



THE MUGELNOOS

No. 530 February 16, 1977

A newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Section of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter. Annual Subscription \$2.00

KNOW YOUR EDITORS (BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY AREN'T ENTIRELY RUTHLESS)

(Editors note: despite the title, the following has merit not only for the subject matter but also the sly way the information was obtained and then smuggled out for publication without the knowledge of aforesaid subject matter, Ruth Mendenhall).

Ruth Dyar Mendenhall has been the driving force behind Mugelnoos for almost its whole history. The importance of her efforts is shown by the fact that it has been published monthly without fail which makes it the oldest continuously published Section newsheet in the Club.

Ruth was born in the farming village of Kiesling, near Spokane, Washington. During childhood on the farm, she and her brother and three sisters spent much time outdoors, hiked, and climbed (in the apple orchards). When Ruth was 14 the family moved to Spokane, where Ralph Dyar was editor of the "Spokesman-Review," as well as being a playwright and author. They lived in a big comfortable house on 12th Street, where in later years, a number of climbers enroute to the Canadian Rockies were to enjoy Mrs. Dyar's hospitality and raspberry pie.

Ruth attended the University of Washington, and graduated with a B.A. magna cum laude in journalism.

The job market of the Depression did not offer many opportunities for a young would-be writer. Ruth took a job in the California State Relief Administration, and later in a small publishing firm in the state. Ruth started going on Sierra Club trips to meet other young people. Then in early 1938 she discovered the RCS. She tried a practice climb (the early ones were at Eagle Rock and Devil's Gate Dam) and thought climbing was about the most enjoyable thing she'd ever done. It came naturally, and so did the easy-going witty people, and the trips to the mountain wilderness (at that time, if you can imagine it, they essentially had the whole Sierra to themselves!). In her first season, Ruth did most of the existing routes at Tahquitz (six), the north face of San Jacinto, and was on the first ascent of the North Buttress of Mt. Sill. She also became active in the Ski Mountaineers, and helped build the ski huts.

In 1939, six young climbers, including Ruth, formed the cooperative house "Base Camp". Mugelnoos was now published by Ruth from the house. Also in 1939, Ruth and another Base Camp member, John Mendenhall, were starting to go together (they had met the previous year at Tahquitz, while walking past the base of the Fingertip Traverse). On September 22, 1939 they were married.

Ruth and John continued to climb together. In 1940 they made the first ascent of Monument Peak, California, and of Temple Crag from the north-east side; in 1941, of the Southeast Face route of Mr. Whitney. The war interrupted their California climbing, as John was transferred to defense work in the East. They climbed locally there, or where no cliffs were available, kept fit with jogging and fall-practice in the woods (which was not exactly conventional behavior in those days--one local sheriff suspected them of smuggling). They were able to get to the Tetons in 1944 (the return from Mt. Moran was memorable for a nighttime slog through a very deep beaver pond).

In 1943, while the Mendenhalls were in Birmingham, daughter Vivian was born. After the war they returned to Southern California, where Valerie was born in 1946. The family lived in Los Angeles at first, then built a house in western Pasadena, with a view of the mountains, to which they moved in 1951. The girls accompanied their parents on most trips. It must be admitted that when they were young, they were not invariably enthusiastic on the trail; but they soon acquired, and still have, their parents' love for walking and wilderness and high places.

(continued on Page Three)

MUGELNOOS STAFF

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Tim Ryan
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Vivian Mendenhall, to name most.

NEXT EDITOR: Andy Fried
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NEXT ISSUE: March 16, 1977

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: March 11, 1977

NEW MUGELMAILER: volunteer someone!

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS: Third Weds. of
each month, 7:30 PM, Lemon Grove
Rec Center, 4959 Lemon Grove Ave.,
LA, near Hwd. Fwy. & Melrose. Program
refreshments. Climbers, skiers,
guests, all welcome!

RCS TO PROPOSE BY LAWS CHANGES
Fred Wing has appointed an ad hoc
By-Law Committee to propose by-law
changes to the RCS membership this
spring. The Committee expects to
propose a change in the date of the
annual business meeting to early
in October (instead of November)
to enable each new administration
to take charge early enough to
meet the Nov. deadline for submit-
ting climbs to the Schedule and to
permit more time for the Safety
and Training Committees to adopt
training policy for the winter
training program. Comments on this
potential change and suggestions
for any additional by-law changes
are welcomed. Please contact the
Committee Chairwoman, Pat Butler,
or Committee members Emory Yount,
LeRoy Russ, or Al Fowler by Mar. 1.
The Committee will explain proposed
changes in future Mugelnoos and
submit them by mail to the vote of
the RCS membership later in the
spring. (PB)

C A L E N D A R

- Feb. 27 So. Cal. checkout tour
Mar. 5-6 Mt. Baldy tour
Mar. 6 Mt. Rubidoux
Mar. 12-13 Mt. Bradley with SPS
Mar. 12-13 Joshua Tree
Mar. 13 So. Cal. checkout tour
Mar. 19-20 San Gorgonio tour
Mar. 26 Stoney Point

ADVANCED ADVANCE NOTICE

The Sierra Club Mountaineering
Committee announces an illustrated
slide lecture by Jim Donini, fea-
turing the first ascent of the Torre
Egger in Patagonia. The program will
also be used to assist in publi-
cation or other dissemination of
the results of such research.
Applications for Mountaineering
Fellowship and Research grants are
available from the American Alpine
Club, 113 East 90th Street, New
York, NY 10028. Requests should
specify which type of form is des-
ired. Applications must be received
before Mar. 1. Awards will be
announced during May.

The ice-capped granite spire, Torre
Egger, rises nearly a vertical mile
out of the Patagonian Ice Sheet at
the tip of South America. Accounts
of the expedition which led to the
first ascent of this extraordinary
mountain were featured in recent
issues of National Geographic and
Mountain Magazine.

The program, beautifully illustra-
ted, is also about Patagonia, its
people, terrain, -a vast wilderness
where glaciers, forest, and desert
merge a scant 1200 ft. above sea level.
Donini's program is the first in
what will be a continuing series
about first ascents to be sponsored
by the Club's Mountaineering Comm-
ittee. Further information can be
obtained from its chairman, Norman
Kingsley, 790-4275. Get your tickets
early! (NK)

EASY MONEY?

The American Alpine Club's Moun-
taineering Fellowship Committee
is accepting applications for grants
from young climbers, generally
under age 26, participating in
expeditionary mountaineering ven-
tures. Grants will be awarded to
individuals depending upon excel-
lence of the proposed project, evi-
dence of mountaineering experience,
and need for funds.

Research grants will be made to
those engaged in research into the
alpine environment. The funds may
also be used to assist in publi-
cation or other dissemination of
the results of such research.

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CLYDE ICE AXE ON DISPLAY

The mountaineering ice axe used by
Norman Clyde, renowned for his
climbing exploits, has been given
to the Inyo County museum by
Frances Kilpatrick of Independence.
The axe bears Clyde's name. Elodie
Drew brought this artifact to the
museum. The museum owns a number
of Clyde's possessions which are
destined for a mountaineering ex-
hibit at the museum.

(from the Inyo Museums News
Bulletin, December, 1976.).

BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS, if you might
be willing to take over the job of
MUGELMAILER, TALK TO TIM RYAN SOON!

Vivian is now a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Maryland. Valerie is a seasonal ranger in Yosemite, and lives in Cedar City, Utah, where her husband Michael Cohen teaches in Southern Utah State College.

On returning to California, Ruth and John lost no time in getting back into climbing. In 1948 they pioneered what is now the regular route on lower Cathedral Spire in Yosemite. They climbed all the 14,000-foot peaks in California, and many others. In 1957 they made the first ascent of the north face of Mt. Williamson. There were also trips to the Canadian Rockies; in 1947 they made the first ascent of Mt. Confederation (after six previous attempts by others), and in 1952 of the remote Aiguille Peak. They were first on the northwest ridges of Mt. Temple and Mt. Lowell, and made many other Canadian climbs, including the Bugaboos and the Lake Victoria area. They also climbed a number of major peaks in the Cascades.

In 1961 the family spent the summer in Europe. During a month in the Alps, they climbed the Wildspitze, the Eiger (northwest ridge), and the Matterhorn (Hörnli Ridge).

Ruth has remained active in climbing and conservation work with the Sierra Club. A member of the Sierra Club Mountaineering Committee, she is also a director of the American Alpine Club, and is particularly interested in good communication between the AAC and the rest of the climbing community, through mountaineering publications, dialogue with other clubs, and encouragement of membership applications. She teaches climbing for the RCS, and lectures to youth groups and classes on backpacking and wilderness skills. She has published three books, "Backpack Techniques"; "Backpack Cookery"; for La Siesta Press, and "Introduction to Rock and Mountain Climbing" (Stackpole). The latter two are in their second editions. Ruth and John received an award from the Angeles Chapter in 1976 for outstanding contributions to the Chapter. Besides these activities, Ruth also visits each year the wilderness cabin in British Columbia which her father bought many years ago, and knits complicated afghans.

Does Ruth have a word of inspiration and guidance for Mugelnoos as it enters its 5th decade? Yes, indeed: "Say MOOGULnoos, not MUGGLEnoos!"
 ***** (VM) *****

A new store, PACIFIC CREST MOUNTAINEERING, has opened in the San Fernando Valley. PCM features personal service and a complete line of climbing and ski mountaineering equipment. This includes a supply of EB's (while they last) and the new Ramer ski binding. Why not drop by and satisfy your curiosity:

PACIFIC CREST MOUNTAINEERING
 4852 Laurel Canyon Blvd.
 North Hollywood, Calif. 91607
 Phone: (213) 762-2500

(AO)

DUTY CALLS

Canada now charges travelers from the U.S. 17 1/2% duty on all food over two days' supply. According to Customs officers, this was "always" the law, but has not been enforced until this season, when many Americans in recreational vehicles took hundreds of dollars worth of groceries over the border.

Climbers going to Canada will simplify their trip by either keeping a record of food purchases which must be declared at the border, or perhaps outfitting in Canada. (RM)

DOES YOUR ROPE KINK?

Some climbers dislike using the Munter friction hitch for belaying because "it puts twists" in their rope. Actually the twists are already in the rope and the Munter hitch is attempting to straighten them out! A good way to avoid twists is to use a chain coil rather than the conventional mountaineers coil. A rope may be chain coiled as follows: Grab the middle of the rope, double it and form a girth hitch around your left hand. Then grab the doubled rope about 12" away with your left hand and pull a 6" loop through the two loops of the girth hitch. Reach through the new loop with your left hand, grab the doubled rope 12" farther on and form another 6" loop. If the rope is stiff, the loops will be somewhat larger. Continue forming loops in this manner until 4 or 5 feet of doubled rope remain. Then pull the remaining length through the last loop. This locks the chain of loops. The remaining ends of it can be used to tie the rope into a bundle, or the chain of loops can be formed into a 3' doughnut and tied-off with the remaining ends.

To uncoil, pull the ends through the last two loops to unlock the chain.

The remaining loops will fall out as the rope is pulled. With a little practice this method is faster and will keep your rope free of kinks. Try it!

(GN) (Editor: run that one by once more please).

DOUGAL HASTON KILLED:
MARTIN BOYSEN TO APPEAR IN HIS PLACE

In mid-January, 1977, Scottish climber Dougal Haston was killed in an avalanche near Leysin, Switzerland. Appearing in the famed mountaineer's place at the February 10- and 11 showing of "EVEREST - THE HARDEST WAY UP" at the Embassy Auditorium in Los Angeles was English climber Martin Boysen, who was also a member of the summit team on the climb of the Southwest Face.

Boysen was forced to return short of the summit due to faulty oxygen equipment and lost crampons. Boysen's climbing partner, Mick Burke, continued on and apparently reached the summit, but disappeared near the top. (RM)

RCS RESCUE SEMINAR

Thirty-six persons counting instructors turned out for the November 6 RCS rescue seminar. Of the students only eleven were RCS members, the other sixteen were non members, although some were former members, and others may be future members. (Is that the new math?-Ed.) All participants had studied the materials well. This became apparent as the day wore on. Much to our surprise the seminar did not run into darkness.

A few new things were introduced into the program. These included the "Ape Hang" and a variation of the same to be used as an alternative to our former system for rescuing a climber hanging from a swami belt from an overhang.

Passing a knot through a braking system was also stressed. Other exercises included tragsitz lower, carries, assisted hoist, and use of triple bowline lower.

Thanks go to all those who helped instruct as well as all who were interested enough to come out and try something new. (Andy Fried).

Rappelling Death at Pinnacles

Mitchell Haydon from Livermore, Ca., died last spring descending the overhanging face of Tombstone Rock in Pinnacles National Monument. He and a friend, Bruce Fischer reached the top of Tombstone around noon, and decided to descend the route via rappel.

A doubled 300 ft., 9mm perlon served as rappel rope, and a 6 carabiner Yosemite system was the brake. But, here comes the hitch. The brake was attached to coils of 1-inch tubular wrapped around the WAIST.

In other words, not a diaper, figure eight or sit sling was used, but a waist-only swami. Haydon used a Prusik sling as a backup system: Prusik on rappel line, tied off to a second waist-swami.

He made it below the lip of the overhang, then got stuck. A hiker heard him yell that his Prusik was stuck. It took his companion, Fischer, 15-min. to downclimb the route in an attempt to help Haydon.

By then the latter was hanging limp, foaming at the mouth. A later coroner's report concluded Haydon died from suffocation caused by aspiration of stomach contents into his lungs. In other words, due to constrictions and exhaustive exertion trying to reach his unreachable stuck Prusik knot, Haydon vomitted. The constriction restricted ejection, and the stomach contents re-entered his lungs.

Without belaboring the point, the report goes into lengthy detail about using waist-swami only (see Kingsley's 'Deadly Swami' article in an earlier Mugelnoos), using a Prusik to safeguard the rappel, and the climber's inability to relieve the strain on his waist and chest, plus lack of sufficient equipment by Fischer to effect a quick rescue. Not mentioned in the report is a technique that was vogue in the northlands and glacier country, i.e. stow a 3-4 ft. 5mm sling in a pocket. In case of trouble such as above, Prusik-knot it onto the rappel line, stand up in it and loosen the jammed knot, then use both Prusik slings to climb out, or take them off and descend.

From a report written by Jim Langford, Pinnacles Nat'l. Mon. I&RM Chief, 20 Sept. 76.

GEAR FOR SALE

195 cm Durafiber Skis w/Ramer Bindings	\$150.00
190cm Ross Haute Route w/Ramer Bndg.	150.00
180cm Mother Trucker w/Ramer Bndg.	150.00
180cm Mother Trucker, clean	75.00
180cm Trucker II	75.00

Sumatic bindings, Skilom x-country shoes, rescue toboggans. Gear is slightly used, see it at the Touring Center at Giant Forest, Seq. (NK).