

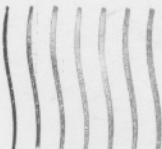
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Mugelnoos

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SMS 2006



THE MUGELNOOS

November 2005



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NEXT ISSUE

Next issue deadline is Dec 20th, 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 p.m, Griggith Park Ranger Station Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles, CA. Newcomers welcome!

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Cover photo:
 Skiing in the Tahoe backcountry on Thanksgiving 2004, the beginning of a great season. Photo by Heiko Knapp

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SMS WEB PAGE

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

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 Scott Klepke - new chair

Calender of events 2005/2006

Dec 18-19 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Mammoth Mt: Ski leaders weekend. Brush up on skills after the summer and get ready for winter season. Ldr: Andy Fried. Asst: Gerry Holleman.

Dec 31 Sat SMS TI: Local Tour - Angeles Crest or San Gorgonio: Local ski mountaineering trip near Waterman or San Gorgonio. Advanced skiing ability required, not for beginners. Skins, beacons, probes required. Depending on conditions trip may be rescheduled or cancelled. Send experience, h/w phones, e-mail address to leader. Ldr: Randy Lamm. Asst: Tom Marsh.

Jan 17 Tue SMS Monthly Meeting: "Wapta Ski Traverse". Jonathan Meagher and Reiner Stenzel will present a slide show of hut-to-hut skiing along the icefields of the Canadian Rockies. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Jan 21 Sat SMS, MBC TI: Mt Cerro Noroeste (Mt Abel, 8280') Mtn bike partially snow covered paved road toward Mt. Abel, 18 mi rt max, 2000' gain. When snow coverage is solid, abandon biking and continue XC skiing. Tour the slopes of Mt Abel. Bring light XC skis, attach to daypack during bike ride. Intermediate skiing and biking abilities reqd. (B/T2/E3). Trip may be rescheduled as snow conditions permit. E-mail or call with experience, h/w phones to leader. Ldr: Lorene Samoska. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Feb 4-5 Sat-Sun SMS, OCSS, PVSBC TC/I: Ski Mountaineers at Mammoth/June Mtn: Practice your telemark/parallel turns on lift-served terrain. Join Andy and Owen as they practice their teaching skills, free ski with other skiers and SMSRs, collaborate with other members to hire local PSIA professionals for group lessons or organize ski touring in local mountains. Something for everyone from advanced beginners to expert. Limited condo space available in Mammoth (must clean or pay for cleaning) send check for \$105 per person (SMS) to Keith Martin for 2 nights plus lesson (based on a lesson cost of \$60). Half day group lessons approx. \$60 per person through Mammoth Mtn for group of 5. Send check for \$60 (SMS) with ski level to Keith Martin for each lesson or take chances when arrive (pay any cost difference when arrive plus instructor tip). Send email or SASE to Keith if want more info. Ldr: Keith Martin. Assts: Andy Fried, Owen Maloy.

Feb 10-12 Fri - Sun SMS TI: Ostrander Hut (8505'), Buena Vista Peak (9709'), Mt Bruce (9743'): Ski to Ostrander Hut from Badger Pass by one of 3 routes (Horizon Ridge Trail, Bridalveil Creek Trail, or Merced Ridge Trail 9-10 miles, < 1500 ft gain) and spend 2 nights. Day tour to nearby Buena Vista Peak and possibly Mt Bruce. Ski out. Cost \$60 per person paid prior to trip to Ldr. Dates subject to change due to lottery. Requires backcountry ski experience with a pack and overnight stay. Required metal edged backcountry downhill skis, skins, beacon, shovel, probes. Send experience, contact, ride share info to Ldr: Leslie Hofherr. Asst: Keith Martin.

Feb 11-12 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Mt Baldy Ski Hut Weekend: Climb or ski to the comfortable Baldy Hut and plan to spend two days skiing the chutes of Baldy Bowl. Ldr: Alvin Walter. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Feb 17-19 Fri - Sun SMS TI: Mono Hot Springs: Rent snowmobile and transport skis and winter camping gear to Mono Hot Springs, Hwy 168. Leisure ski tours by day, followed by soaking in hot springs. Intermediate skiing, swimming and driving abilities reqd. (B/T2/E3/A7/X9). Cost involved. Ldr: Leslie Hofherr. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Feb 18 Sat SMS TI: San Antonio Ski Loop: Climb and ski to Thunder Mt, then traverse the ridgeline to Bighorn and ski out Icehouse Canyon. A short car shuttle will be arranged. Ldr: Alvin Walter. Asst: Jim Crouch.

Feb 21 Tue SMS, SPS, DPS, HPS, LPC Annual Joint Meeting: Meet and make plans with your friends and learn activities of these groups. Each group will give a presentation of their scope and upcoming plans. The program will include a presentation by Tim McCartney Snape from Australia on walking from the Bay of Bengal to the summit of Everest as well as climbing Gasherbraum IV. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Feb 25- 26 Sat - Sun SMS TI: Chinese Peak (8709'), Red Mountain (9874'): Sat ski from Hwy 168 near Huntingon Lake toward Chinese Pk and to West Lake below Red Mtn (5 miles). Build igloos to spend the night in and tour area. Sun ski Red Mtn via west ridge and possibly climb Chinese Pk on way out. Intermediate level backcountry ski skills and willingness to build and spend the night in an igloo required. Metal edged skis, skins, safety equipment, and snow saw required. Experience in snowcamping required. Send experience, contact info, ride share info to Ldr. Leslie Hofherr. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

March 11-12 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Jepson Pk (11,205') Snowcamp: Climb and ski to the base of Little Draw Bowl. Set up a snowcamp, then ski the chutes of Jepson and Charlston. Ldr: Alvin Walter. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

March 11-12 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Mt Baldy Ski Hut Weekend: Climb or ski to the comfortable Baldy Hut and plan to spend two days skiing the chutes of Baldy Bowl. Ldr: Randy Lamm, Assist: Tom Marsh.

Mar 21 Tue SMS Monthly Meeting: Meet your ski friends, discuss trips and be entertained by a slide/video program. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Apr 1-2 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Elderberry Cyn, Onion Valley: Ski (hopefully) on corn snow in the Eastern Sierra Nevada on two day tours and car camp. Intermediate or better skiing ability, metal edged skis with skins, beacons and probes required. Send experience, h/w phones, e-mail address to Ldr: Randy Lamm, Assist: Tom Marsh.

Apr 8-9 Sat-Sun SMS TC: Mammoth Lakes Ski and Wine Tasting Tour: Ski the Mountain by day and sample from Andy's vineyard by night from his E(exquisite)-rated Zins, Nebs and Sangioveses. Repeat, if possible, next day, after aiming for the "Hole in the Wall". Intermediate skiing abilities under

all conditions required. Send e-mail with previous similar experience to Ldr: Andy Fried, Assist: Tom Marsh.

Apr 15-16 Sat-Sun SMS, SPS TI: San Joaquin Ridge: Sat ski from Mammoth Lks along the San Joaquin Ridge toward Two Teats and S.J. Pk. SPS snowshoers welcome. Intermediate skiing abilities reqd. Bring metal-edged skis, skins, poles. Sun ski The Mountain. E-mail or call with experience, h/w phones to leader. Ldr: Barbara Sholle. Asst: David Sholle.

Apr 18 Tue SMS Monthly Meeting: Meet your ski friends, discuss trips and be entertained by a slide/video program. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

Apr 13-16 Thur-Sun SMS, SPS TI: Mt Lyell: Ski mountaineering trip to an SPS Emblem peak from Silver Lake. Advanced backcountry skiing and snow camping experience required. Bring skis, skins, beacon, shovel, probes. Send experience, contact, ride share info to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Alvin Walter.

Apr 22-30 Sat-Sun SMS TI/C: Fairy Meadows Hut, Canada: Powder skiing in the Northern Selkirk Mtns. Stay a week in comfort in a backcountry lodge, do long day trips with light packs. Powder skiing guaranteed, sunshine not. Guiding, heli transport and lodge cost approx. \$1500 CA \$. Advanced backcountry ski skills required. 25% deposit due by end of Nov. Read an earlier trip report. Send experience, address, H&W phone, email to Ldr: Jonathan Meagher. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Apr 22-23 Sat-Sun LTC, SPS, DPS, SMS M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff: Demonstrate your skills to receive an M or E snow checkoff or sharpen snow climbing skills. Restricted to Sierra Club members with prior ice axe, crampon, rope training/experience. All restricted trips now require everyone's complete medical info for the National Sierra Club. Eastern Sierra site depending on snow conditions. Email or send 2 sase, SC#, resume of snow climbing/training, H&W phones to Ldr: Tom McDonnell. Co-Ldr: Randall Danta.

Apr 29-30 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Rock Creek: Ski slopes of beautiful Little Lakes Valley and camp near the Treasure Lakes. Intermediate backcountry skiing and snow camping experience required. Bring skis, skins, beacon, shovel, probes. Send experience, contact, ride share info to Ldr: Mike Seiffert. Asst: Randy Lamm.

May 6-7 Sat-Sun SMS TI: Ski Mountaineers Pk: Ski the peak on the Thompson Ridge named after our section. Solid experience in backcountry skiing and snowcamping required. Bring metal skis, skins, beacon, shovel, probes. Send experience, contact, ride share to Ldr: Leslie Hofherr. Asst: Mark Goebel.

May 13-14 Sat-Sun SMS TI: False White, Blue Couloir: Ski corn snow on two day trips in the Eastern Sierra Nevada and car camp. Intermediate or better backcountry skiing abilities required. Bring metal skis, skins, beacon and shovel. Send experience, contact, ride share to Ldr: Mike Seiffert. Asst: Keith Martin.

May 13-20 Sat -Sat SMS, SPS TI: Onion-Boose Trip: Join a 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 e-mail to Ldrs: Tom Marsh, Reiner Stenzel.

May 16 Tue SMS Monthly Meeting: Meet your ski friends, discuss trips and be entertained by a slide/video program. Newcomers welcome. 7:30 pm Griffith Park Ranger Station.

May 19-22 Fri-Mon SMS TI: Mineral King Base Camp: Ski from Silver City to basecamp near Mineral King unless road is open to MK. 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. E-mail experience, address, and h/w phones to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Randy Lamm.

May 20-21 Sat -Sun LTC, Sierra Peaks, Desert Peaks, SMS M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff/Practice: For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings or others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to SC mbrs with some prior basic training with the ice axe. All restricted trips now require everyone's complete medical info for the National Sierra Club. Send SC#, climbing resume, 2 SASE or email, H&W phones to Ldr: Nile Sorenson Co-ldr: Doug Mantle.

May 27-30 Sat-Tue SMS TI: Sonora Pass Ski Camp: Ski slopes and bowls around Sonora Pass, car camping overnight. Experience in backcountry skiing and climbing required. Bring metal edged skis with climbing skins, ski crampons, avy beacon, shovel, and snow camping gear. E-mail experience, address, and h/w phones to Ldr: Leslie Hofherr. Asst: Lorene Samoska.

Jun 22-25 Thur-Sun SMS, SPS MR: Miter (12,770'), Major General (12,400') and McAdie (13,680'): Do the three M's out of Rock Creek. We explore new routes and non-listed peaks. From Cottonwood Lks trailhead via New Army Pass to basecamp in Rock Creek. Must be comfortable on high cl 3 rock and proficient with ice axe and crampons. All restricted trips now require everyone's complete medical info for the National Sierra Club. Send e-mail or SASE with experience and conditioning, SC#, phone #'s, \$5 permit fee to Leader: Reiner Stenzel. Asst Ldrs: Asher Waxman, Mark Goebel.

Rock Creek Introductory Ski and Base Camp

May 14-15 by Lorene Samoska

We met at the end of the plowed Rock Creek road above Rock Creek Lake a little after 8AM on a gorgeous sunny day. The group consisted of John Anderson, Scott Koepke, Dennis Landin, Keith Martin (assistant leader), Vince Shulda, Mike Seiffert, Jan St. Amand, and myself. Our plan was to ski in with backpacks on the snow-covered road to Mosquito Flat campground (inundated by snow) and then make our way into the John Muir Wilderness and camp on the east side of Box Lake. Views of the big peaks in the range were everywhere – Mt. Morgan, Bear Creek Spire, Mt. Dade, the Hourglass Couloir, and Mt. Abbot.

At the trailhead, another Sierra Club group of about 15 people was heading in with sleds, snowshoes, steaks and wine to camp at Mills Lake and attempt a climb of Mt. Abbot – which was still quite snow-covered for this time of year. Even with skins and heavy packs we were able to pass the



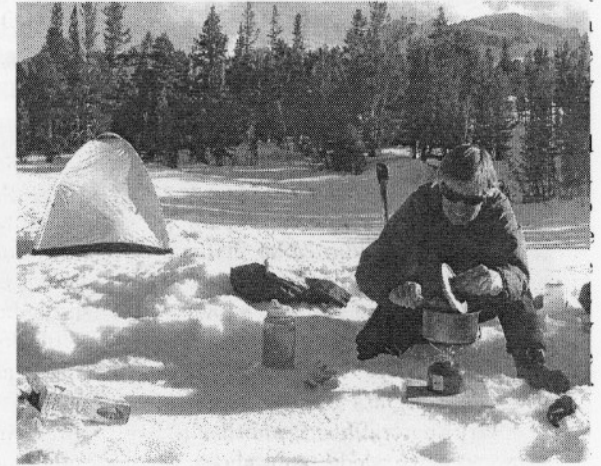
Group of SMS skiers in Rock Creek. Photo by Scott Koepke.

snowshoers with the lit hours we were setting u water, we observed a r advantage of the early kitchen at 11AM.

The bowls on t inviting, and we figurec northwest aspects. We pitches en route to an Peak and the Hourglas Lakes Valley below. Tl break, we whooped it 1 down to our camp and shade back at camp to more turns above an un

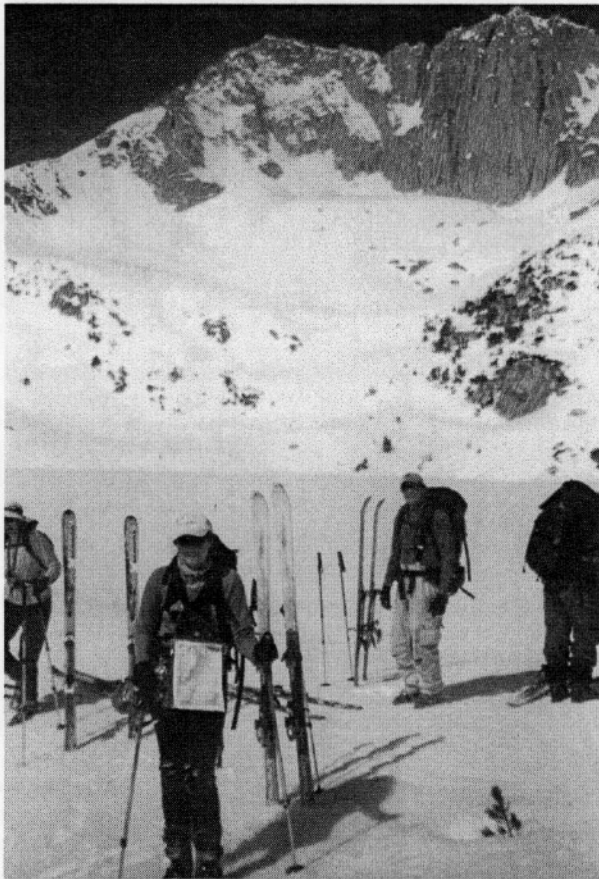
By 5 PM we : Then the appetizers ca dried mangos, nuts, an Japanese shrimp rolls, which we patiently steamed in a camp stove. Everyone sat in a circle and we exchanged stories in the long, warm evening. A split-snowboarder headed up near where Keith had been skiing earlier for a sunset run, but did not provide enough entertainment as we watched, since he headed into the trees and out of sight. The temperatures were so warm that Scott took off his shirt to catch the rays. After cooking all of our dinners, 8 o'clock came upon us and the sun went behind the ridge. Expecting the temperature to drop rapidly, I piled on the down jacket, but the air temperature stayed warm for quite some time. It was not until much later in the evening that the snow around camp froze enough to not post-hole on late night excursions. It was a windless and starry night, and we slept well.

The next morning, I wanted to get an early start given the warm temperatures of the previous day, so we met a bit after 8AM ready to skin up into the Ruby Lake/Mills Lake drainage. The route we took up to Ruby Lake is fun! An easy-to-miss cliffband hides a narrow snow-covered "notch," described in John Moynier's books, to gain access to the higher country. The Ruby notch had a snowshoe-tracked crux with slightly rotten snow, but most of it is gentle and everyone made it through for the skin up to Ruby Lake. We enjoyed the skin up to Ruby, but already the northeast facing bowls were very soft at 9:30 AM. Near the top, an escaped, deflated mylar balloon was captured on the tip of a ski pole. We got to Ruby Lake before



Jan at basecamp in Rock Creek. Photo by Scott Koepke.

10AM, and the clouds came in and the wind started kicking up. The snow at and above Ruby was very frozen. We had a break at the lake enjoying the views of Ruby Wall and commenting on how the skiing below Ruby Wall looked better than any of us had ever seen it – I



Jan, Lorene, John, Keith below Ruby Wall. Photo by Mike Seiffert.

remembered the photos from Moynier's book of skiing below Ruby Wall, but have mostly only seen rockpiles there – not beautiful ski slopes!

But Ruby Wall would wait for another day, as we were headed up toward Mills Lake for some great views. As we started skiing up the drainage, the clouds got thicker and the wind fiercer, keeping the snow very firm. We avoided the steep slopes above some open water in the lake while we skinned up higher. As the wind became stronger Jan expressed

interest in hiding in a crevice formed next to a 20-foot tall boulder, but I wanted a view! We climbed to about 11,600' and gathered in a large rockpile where we had nice views of both the weather coming in and the

surrounding peaks as we huddled together for warmth. What a difference from the windless day before!

Once in the rocks, we chatted and ate an early lunch while we waited for the north-facing bowls above Ruby Lake to soften – which we really, really hoped would happen. By 11:45AM, finally a large lenticular cloud moved away and within 15 minutes, the corn bomb went off. The run down was well-worth waiting for, as we had the finest corn the Sierras have to offer on the way back to the lake!

Everyone unpeeled all the extra layers at the lake and we made our way down the now mushy snow back through the notch. My smarter-than-the-average-husband Mike decided to find a “better” route through a mushy section, and found himself on a more steep, snow-covered waterfall where the water was gushing loudly underneath his skis. Fortunately, it supported his weight and he was able to ski out of it. We picked our way with lots of kick-turns through the crux of the notch and then cruised back to camp by 1PM.

While we were packing up our tents, at 2PM we heard a loud thunderous “boom” and turned to see a large avalanche let loose from near the top of one of the east-facing chutes of Mt. Starr about a mile away. We all watched the avalanche grow and widen, wondering if it would come all the way down to the trail we were going to ski out on, but it stopped after 1000 feet atop a cliff. The day had warmed significantly, which undoubtedly led to the slide we witnessed. That was the closest I've ever observed a large avalanche (and as close as I'd like to come, thank you!)

By 2:30, we were packed and ready to go. On the way out, many more little streams had opened up in the warm sun. We had a pleasant ski back out and reached the cars before 4PM. A few of us met at the Taqueria in Bishop for après ski fixings. This was a great spring corn weekend with great friends. Thanks to everyone who participated, and especially to Keith for assisting. very full Dry Lake. It's several more hours to the car where we arrived after a 12-hour day, and 15 miles of hiking. A long way for some turns, but very satisfying, and we will remember them with pride for how they were earned ... the old fashion way.

The three "San"'s and Baden-Powell

2005 by Mark Goebel

As we approach another ski season, and for some it has already started, the 2005 winter season is still on our minds. Only a little more than 4 months ago some were still out there sliding on the remains of what had been a record winter. New snow has now fallen in the Sierra on surviving patches from last season, and the same has happened here in the local SoCal mountains. As of mid-November, a patch from last season is still hanging on Mt. Harwood, just east of Mt. Baldy, and granular from recent storms has added a new layer.

Usually when the local slopes are drying up, it is the start of prime backcountry time in the Sierra. However, in Spring 2005, the long drive north wasn't necessary as the locals were still deeply buried just a short drive from home. So drift back a bit, and here is a late report on enjoying a rare local bonus season.

March 26, 2005: A quick drive with Bahram M. down to Palm Springs, and we are on the 8am tram up San Jacinto. While skinning-up at the ranger station, a snowshoer asks how we are going to get our skis up to the summit without a lift? "Watch us" and we stride off in to the woods. In a couple hours we are on the summit along with the snowshoers and a couple of snowboarders. The hut just below the summit is buried to the eaves, and the summit boulders are well buried. The entrance to Snow Creek down the north side looked forbidding. We went south. The best snow was in the first 5 turns off the summit, thereafter, just a little bit too heavy/soft. Still, a fast return trip through the woods, and then that darn steep sidewalk to the tram building.

April 10, 2005: Hiked up over snow to a windy Baldy Hut and met Bahram M., Gil E., and Eric W. Ever-popular Baldy, the Hut trail now has plenty of steps in the snow, so I hiked in comfortable light trail shoes. We were soon out and across the still snow covered creek and skinning our way on frozen slopes toward West Ridge. Once on the ridge, the wind became more forceful, and ski crampons just barely kept us on the steep frozen snow. Finally, at the last tree before the summit, we left our gear and hiked the last remaining steps to the summit where an icy wind was blasting up the north face. Not a good place to enjoy the view, I was almost blown to the ground while returning to the tree. Skins were quickly stripped, and we were on our way, a jarring, frozen ride, sliding and traversing to West Baldy's south facing slopes. Then, as if by magic, the snow softened, and we were quickly carving our way down an alpine carpet of firm corn snow down the canyon to a lunch stop. We were soon skinning back up for another run, but this time, down longer and steeper



Approach up the Big Draw, descent route to the left on broad snow field

slopes. We each took a line, stopping to enjoy each long set of turns until it was time to climb back over West Ridge, drop into Baldy Bowl and slide back to the Hut.

May 7, 2005: Again hiking up the Baldy Hut trail. Most of the snow is gone until just below the hut. A couple of skiers descended West Ridge as I was crossing the bowl. The snow is still deep around some 20' boulders. The last new snow of the season fell just a couple days ago, and trees on the final slope to the summit are ice-covered. I am alone on the summit, a rare occurrence. Suddenly, clouds that were creeping up the valley are now coming over the summit. Time to ski. The snow is a firm, styrofoam surface. Delightful turns down the broad summit slope are over too quickly. Now I traverse and turn my way down the steep western slopes of West Ridge. Don't want to fall into Good Canyon! At the saddle, I peer into the Bowl. The snow is very soft, over cooked; I drop in, make some big wide turns and then glide over to the creek. Only 15 minutes from the summit.

May 15, 2005: Bahram, Reed Moore, and I start hiking from Camp Fenner, carrying boots and skis, on a washed out, avalanche covered dirt road 3

miles below Hwy 2 and the start of the Baden Powell trail. Bahram and Reed are wearing sandals. Good for the stream crossings, but questionable over avalanche debris. At Vincent Gap, we find 3 bikes, another option when the road is closed. Soon we are climbing straight up a staircase in the snow, thanks to those ahead. It goes on seemingly forever. Just before the summit there is a whoosh sound above, and a glider swoops low over the trees. I look down, and Camp Fenner is just a dot so far, far below.

On the summit we join a group of BP regulars with endless energy. They are yo-yoing chutes on the summit's SE slope. The view is amazing. Starting from Mt Baldy's massive north face, the San Gabriel's are still snow covered clear west to Mt Waterman. The BP regulars start down the main north-facing canyon from the summit, and we soon follow, almost 3000' to Hwy 2. Broad slopes quickly narrow, and at the first waterfall we must traverse, and make quick turns around rocks to negotiate a continuing descent. Now the snow is littered with rock fall that challenges our ski bases. Below we see the BP regulars on foot, climbing on rotten rock, clinging to bushes over a deep narrow point in the canyon. We have reached the second waterfall. I creep to the edge and see a large opening in the snow. A torrent of ice water rushes out under my feet and back under the snow below. Not a good place to fall. What to do? Bahram spots a ledge above that allows us to traverse around the falls, ending above a short cliff of steep hard snow. Using ski pole tips as ice picks for handholds, we kick some toeholds and descend carefully. Next time I'll bring an ice axe. Once around the waterfall, it's a short walk down to Hwy 2 where a snow wall cut by a plow is 15 feet high! Now, only another 3 miles back to the car.

June 26, 2005: The final San. "Gorgonio" that is. Bahram and I camp at the South Fork trailhead and start hiking early in search of snow. Southfork Meadows is very wet, and we must climb over and around piles of fallen trees, victims of winter avalanches. Where did all the snow go? In early May, Christmas Tree Hill had at least 10', and now we are climbing up bare slopes! Finally, we reach the Big Draw and continuous suncuped snow. Imagine climbing up a tilted honeycomb. On the final steep climb to the ridge, the snow is smoother and crampons help to secure each step. Our plan is to ski from the summit ridge down the broad north slope just east of the Big Draw. This slope descends steeply at a constant angle for almost a 1000' before easing off. We stash the gear at the jump off point, and hike another half mile over and back along the ridge to bag the summit. Now it is ski time. Our first turns are off balance across a shallow field of suncups, then over the edge on to the steeper slope below. Thank goodness the snow was smooth, and not too soft by mid-afternoon. Still some energy left in the legs, and down we go, turn after turn. After about 800' down, the good progressively became the bad and then the ugly, as suncups appear and grow closer and closer, and deeper and deeper. Our descent slows, as traverses became longer, and turns fewer. Sort of like skiing

across basketballs, but worse. We escape into the trees and find continuous mounds of snow allowing us to slide on downward between trees and rocks. On the last finger of snow, we enjoy a few more turns up and down the sides of a gully. With skis and boots back on the packs, we are soon hiking down the Mineshaft Saddle trail to a very full Dry Lake. It's several more hours to the car where we arrived after a 12-hour day, and 15 miles of hiking.

A long way for some turns, but very satisfying, and we will remember them with pride for how they were earned . . . the old fashion way.



Jan at basecamp in Rock Creek. Photo by Scott Koepke.