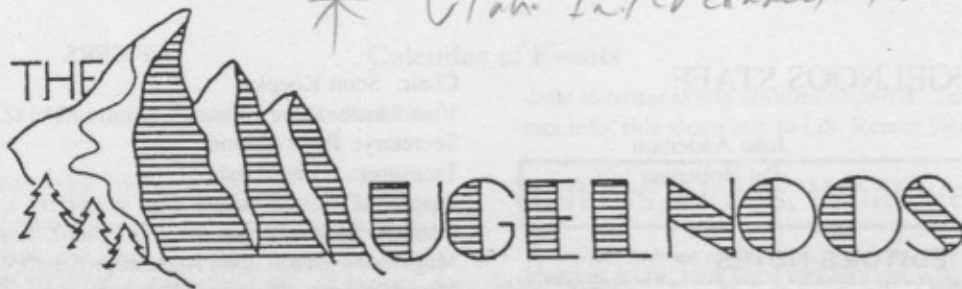


UTah Interconnect Inc

THE  MOUNTAINS

6/07

April/May 2007

Issue # 800

## TWIN PEAKS-SILLIMAN CREST

March 9-11, 2007

Reiner Stenzel

This trip was a replacement for the scheduled Mt. Lyell trip, which lacked participation. We decided to ski and climb on the Silliman Crest in Sequoia National Park. The Western Sierra has usually plenty of snow in the early season and that's what we needed in a poor snow year.

On Friday March 9, four skiers met at Lodgepole: Leslie Hofherr, Bill Lutz, David Bjerk and me. We got a self-issue wilderness permit and took off at about 9am on the Twin Lake trailhead.

Snow conditions were good and we skied from the parking lot. There were a few dry spots on the trail but otherwise solid coverage. At the junction with Silliman Creek we left the trail and headed up along the partly open stream. The pace slowed as we headed through forest and ascended some steep slopes. We had a break near Silliman Meadows and by about noon we reached the open slopes leading to Silliman Lake.

The easiest way to ski Mt. Silliman (11,188') would be to ascend to Silliman Lake (10,049'), as we had done on a previous SMS trip to Silliman. But this time we wanted to explore the Silliman Crest, which is not easily possible from Mt. Silliman. Thus we decided to ski up to the Little Lakes (9804'), 0.5 mi northwest of Mt. Silliman. Thus we ascended the next drainage north of Silliman Creek and reached the Little Lakes by early afternoon. We set up camp at the shore of one lake with wind shelter from some trees. This would be our base camp for two nights. We had a great view of snow covered slopes, the impressive NE face of Mt. Silliman, and a

view over the San Joaquin Valley with the Coastal Range at the horizon. The Central Valley was covered by clouds, while we enjoyed sunshine. After our 3100' climb with full packs we relaxed in the late afternoon and started an early dinner in the snow kitchen. In the evening there was a great sunset, which lit up the mountains and the thin clouds in the western sky. The wind picked up at night and we went to bed early.

On Sat, 3/10, there was not a cloud in the sky, no wind and nothing but untouched snow covered slopes around us. This would be our day of skiing and climbing. After breakfast we headed up north along the Silliman Crest to Silliman Pass. Our destination, Twin Peaks (10,479'), stood out clearly on the Crest. Skiing along the Silliman Crest on a clear day with at least 50 miles visibility was absolutely gorgeous: The entire panorama of the white Sierra Nevada was visible to the east.

Particularly impressive are the "nearby" peaks of The

Great Western Divide. We could see our previous route of the Tableland Traverse. We also spotted some slab avalanches on the steep slopes east of the Silliman Crest. Many animal tracks were visible, presumably from coyotes. We took many pictures, took a break near Silliman Pass and then skied into the saddle between the two peaks of Twin Peaks, 0.5mi NE of Twin Lakes. The western peak is the high point.

Climbing Twin Peaks is not trivial. The south and east faces are technical climbs. A route description mentions a class 3 route from the west. A steep snow chute NW of

(Continued on page 4)



Dave Bjerk: "are we having fun yet?"

Reiner Stenzel photo

## MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR  
MUGELMAILER

John Anderson  
Pat Holleman

### EDITOR'S NOTES

This is the 800th edition of the Mugelnoos. It's astonishing that a Southern California backcountry ski organization could have such a history and tradition. I'm proud to be part of the great SMS tradition.

We need everyone to attend the meetings. Sure, they are hard to get to and you get home late, but it shows respect for the people who take their time to put the meetings on and make presentations. Please resolve now to start attending meetings in the fall.

I apologize for the tardiness of Mugelnoos this year. I was learning, and I had many more day job demands than I thought I would have when I took the job. Next season should be better. Please renew and give Mugelnoos another year.

### NEXT ISSUE

The next issue is November, 2007. All letters, photos, slides, or articles should be sent to Mugelnoos editor, John Anderson, 21717 Evalyn Avenue, Torrance, CA 90503. Materials can be sent by IBM disc or e-mailed to [jaydeeay@yahoo.com](mailto:jaydeeay@yahoo.com). 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!

### SMS WEB PAGE

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

### For Sale:

Cleaning out your ski locker over the summer? Got any stuff you want to sell? Send it in....

## OFFICERS

Chair: Scott Koepke	(310) 413-8087
Vice Chair: Steve Hessen	(562) 693-5012
Secretary: Randy Lamm	(310) 319-1947
Treasurer: Tom Marsh	(805)-498-9580
Programs: Keith Martin	(310) 316-7617
Outings: Heiko Knapp	(213) 385-8220
Mugelnoos Editor: John Anderson	(310) 503-2542
MugelSpinner: Thomas Johansson	
Conservation: Kathy Crandall	(661) 255-9661
Mugelmailer: Pat Holleman	(310) 374-4654
Asst. MugelSpinner; Reiner Stenzel	(310) 454-8787
Asst. MugelSpinner: Owen Malloy	(760) 934-9511

## SMS LEADERS

### SMS Leaders and Officers:

Kathy Crandall (M)  
Newhall  
661-255-9661  
[kcrandal@hartdistrict.org](mailto:kcrandal@hartdistrict.org)

Andy Fried (E)  
Northridge  
818-993-1891  
[andyfried@earthlink.net](mailto:andyfried@earthlink.net)

Mark Goebel  
Huntington Beach  
714-963-9384  
[Goebel.mj@verizon.net](mailto:Goebel.mj@verizon.net)

Leslie Hofherr (Prov I)  
Pleasanton  
(925) 422-8255  
[hofherr2@ltnl.gov](mailto:hofherr2@ltnl.gov)

Pat and Gerry Holleman (M)  
Manhattan Beach  
310-374-4654  
[patngerry247@verizon.net](mailto:patngerry247@verizon.net)

Thomas Johansson  
Newport Beach  
[thomasjohansson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thomasjohansson@sbcglobal.net)

Heiko Knapp  
Los Angeles  
213-385-8220  
[heiko.knapp@web.de](mailto:heiko.knapp@web.de)

Scott P. Koepke  
Los Angeles  
(O) 213-623-7820  
(Cell) 310-413-8087  
[SPKoepke@aol.com](mailto:SPKoepke@aol.com)

Randy Lamm (I)  
Santa Monica  
310-319-1947  
[randy\\_lamm@yahoo.com](mailto:randy_lamm@yahoo.com)

Owen Maloy (I)  
Mammoth Lakes  
760-934-9511  
[owen.maloy@verizon.net](mailto:owen.maloy@verizon.net)

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

Tom Marsh (I)  
Thousand Oaks 805-498-9580  
[qrtmoon@aol.com](mailto:qrtmoon@aol.com)

Lorene Samoska (I)  
La Canada Flintridge 818-952-3665  
[samsei@earthlink.net](mailto:samsei@earthlink.net)

Mike Seiffert (I)  
La Canada Flintridge 818-952-3665  
[samsei@earthlink.net](mailto:samsei@earthlink.net)

Reiner Stenzel (M)  
Pacific Palisades 310-454-9787  
[stenzel@physics.ucla.edu](mailto:stenzel@physics.ucla.edu)

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

## Calendar of Events

*All trips sponsored Ski Mountaineers unless otherwise indicated.*

**April 14-15 Sat-Sun TI: Sierra Day Tours:** Ski to Cloud Ripper and Mt Goode from South Lake. Intermediate to advanced terrain. Ldr: Alvin Walter Asst.: tbd

**Apr 17 Tues Ski Mountaineers. 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 Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles.

**Apr 21-22 Sat-Sun TI: Onion Valley Area ski tours:** Ski (hopefully) on corn snow in the Eastern Sierra to Kearsarge Pass and Robinson Basin on day tours and car camp. Intermediate or better downhill skiing ability, metal edge skis with skins. Send experience, h/w phones, e-mail & addresses to Ldr: Mark Goebel. Asst Ldr: Tom Marsh

**Apr 21-22 Sat-Sun TI: Ski Where the Best Snow Is:** Ski tour to local mountains, the Sierra or desert peaks, where the snow conditions are the best. Typical destinations are Baldy, Gorgonio, Jacinto, cl 2 Sierra Peaks, White Mtns or Panamints. Location depends on road and snow conditions. Snow camping or car camping. Bring backcountry ski and camping gear. Intermediate to better skiing abilities required. Send experience, contact info, ride share info to Ldr. Reiner Stenzel. Asst: tbd

**Apr 27-30 Thu-Mon TI: Middle Fork Bishop Creek:** Ski up into drainage and make a base camp. Ski tours to places of interest, possibly including Mt. Wallace. Required metal edged skis with climbing skins, avy beacon, shovel, and snow camping gear. E-mail or call with experience, address and home phone to Ldr: Jim Crouch. Asst: Alvin Walter.

**May 12-13 Sat-Sun TI: Rock Creek Introductory Ski Tour:** Car camp, ski slopes of beautiful Little Lakes Valley and surrounding area. Intro SMS day tours aimed at intermediate or better skiers with some backcountry experience. Metal-edged skis & skins required. Send experience, contact, ride share info to Ldr: Mike Seiffert. Asst: Lorene Samoska

**May 15 Tues Ski Mountaineers. 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 Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles.

**May 19-20 Sat-Sun TI: Ski Where the Best Snow Is:** Ski tour to local mountains, the Sierra or desert peaks, where the snow conditions are the best. Typical destinations are Baldy, Gorgonio, Jacinto, cl 2 Sierra Peaks, White Mtns or Panamints. Location depends on road and snow conditions. Snow camping or car camping. Bring backcountry ski and camping gear. Intermediate to better skiing abilities required. Send experience, contact info, ride share info to Ldr. Reiner Stenzel. Asst.: tbd

**June 2-3 Sat-Sun TI: Ski Where the Best Snow Is:** Ski tour to local mountains, the Sierra or desert peaks, where the snow conditions are the best. Typical destinations are Baldy, Gorgonio, Jacinto, cl 2 Sierra Peaks, White Mtns or Panamints. Location depends on road and snow conditions. Snow camping or car camping. Bring backcountry ski and camping gear. Interme-

diated to better skiing abilities required. Send experience, contact info, ride share info to Ldr. Reiner Stenzel. Asst.: tbd

## Letters, Notes, Whatever....

Here is a link to a very thought provoking film about group dynamics while skiing in avalanche terrain.  
<http://www.lifeonterra.com/archive.php>

Recommend viewing the segments in order, 1, 2, 3.

*Mark Goebel*

## FAVORITE THINGS TO TAKE ON AN OVER-NIGHT SNOW CAMP:

Alvin Walters—FRS radios

Mike Seiffert —Mountain bike (why hike up in tele boots when you can ride?)

...to be continued in November



2006-2007 Chair Scott Koepke

(Continued from page 1)

the saddle makes the traverse to the west difficult. Leslie and Bill decided to head for the lower Twin. David and I were able to ski up the steep snow field to the eastern ridge where we left the skis and climbed over the ridge to the west. We inspected the steep rock face and found something like a class 3 route just west of the summit, a mixed snow and rock climb. First we ascended a steep snow field with "skiers ice axes" (poles without basket inserted up to the handle into the snow), then did some rock climbing including a short chimney ascent with telemark boots, and suddenly were on the summit. Again a superb unobstructed view of endless mountains and valleys. We watched our partners on the other Twin. We had lunch, took pictures, left a new peak register under a cairn.

We were a bit anxious about the descent. But everything went fine, including telemarking down the 40+deg eastern face of the big Twin. The group then headed back south along the Crest toward Silliman. Bill and David were anxious for carving the virgin slopes above Little Lakes and went ahead, while Leslie and I skied along the Crest as far south as possible. Eventually it turns into a non-skiable rocky ridge and we had to retrace. Along the way we encountered some impressive old gnarly trees. The only way to climb Mt. Silliman was through a narrow steep chute topped by a cornice, not very appealing.

The steep slopes directly down to the upper Little Lake looked avy prone since soft snow rested on wet smooth slabs, so we chose a safer detour back to base camp. Since it was too early to retire I followed David and Bill's ascent route on the eastern slopes of Silliman and left my marks in the soft spring snow. Later Leslie joined. Everyone had skied their hearts out on this wonderful day.

In the evening we had another great sunset. No wind at night, bright moonshine after midnight and pleasant temps although the water bottle was frozen in the morning. David and Bill did not want to depart on Sunday, 3/11 morning. They liked the skiing too much and decided to leave in the afternoon while I had to drive home. By 9am we packed up and skied down, first on hard frozen snow, then on spring snow, then on apple sauce, and finally on patches of grass and pine needles. A heat wave had arrived and the snow went down the Kaweah River. From morning in the mountains to afternoon the Valley there was a 50 degree temperature change! But we had the best of all, great skiing in spring weather and green foothills filled with wildflowers. It was a great trip with best friends.

## SAN ANTONIO SKI HUT *update*

The big fund raising effort for the San Antonio Ski Hut, affectionately known to the SMS as the "Baldy Hut," is to replace the roof. The current conventional roof will be replaced with a 40-50 year life metal roof (color to match the out-guess the color "outhouse budget is \$8,000 has been



house-green. I would be termed green." The \$10,000, of which raised so far.

This will be a fort. The old torn off and all carried down the new roofing the major physical effort needs to be the old materials the trail. Then all materials need to be carried up the trail. The roofing materials will consist of insulation (to go under the roofing material) plus the metal roof skin. Gil Estrada, man of the tonio Ski Commit-tee, says, "This is a magnitude not seen original build and the hut. "

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Baldy Summit, March 2007  
*Alvin Walters photo*

Gil hopes to begin carrying material up as early as this June, with completion anywhere from this summer to as long as next summer. Because of the lack of rain this year the summer fire season may arrive early, which could cause the USFS to close down the forest. Gil says if the forest is closed down, the project will have to be postponed.

The SMS has been a big supporter of the effort to raise the \$10,000 required for the job. SMS members have donated \$880 to the repair effort, which was matched by \$880 from the SMS treasury. Thus the SMS contributed roughly 22% of the \$8,000 raised to date.

\$195

# SKIING THE UTAH INTERCONNECT TOUR

Mark & Joy Goebel

Early last year Joy returned from a conference in Nashville with good news that the 2007 conference would be in Salt Lake City, and we should do some skiing before the conference. Since we would only have a few days to ski, which of the 7 local areas should we visit? Did you know that it's possible to ski 6 in one day, and sample some of the Wasatch backcountry at the same time!

It happens almost daily, snow and weather conditions permitting, throughout the ski season via the Ski Utah Interconnect Adventure Tour. Designed for advanced skiers in good physical condition, the resorts of Deer Valley, Park City, Brighton, Solitude, Alta, and Snowbird can be linked together via chairlift rides, traverses, and sidestepping up short inclines. The tour is made in a group of up to 12, with 2 guides. It is designed to be done on alpine gear, but we were happy to be using our lighter backcountry gear on the uphill sections. Joy was on tele, and I was on AT. Anyone who is comfortable skiing crud and other backcountry snow conditions will enjoy this tour. A majority of the skiing takes place within the ski areas, both on and off the groomers. It was an all-day outing, with a fairly continuous pace between chairlift rides. There was really only one break before a late lunch, and then we went non-stop the final few hours to finish the tour on time. We were glad that we had acclimatized the day before by skiing at Snowbird.

While the Wasatch Range usually has a deep blanket of snow by February 14<sup>th</sup>, the date we took the tour, the areas were below normal like other western resorts. Fortunately for us, there was a good dump just before we arrived, so the snow was soft and untracked in the backcountry. On tour day we started from Deer Valley where we met the rest of the group, there were 8 total, plus our guides, Brian and Patrick. The first couple of fast runs at Deer Valley, well know for its high-end lodging, service, and groomed runs, allowed the guides to check everyone's skiing ability. Then it was only a few side-steps, and we were up and over into Park City Resort. While some took an optional crud run, we saved our legs and stuck to the groomers as we made our way to the top of the Jupiter Chair. We skied under the out-of-bounds rope, through some trees, and we were overlooking an open, untracked slope down into Big Cottonwood Canyon. One by

one we made our first powder turns on a long descent to the base of Solitude Mtn. Resort where we had a short break. We skied some runs in Solitude, and then skied the upper SolBright trail over to Brighton. In Brighton everyone opted for an exciting/steep crud run down between big rocks and cliffs, before taking the lower SolBright trail back to Solitude for lunch and a well-earned break.



Skier: Reiner Stenzel

Our

guides warned against selecting the chili-cheese fries, because right after lunch we rode a chair to the top, slid around the corner to the side of a steep bowl, and began a dramatic, 500-yard sidestepping traverse across the "Highway to Heaven" and into Little Cottonwood Canyon via Twin Lakes Pass. Needless to say, we were well heated up by the time we reached the far side, but it only lasted a moment, for it was now blowing and snowing. We enjoyed our turns down to Alta in the new soft snow, quickly rode up two chairs and skied 1000 feet down into Mineral Basin on the back of Snowbird. The Mineral Basin Express took us to the 11,000' summit of windy Hidden Peak, and we made our final 3000' run to the bottom of the Snowbird Tram and our waiting van ride back to Deer Valley. All in all, it was a fun and memorable day, everyone skied well together, and our guides were highly skilled, fun, patient, and encouraging. For more information about the tour and some photos, check out the website: <http://www.skiutah.com/interconnect/>

## Zion Ski Traverse by Rich Henke

In early March 1989, Bob Dugdinski, Brian Samuelson, and I did a ski traverse of Zion National Park from the West Rim Trail - in the main Zion Canyon - to Lee Pass at the far northwest corner of the park. The tour is described in Steve Barnett's book, "The Best Ski Tours in North America". According to the Zion rangers, it has seldom been completed and they were not very happy to see us attempt it. Barnett's book described the tour as an easy one, which it was, but different weather and snow conditions could require parties to be skilled in ice axe use for some portions of the tour.

The scenery is spectacular, starting with the long climb by foot up the West Rim Trail with beautiful views of Zion Canyon. The trail was almost clear of snow. But the upper portion of the trail is cut into a rock cliff and at times, you might find the route packed with 45-degree ice above a 500-foot cliff. Skiable snow was reached in about 3 miles and we were on our skis most of the time from that point on until the last 13 miles, which we walked. The snow would be better earlier in late January or early February. But it would be colder and have a higher probability of needing to use an ice axe.

We followed the trail along the rim of Phantom Canyon, which passed through Potato Hollow and finally arrived at Lava Point. From here, we skied a snow-covered road to Kolob Reservoir and west to where it dropped down into Willis Creek. Kolob Reservoir is outside the park and many cabins are located here. Snowmobiles are common, especially on weekends. The steakhouse mentioned in Barnett's book has been closed for many years. There is also a non-technical escape route at this point. You can return to the town of Virgin by skiing and walking south along the Kolob Reservoir Road. On weekends, you could probably get a ride after passing the gate where the road is closed in winter. After leaving the reservoir, we took a wrong turn on the road, which caused us a 3-hour detour through snow covered scrub oak slopes before we got back on the route. We walked the road down to Willis Creek, but then skied through this narrow canyon with sandstone walls rising on both sides. At La Verkin Creek, the skiing was essentially over since the many stream crossings made it impractical. This was especially true for me, since my old ski binding had fractured due to metal fatigue at Lava Point. I skied the last half or the trip with an impro-

vised cable binding made from leather straps. I could maneuver the ski but it took me several minutes each time I had to put it on or take it off.

### GOOD SNOW YEAR??



San Gorgonio, March 2005

*Photo Alvin Walter*



San Gorgonio, March 2007

*Photo Alvin Walter*



Jim Luick, Dale G. and Mark Kim

*East face of Mt. Charlton, March 2007*

*Photo: Alvin Walter*

# Backcountry Day Tripper

## ONION VALLEY

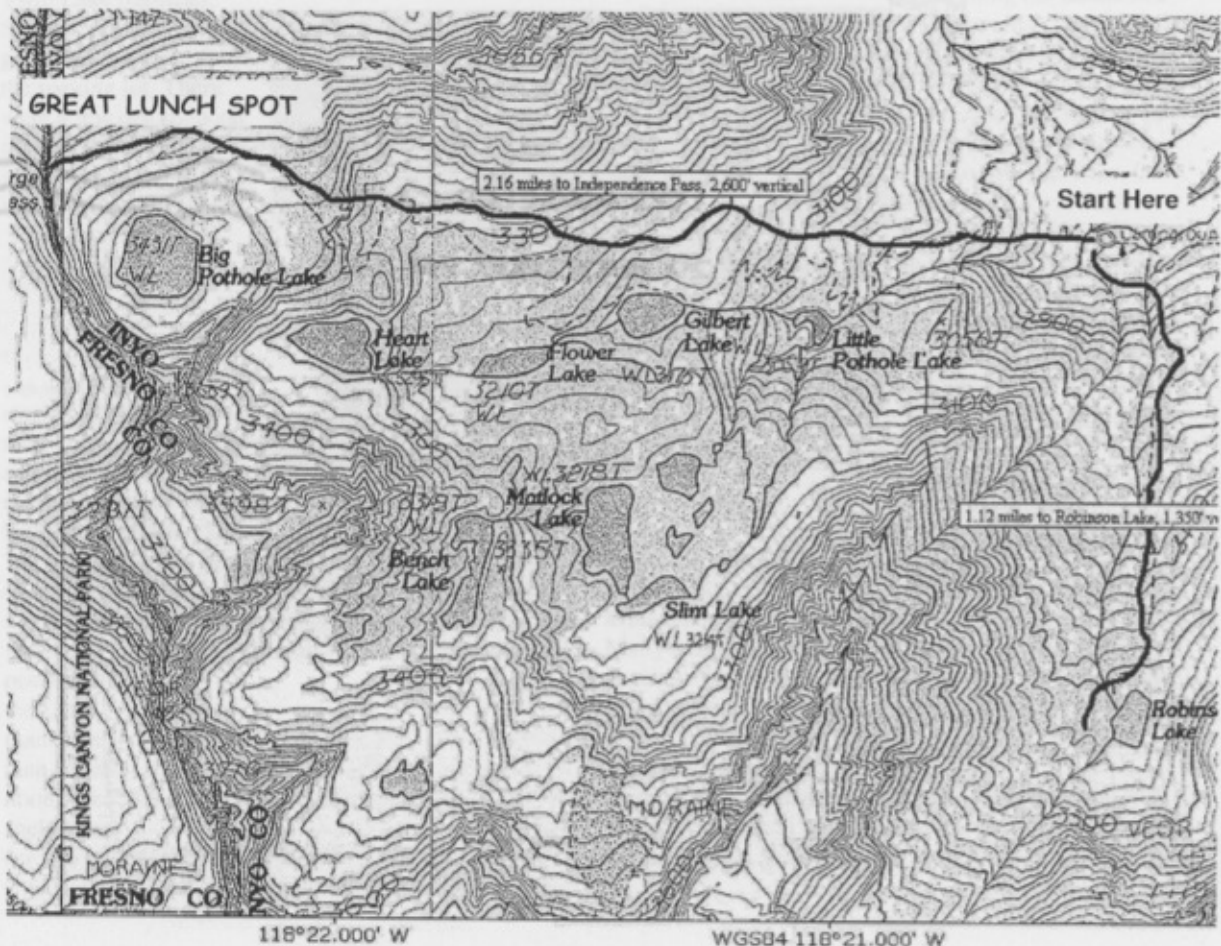
Onion Valley has long been a destination of SMS trips. It has all the great attributes of a great backcountry day-trip destination: close enough to drive direct from Los Angeles (a little longer than it takes to drive to Big Bear), 2,500' or so of climb, generally good spring corn snow, intermediate terrain with some open bowl skiing near the pass and tree skiing on the way down. I have left the South Bay at 5:00am and arrived at the Onion Valley trailhead by 9:00 (those riding with Bahram a few years ago would have made it much faster).

To get to Onion Valley drive north on 395 to Independence, turn left at the Onion Valley sign. For a quick weekend, the idea is to camp in the Upper or Lower Grays Meadow campgrounds well outside of town in the foothills. You can sleep low but still acclimate to the elevation. The next morning, start early. Drive to the

turnaround at the end of the Onion Valley road.

There are at least two routes to follow. One is to climb north towards Kearsarge Pass, the other to bear a bit south and ascend Robinson Canyon.

If you have left early enough (in the spring time), you arrive at the pass just as the corn is ripening, but in time for lunch while taking in the great views to the west. If you like, you can ascend the slopes to the north to increase the vertical on the way down. Then crank up the fun meter: The skins go in the pack, the poles are adjusted, the pack straps get tightened, and its whoops and hollers all the way, carving through the corn on the way to the parking lot and your stash of cold ones.



THE  
MUGELNOOS



Reiner and  
Dave ascend-  
ing Twin  
Peaks

### SEND TO MUGLENOOS

- *Suggestions for articles*
- *Stuff you want to sell*
- *Private trip reports*
- *Letters to the editor*
- *List of great backcountry skiing websites*
- *This is your publication. What ideas do you have to make it better???*



LOS ANGELES, CA 900

29 MAY 2007 PM 14 T

Mugelnoos

Pat Holleman  
1638 6th Street  
Manhattan Beach,  
CA 90266



Richard L. Henke  
409 South Lucia  
Redondo Beach, CA 90277-  
SMS RCS R 2007