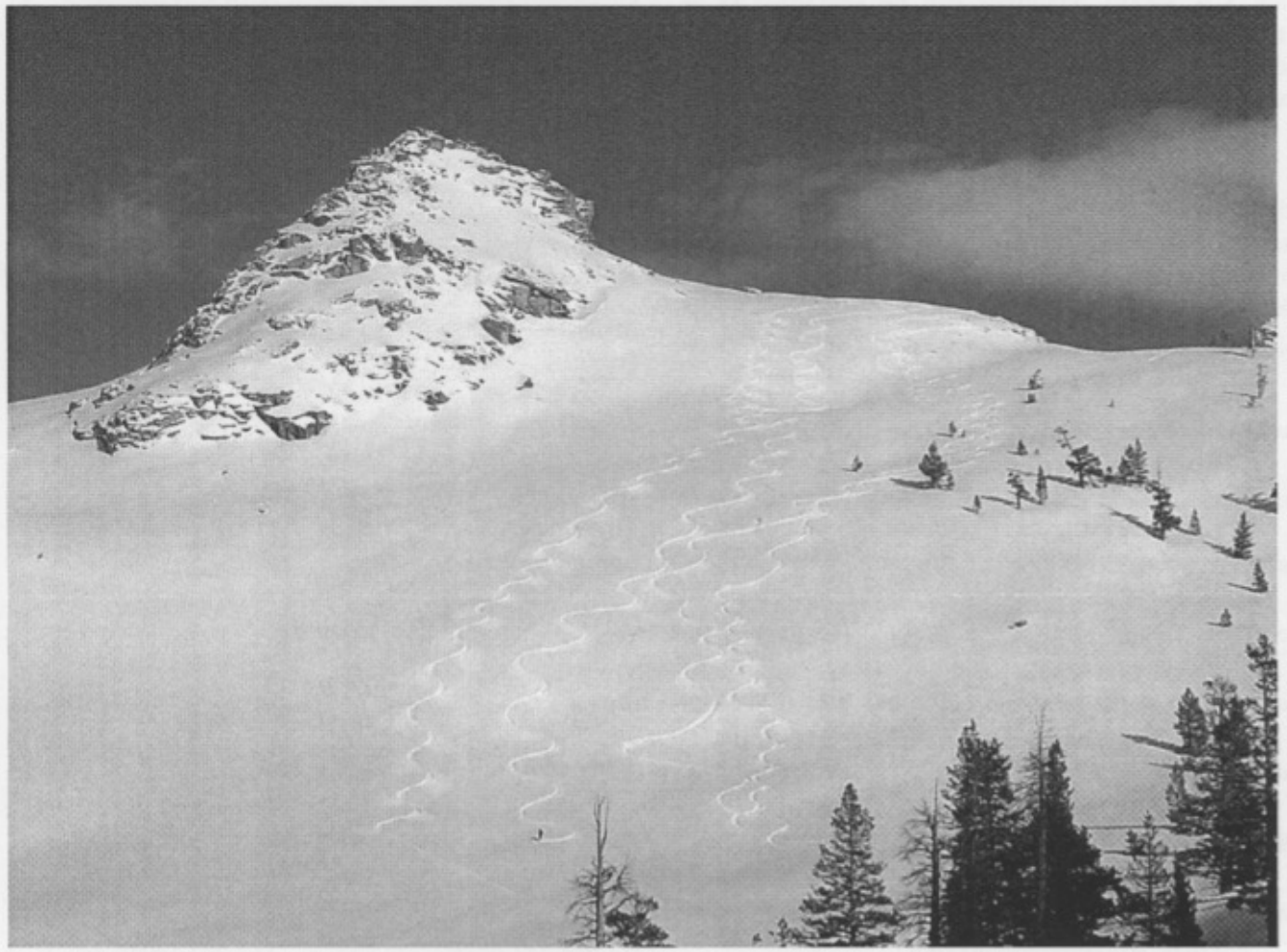


5/2005

THE MUGELNOOS

April 2005

Issue # 794



Traverse of the Tableland February 19-20, 2005 *Reiner Stenzel*

This was a winter ski tour from Lodgepole across the Silliman Crest, the Kings-Kaweah Divide, a traverse through the Tableland, and a descend to Pear Lake and Wolverton. The objective was to experience true winter wilderness, to travel where at this time of the year nobody can go on foot, and to be reasonably safe and comfortable in an environment where an improperly prepared person would probably perish. These conditions are found in the backcountry of the Western Sierra Nevada where in mid-winter the Pacific storms dump their moisture and the mountains are covered by many feet of soft snow. This year's Presidents weekend was no exception. A low pressure system moved slowly over Central California and produced real winter weather.

We left Los Angeles on Fri, Feb 18, in pouring rain. Luckily, the Generals Highway in Sequoia National Park was open and there was no problem to reach Lodgepole. The road was flanked by 6 foot high walls of snow. We car-camped in the empty parking lot and enjoyed a fondue-wine dinner on my birthday evening.

On Sat, 2/19, our small group of four (Alvin Walter, Steve Hessen, Stefan Schiede and myself) gathered at 7:30am at

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR Heiko Knapp
PRINTING Heiko Knapp
MUGELMAILER Pat Holleman

NEXT ISSUE

Next issue deadline is May 01st, 2005. All letters, photos, slides, or articles should be sent to Mugelnoos editor, Heiko Knapp, 2209 W. 12th Street Apt A, Los Angeles, CA 90006. Materials can be sent on CD or emailed to heiko.knapp@web.de. Electronic photos and articles are preferred and appreciated. For files or emails >2MB, please email me for special instructions.

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: Lorene Samoska (818) 952-3665
Email: samsei@earthlink.net
Vice Chair/Leader Records: Reiner Stenzel (310) 454-9787
Email: stenzel@physics.ucla.edu
Secretary: Randy Lamm (310) 319 1947
Email: randy_lamm@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Tom Marsh (805) 498-9580
Email: qrtmoon@aol.com
Webmaster: Thomas Johansson (949) 548 7182
Email: thomasjohansson@sbcglobal.net
Outings & Safety: Leslie Hofherr (310) 206-3929
Email: Leslie@admin.ucla.edu
Editor: Heiko Knapp (213) 385-8220
Email: heiko.knapp@web.de
Programs: Wally Drake
Email: wdrake@altrionet.com
Cons: Kathy Crandall (661) 255-9661
Email: kcrandal@hartdistrict.org
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 and email changes to: Pat Holleman, 1638 6th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266. \$15 per year payable to "SMS". Due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

SMS LEADERS

Kathy Crandall (M)
Newhall
kcrandal@hartdistrict.org
(661) 255-9661

Jim Crouch (I)
San Diego, CA 92110
619-223-9084
jim@saraitlim.com

Michael Dodson (M)
Fullerton, CA
714-529-6020
phyllisd@surfside.net

Andy Fried (E)
Northridge
H (818) 993-1891
andyfried@earthlink.net

Mark Goebel (E)
Huntington Beach
714-963-9384
goebel.mj@verizon.net

Leslie Hofherr (Prov I)
Manhattan Beach
310-206-3929
Leslie@admin.ucla.edu

Pat & Gerry Holleman (M)
Manhattan Beach
310-374-4654
patngerry@earthlink.net

Randy Lamm (I)
Santa Monica, CA
H (310) 319-1947
randy_lamm@yahoo.com

Owen Maloy (M)
Mammoth Lakes
H (760)-934-9511
Fax 760-934-9511
owen.maloy@verizon.net

Keith Martin (M)
Palos Verdes Estates
310-316-7617
kwmartin@verizon.net

Tom Marsh (I)
Newbury Park, CA
(805) 498-9580
qrtmoon@aol.com

Mike McDermitt (I)
Mendham, NJ
mike@mcdermitt.org

Joe Mc Guire (I)
Sunnyvale
408-204-8775 (H)
408-553-7607 (W)
joejam99@ix.netcom

Jonathan Meagher (Prov I)
Pasadena
818-354-3374
meagher@radar-sci.jpl.nasa.gov

R.J. Secor (E)
Pasadena
626-795-5520
rjsecor@earthlink.net

Reiner Stenzel
Pacific Palisades
H (310) 454-9787
stenzel@physics.ucla.edu

Lorene Samoska (O, Prov I)
La Canada
818-952-3665
samsei@earthlink.net

Mike Seiffert (Prov I)
La Canada
818-952-3665
samsei@earthlink.net

Jan St Amand (Prov I)
Santa Clarita, CA
661-702-1902
janstamand@sbcglobal.net

Alvin Walter (M)
San Diego, CA
858-586-1982
awalter@pacbell.net

Cover photo: Great skiing near "Litte Matterhorn" at Pear Lake. Tracks by telemarkers, randonnee skiers and a snowboarder. Photo by Reiner Stenzel

Calendar of Events 2004-2005 Ski Season

May 02-May 8 Sat - Fri SMS/SPS

TI: Onion-Boose Trip: Join this Sierra Crest ski tour from Onion Valley to Taboose Pass. Ski and climb by day, followed by happy hour in camp. Hi route goes via Kearsarge Pass, Dragon/Rae Lks, Baxter Lks, Twin Lks, Pinchot Pass, Lke Marjorie and Taboose Pass for a short car shuttle back to Onion. On the way there are optional ski ascents of such class 2 peaks as Gould, Baxter, Acrodetes, Cedric Wright, Crater, Wynne, Pinchot, Striped. Need advanced backcountry skiing skills, proper ski and snow camping experience, bring good food and the right spirits. Must have skied/climbed with the SMS/Ldrs before the trip. Extended ski pack touring experience req. Trip subject to modifications depending on snow and weather. Send experience, address, H&W phone to Ldr: Tom Marsh. Asst: Reiner Stenzel

May 07-08 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Ski Mountaineers Peak (13,323): Our goal is to ski from the high point of Thompson Ridge down its long east slope. Sat hike and ski from below South Lake to Treasure Lakes snow camp, 1200 gain, 3 mi. Sat afternoon ski near by slopes below the Sierra Crest. Sun tour to Ski Mtneers Peak, 2900 gain, 4 mi rt, and then pack out. Requires intermediate or better bc skiing and snow camping experience. Send email/sase, past experience, phone, ride share info to Ldr: Leslie Hofherr. Asst: Mark Goebel

May 7-8 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Mt Gibbs and Gaylor/False White. Ski Mt Gibbs and Gaylor/False White with car camping or snow camping in the Dana meadows. Send experience, address, H&W phone to Ldr: Jonathan Meagher. Asst: Leslie Hofherr Trip canceled/delayed.

May 14 Sat SPS/SMS

MR: Bloody Mtn. (3826m): A day climb and ski tour of this peak near Mammoth Lks. Hike up the Laurel Creek Rd to snow line and climb frozen snow in the am. Climbers will curse the soft snow in the pm and skiers will enjoy a wonderful ski run before returning to the cars. 12 mi rt, 5,196 ft of gain. Restricted trip, ice axe and crampon exp required for climbers and skiers must have advanced skiing skills, metal edged skis, climbing skins, avy beacon, and shovel. Can be combined with the Mt. Morrison climb and ski tour on Sun, May 15. Send experience, address, H&W phone to Ldr: RJ Secor. Asst: TBA Trip canceled.

May 15 Sun SPS/SMS

MR: Mt. Morrison (3748m): A day climb and ski tour of this peak near Mammoth Lks. Hike x-c to the hang-

ing valley east of Mt. Morrison and climb frozen snow slopes in the am. Return by glissading or skiing soft pm snow before returning to cars. 6 mi rt, 4,580 ft gain. Restricted trip, ice axe and crampon exp required for limbers and skiers must have advanced skiing skills, metal edged skis, climbing skins, avy beacon, and shovel. Can be combined with the Bloody Mtn. climb and ski tour on Sat, May 14 Send experience, address, H&W phone to Ldr: RJ Secor. Asst: TBA Trip canceled

May 14-15th Sat-Sun SMS, PVSBG, OCSS

TI: Rock Creek Introductory Ski & Basecamp Please join us for an introductory ski backpack in the Rock Creek area. Saturday, ski with overnight pack to make snow camp in Little Lakes Valley, 8 mrt, 600' elev. gain with pack. Sunday, explore surrounding ski bowls and lakes & practice turns, then packout. Additional 3 mile, 1000-1500' ski touring with daypacks each day. Intermediate skiing ability and some prior backpacking experience necessary. Metal-edged skis, climbing skins, shovel, snow-camping gear, warm sleeping bag required. Send/email experience, home & work phones, email, to Ldr: Lorene Samoska, Asst: Keith Martin

May 17 Tue SMS Monthly Meeting: Entertaining slide programs featuring equipment, safety and outings. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

May 21-22 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Basin Couloir: Base Camp in the Buttermilks. Day tours to ski Basin Couloir and the slopes of the Bishop Bowl. For strong, well conditioned skiers with metal edged skis, skins, beacons and shovels. Send experience, address, H&W phone to Ldr: Randy Lamm. Asst: Reiner Stenzel

May 28-31 Sat-Mon SMS/SPS

TI: Mineral King Base Camp: Depending on road opening, drive/ski from Silver City to basecamp near Mineral King. Then do day tours to nearby peaks and passes. Experience in backcountry skiing and climbing required. Bring metal edged skis with climbing skins, ski crampons, avy beacon, shovel, and snow camping gear. Experienced SPS snowshoers welcome. Send experience, address, H&W phone to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Randy Lamm

Katie the Wonder Dog Returns to Baden-Powell

Mar 12, 2005 *Craig Connally*

Not since late spring of 2001 had Katie visited her favorite ski mountaineering terrain, the north chutes of Mount Baden-Powell. Since then she had been biffed by an SUV, with the consequences of a lengthy surgery, lots of pins and wires, and a long rehab to repair a severely dislocated hip. When near record snows in the spring of 2005 presented the opportunity

to return, she jumped at the chance. The difference this time was that the Angeles Crest Highway was a long way from being plowed.



Wally collects the slush fund. *Photo by Craig*

Katie invited her friends Craig Connally and Wally Drake, who linked up with Heiko Knapp and a trio from the Outdoors Club consisting of Sung Byun, Kevin Trieu, and James the AT Guy. The plan was to approach the Angeles Crest Highway from the north using Big Rock Creek Road, which proved to be washed out about a mile and a half from the ACH. About 3/4 mile from where the road ended, boots and paws got us to the immense avalanche debris field below the biggest chute (the one about .8 mi west of Vincent Gap). The debris field was about a half mile long below the highway and maybe another mile above; the amount of snow blocks, rock, and trees in it was awesome. Unfortunately, the debris had been rotted out by rain, so traveling up the runout area was less than pleasant, on two feet or four.

The snow was getting softer and the going

slower, so after booting, skinning, snow shoeing, and scrambling to about 8000 feet Heiko decided to go for the summit alone while Craig, Wally, and Katie decided to turn around rather than struggle on for a few more turns. The turns in deep, soft slush proved to be only marginally fun and for Katie the descent meant chest deep postholing—but she was laughing the whole way down and back to the car. Craig and Wally weren't laughing, we were clenching our teeth trying to make turns. The chute down to the highway from the summit varies from about 35° to 20°, with several rolls and rock islands for interest. At the ACH the dog skiers followed the highway about a quarter mile down to a more northerly aspect. Below we found the best snow of the tour pitched about 35° among the trees where we were able to set off mini-slides of a few inches of wet snow over an ice layer. We were able to get within a half mile of the car without taking off skis, making for a descent of over a mile and a half and 2300 feet (3600 for Heiko). Next time we'll get to the trail head before 8 am and plan on better snow. There's plenty of snow above 6000 feet on Baden-Powell, Burnham, and Dorr Canyon below Throop—all readily accessible from Big Rock Creek Road, which proved to be a reasonable approach. Katie's ready.



Katie near bottom of chute. *Photo by Craig*

the Lodgepole Visitors Center. We drove to Wolverton where we left two cars, returned with one car to Lodgepole where we started our tour around 9:30am. Near the Visitors Center we skied on a snow bridge across the Kaweah River, passed through the employee's town where a concerned Ranger directed us to the trailhead and wished us well, then headed up the "trail" toward Silliman Creek. The sky was uniformly gray, it was snowing lightly and turned foggy as we ascended and/or the clouds descended.

Occasionally we lost the trail and simply continued to ski XC through the forest while navigating with my GPS. Near the streambed of the completely covered Silliman Creek we ascended north past Willow Meadow toward Silliman Meadow. It was now snowing heavily and trail braking in the deep wet snow became arduous. My original plan was to camp at Silliman Lake. The next morning we would do an ascent of Mt Silliman (11,198') and then continue to ski past Little Lakes to Silliman Pass. However, this plan had to be abandoned since the open slopes up Silliman Creek were too dangerous to ascend. They were loaded with heavy new snow and we were in a

complete whiteout with continuous snow fall. Thus, by 3pm, we decided to ascend a safer forested ridge toward the Little Lakes. By 4pm a winter thunderstorm moved in. It was not safe to camp too high in the open. Thus we stayed near the last trees at about 9200', 0.3mi SW of the Little Lakes, and set up camp quickly to get out of the weather. The dark and gloomy evening was occasionally interrupted by yellow flashes of light followed, within seconds, by roaring thunder. All night it was snowing heavily.

On Sun, 2/20, after 12 hours in the tents, we woke up and there was still a whiteout and light snowfall. After we shoveled a foot of snow from our tents, finished breakfast, packed and got ready to ski, the clouds thinned, broke up and the sun appeared. Suddenly we were in a winter wonderland: All trees were rimed and loaded with fresh snow, all slopes were covered with velvet snow, the clouds were swirling around Mt Silliman; it was a wonderful sight - as long as it lasted. Out of the Central Valley the clouds were rising again

and by 11 am Silliman was back in a whiteout. This was not the season for peak climbing, unlike 7 years ago, when we had spring-like weather on an SMS outing to Mt Silliman.

From the Little Lakes we headed north toward Silliman Pass, which is just south of the prominent Twin Peaks. The summer trail switchbacks from the Twin Lakes to the Pass, but in the present conditions the slopes looked too avalanche prone, thus we stayed high on the Silliman Crest to approach the Pass. Skiing along the corniced crest also offered us a grand view of the high country of the Sierra Nevada, in particular the Great Western Divide. During our lunch break at the 10,200' pass we took many pictures, enjoyed some sunshine, and were in a high mood, looking forward to a fine ski descent. For the break we had taken off our skis but we could not walk on foot since with each step one sank in to the hips. Thus, it would be impossible to travel in this terrain without skis.



Steve breaking first snowcamp. Photo by Reiner

After peeling off the skins I noticed that the metal edge of my right TUA Helium ski had a crack under the binding and a bulge in the P-tex. With the knife I pushed the protrusion back down, not worrying too much. Then we skied down the east side of Silliman Pass in deep snow. While doing left telemark turns I felt some unusual flex in my right ski. It did not take long to realize what had happened: The ski had delaminated and cracked right in the middle. This was totally unexpected since I used the same skis the weekend before without any problems. It was a very serious problem since without skis one cannot get out of this terrain. The first precaution was to give up turning or trail braking to avoid too much flexing the cracked ski.

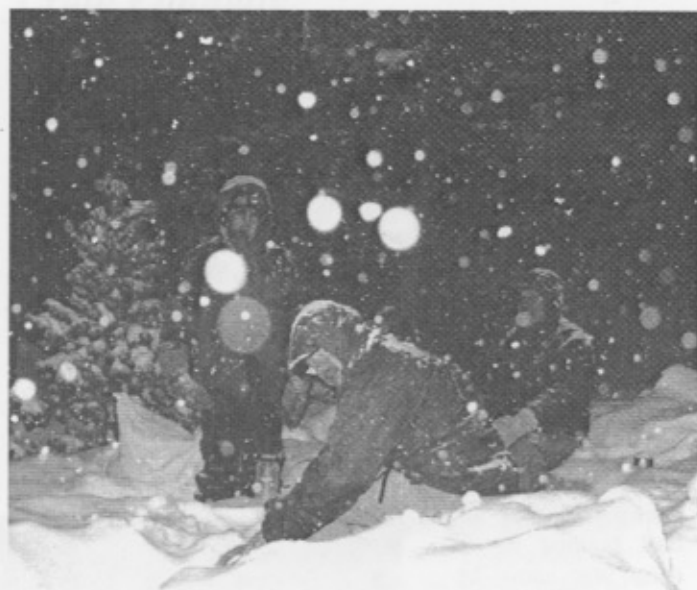
Then I put on skins and slid gingerly in the tracks of my fellow skiers. This worked fine till the late afternoon when we made camp in the upper Crowley Canyon, at 9200', at the South Fork of Sugarloaf Creek. We chose to camp in the last stand of trees since by 4pm the wind had picked up and it was snowing again. We had another dinner in the snow and

(Continued on Page 6)

then spent the next 12 hours in the tent; enough time to figure out what to do with a broken ski.

On Mon, 2/21, it was overcast but not snowing. After the usual breakfast of oatmeal with hot chocolate I started to repair the ski. I took the basket off my Life-Link ski pole, unscrewed the 3' long carbon-fiber shaft and attached it with steel wire to the underside of the ski on top of the skin. The pole was tightened at both ends and in the middle with steel wire around the ski. A small hose clamp fixed the wire to the smooth shaft. The idea was that the pole would keep the two halves of the ski together, take up my weight (220lbs with pack) on each step and present minimum friction when sliding forward. Finally, another wire was attached from the hole in the ski tip to the pole so as to prevent the pole from sliding backwards. A test run was made and it worked. In fact, it worked flawlessly for the rest of the trip. Shows that a good repair kit is vital on backcountry tours.

After breaking camp we ascended Crowley Canyon to cross the Kings-Kaweah Divide. Many of the passes were steep and corniced, but Alvin led us over the least precarious one near UTM 4056000N, 351500E. In the high open country of the Tableland we were greeted by cold winds, spindrifts and poor visibility. At 11,000' the rolling terrain of the Tableland offers no protection, no trees, no rocks. We kept travelling in a tight group following the directions of the GPS. We headed for Lake 10,559' about 0.5mi N of the Table Meadows. As we began our descent to the lake the



Snowed in again the third night, in the Tableland. Photo by Reiner

clouds lifted and we had a wonderful view into the Kaweah River valley. Unfortunately, the Great Western Divide was still in the clouds. We (minus one) had a fine ski run down into the valley where there were many good campsites among small trees. Predictably, it started to snow at 4pm. Unexpectedly, an hour later the sun broke through some wild looking clouds. Now we could fully enjoy the scenery of the Tableland in sunshine. In the sunlight we spotted a large slab avalanche, a reminder to be very careful in this terrain and weather. A thick thunderstorm cloud rolled in and at dinner time it snowed heavily again. At a midnight nature call, the valley was in bright moon light.

On Tue, 2/22, we had an easy day. We only had to ski a few miles down to Pear Lake Hut. I had made reservations at the hut, since after three rough nights everyone would probably enjoy a warm shelter. The run down the Marble Fork of the Kaweah River was fun, very scenic and almost too short.

The hut was open, the stove was running and we met



A silver lining in the clouds followed by brief sunshine



Group skiing near Aster Lake. Photo by Reiner



Dining in the snowkitchen during a winter storm. Photo by Reiner

a nice young couple. In no time we occupied all the laundry lines with our clammy clothes, sleeping bags, wet tents, etc. Like civilized people we ate lunch at a table,

of Pear Lake Hut.

On Wed, 2/23, we packed up, cleaned and left the hut. In fine weather we skied the low route past Aster and Heather Lakes, over the Hump and down the trail to Wolverton. From the Hump on down the snow turned into infamous Sierra cement. In the parking lot my left leg was burning from skiing primarily down on it with a full pack.

We had all had made it safely across the mountains and were happy with another great ski mountaineering adventure. After digging out the cars and shuttling back to Lodgepole we were on our way home passing through the beautiful green Sierra foothills covered with wildflowers. It was a great trip with great friends.



Hidden Pear Lake Hut. Photo by Reiner

read

books and talked around the fireplace. In the later afternoon we skied the hills near Pear Lake. It snowed and was sunny intermittently. While everyone was heading up to the "Little Matterhorn" I toured around Pear Lake and skied the mellower slopes. Although not easy, I managed to tele on one leg and one pole, gaining a deep respect for those who have no other choice. While everyone else was yo-yo-ing on the hills I compensated by skiing the summit



End of trip at Wolverton



Heiko, Wally and Sung climb avalanche debris. *Photo by Craig Connally*

For sale — Two person Bibler I Tent ,seam sealed ,used three times. \$300 tent only, \$350 w/ vestibule obo.
2003 Atomic Tm:22 160cm skis (106-72-98) drilled for Fritschi Bindings, used once \$100.LOWA Struktura
Evo AT boots, fits men's size 8.5/ 9 \$75
LOWA Struktura AT boots, fits men's size 6.5/7 or women's 8.5 \$100 obo
(2) Thermarest ultralite 3/4 length pads, approx.7/8 in. thick \$30 ea.
Email peninsulatug@earthlink.net or call Jim 310-833-6088.

Atomic TMEX length168 with risers and G3/T9 (titanium) bindings \$350obo, also Atomic TM 20 length 170
with 7TM releasable bindings \$325obo. Both pairs used for 2 seasons by non-aggressive skier and both pairs
in excellent shape. Make offer to bsholle@verizon.net

Mugelnoos

Pat Holleman
1638 6th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA
90266



Richard L. Henke
409 South Lucia
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
SMS RCS R 2005