

# THE MOUNTAIN DOGS

No. 608 -- August 16, 1983. A 6 page issue.

A newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Send subscriptions & address changes to Dove Menkes, 2530 Coventry Circle, Fullerton 92633. \$5 per year due in October.

## JOHN MENDENHALL DIES FROM A STROKE

John D. Mendenhall died July 30, 1983, in Seattle, Washington, after suffering a stroke in mid-July. He was well-known in the engineering and mountaineering communities for his outstanding achievements. He was born December 19, 1911, in Burlington Junction, Missouri. John and his wife Ruth lived primarily in Los Angeles before building a home in Pasadena, where they then lived for 25 years. Five years ago John retired, and they moved to Seattle. His father, Walter M., and brother Ferdinand had made many valuable contributions to the Southern California community, one of which was publishing the Van Nuys News.

In 1933 John acquired a B.S. with Honors in civil engineering from the California Institute of Technology. The previous year he was elected to Tau Beta Pi, the national honorary engineering society. He served many years of his professional life as chief structural engineer for the Ralph M. Parsons Company. He was a member of both the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Structural Engineers Association of Southern California. The latter society elected him to serve on a panel working on earthquake building standards for California, where he made valuable contributions.

He and his wife Ruth were avid mountaineers and later their two daughters also became very active in the sport. John and Ruth made several new ascents and climbed extensively in the United States, Canada and Europe. John and Ruth's first ascents included Mt. Confederation and Mt. Aiguille in the Canadian Rockies and the north face of Mt. Williamson in the Sierra Nevada. John is also known for the first ascent of the "impossible" Open Book rock climb on Tahquitz Rock in Idylwild. He and Ruth coauthored the popular book, Introduction to Rock and Mountain Climbing.

Both John and Ruth were active members in the Sierra Club and were particularly involved in the Rock Climbing and Ski Mountaineers Sections of the Angeles Chapter since 1937. They were both honored by the Sierra Club, and they received in 1978 the Francis Farquhar Mountaineering Award. That same year the Rock Climbing Section recognized their outstanding activities and services by awarding them a lifetime Honorary Membership in that Section. They were long-time members of the American Alpine Club, and John was Chairman of the Cascade Section around 1981. The last five years he was an active member of the Seattle Mountaineers.

John, Ruth and other family members were vacationing in the Tetons in July. The night before a planned climb of Disappointment Peak, John suffered a stroke. He was flown to Salt Lake City and later to Ballard Hospital in Seattle, where he soon died. John leaves his wife, Ruth Dyar Mendenhall, daughters Vivian Mendenhall of Seattle and Valerie Cohen of Cedar City, Utah, and one grandchild, Jessie Cohen. His family and friends will long remember him for his intelligent, friendly, warm personality, his rugged determination, and his great love of the mountains.

Funeral services were held in Seattle, Washington, on August 3, 1983. Those wishing to make a contribution in John's memory should donate to the Sierra Club (contact Mary Ferguson at the Angeles Chapter office), the American Alpine Club, or the Seattle Mountaineers. (Those wishing to donate to one of the latter, contact Ellen Wilts, 1431 Brixton Rd., Pasadena 91105, (213) 255-9521.)

--Ellen Wilts

John was an exemplary gentleman in addition to being a fine mountaineer. During a climb, he was fond of quoting from the classics of mountaineering literature. Two quotes that stand out in my memory are: "Men can go where the clouds can go, but they must be hardy men" (Conrad Kain) and "Look after yourself monsieur, I can hardly save myself" (sorry, but I don't know the source for this one).

A day in the mountains with John Mendenhall was a joy.

--R.J. Secor

John was my dear friend for over 45 years, a wonderful person as well as such a fine mountaineer. We "old timers" will miss him very much.

--Howard Koster

MUGELSOOS STAFF

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\$5 per year - make checks to Mugelnoos

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NEXT ISSUE: September 20, 1983

DEADLINE: Thursday September 15

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS: Third Tues. of  
each month, 7:30pm, Dept of Water and  
Power Cafeteria (Orange Rm) or Audi-  
torium, 111 N. Hope, downtown LA.  
Parking free. Program, conversa-  
tion--Climbers, skiers, & guests all  
welcome!

C A L E N D A R

Ski Mountaineers

Sep 20 - Mugelnoos meeting: D Katz  
Yosemite Valley climbs

Rock Climbing Section

Aug 27-28 - Tahquitz: Mundwiler

Sep 2-5 - Tuolumne: Johnson/Fowler

Sep 11 - Safety Test: Russ

Sep 20 - Mugelnoos meeting; D Katz  
Yosemite Valley climbs.

Sep 24-25 - Tahquitz: Crandall/Harris

RCS SAFETY TEST

Individuals interested in taking the  
safety test for membership and or a  
proficiency rating must make a re-  
servation with the safety chairman.  
NEXT SAFETY TEST: SEP 11.

--LeRoy Russ

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 20: David Katz, a veteran  
Yosemite climber who got his start  
with the RCS will present a climbing  
program covering many climbs in the  
Valley. Climbs of numerous high level  
routes such as the Shield and Di-  
hedral Wall on El Cap will be presen-  
ted. Starts at 7:30pm.

OCTOBER 18: The program will be a  
potpourri of slides from members and  
those active with the RCS. Members  
are encouraged to bring 5 to 10 of  
their best slides for sharing (No  
hero shots; ED).

CLIMBING LESSONS

Randy Vogel's new telephone number,  
for those interested in climbing les-  
sons, is 714-494-6350.

Address: 1924D Pac Coast Hwy  
Laguna Beach, Ca  
92651

ANNUAL RCS BUSINESS MEETING

The annual RCS business meeting will be  
held on Wed., Oct 26, at 7:15pm in the  
Cafeteria of the DWP. Members and non-  
members are invited.

A W A R D S

The RCS awards instituted at last year's  
annual business meeting will be awarded  
again this year. Included are the "C.Y.  
Rocksoff Memorial Award" for the most  
auspicious experience on an RCS outing,  
the "Hell on High Mountain Award" for  
the most climbs attended, and the "E.B.  
Twinkletoes Award" for the most titillat-  
ing or humiliating experience. It is  
possible that this occasion might see the  
presentation of the second annual (?)  
"Real Men Don't Eat Quiche Award".

--Virgil Shields

C A L E N D A R C H A N G E

The Oct 1-2 Suicide trip has been changed  
to the North Side of the Owens Ridge.  
Contact Virgil Shields (who else would  
lead a trip to the mysterious, distant  
Owens Ridge: ed) for details.

ASSORTED ANNOUNCEMENTS

SMS DONATION: The SMS has made a donation  
to Amnesty International in the memory of  
Jackie Van Dalsam. Amnesty International  
was Jackie's favorite charity. Anyone  
wishing to make a personal donation may  
send it to: Amnesty International, 633  
South Shatto Place, L.A. 90005.

SAFETY COLUMN: The author of the Safety  
Column in September's Mugelnoos will be  
Paul Harris. Perhaps the author of the  
Safety Column for August will turn his  
in in time for the September issue also.

RESCUE SEMINAR: A Rescue Seminar for  
demonstration and practice of rescue tech-  
niques for small climbing parties will  
be given on Oct 16. See Sept. Mugelnoos  
for details.

Active RCS members from any Sierra Club  
Chapter can attend trips of the Angeles  
Chapter RCS by contacting the RCS Safety  
Chair and then the trip leader.

FOR THE RECORD

Re item on Pg 2 of July Mugelnoos: The  
injured party rescued from area near  
Meysan Lake was Gary McCoppen. He broke  
his leg glissading during a BMTC snow  
camp. He was not skiing.

--Bob Hicks, Safety Chair

F O R S A L E

New Mammut 9mm rope, still in package: \$50  
New Sierra Design Down Parks, Large: \$35  
Bleuet Lantern: \$10

F O R T R A D E

New #1 Friend plus \$? for 1½ or 2½ Friend  
(A friend in the hand is worth 1½ or 2½  
in the \_\_\_\_\_?: ed)

P E R S O N A L S

Climbing partners wanted for Tuolumne  
Meadows Aug 27 - Sep 9.  
Contact Jim Bryla on all these items  
213-794-0702-Lv Msg, or 213-794-6491

HISTORY OF ACHIEVEMENT: JOHN MENDENHALL'S MOUNTAINEERING

John Dale Mendenhall moved to Van Nuys from his native Missouri as a boy of 8 in 1919. Family vacations in the Sierra stimulated an interest in mountaineering, and he made three first ascents near Convict Lake before 1930. That year, John and a friend made the first ascent of the NE Gully of Laurel Mtn, generally accepted as the first belayed climb in the Sierra. The youths had been practicing on Los Angeles area cliffs using techniques gleaned from library books. John published accounts of his climbs in the Sierra Club Bulletin but did not join the club until later.

After graduating from Cal Tech in 1933, John went to work as a civil engineer on Colorado River water projects. Despite a competing interest in wrestling, he continued climbing throughout the early and middle thirties.

John returned to LA from the desert in early 1938 and joined the Sierra Club. He was climbing more than ever and soon became active with the RCS. He met his future wife Ruth Dyar on a Tahquitz trip with the RCS in the Spring of 1938. John and Ruth became RCS members on June 29, 1938. John made the 2nd ascent of the difficult Mechanic's Route at Tahquitz that year.

John joined the Ski Mountaineers in December 1938 (Ruth has been in SMS since Jan. 1938). In May of 1939, John and Ruth became charter members of "Base Camp," a cooperative with other young skiers and climbers. The rented house became an unofficial headquarters for the RCS and SMS.

John climbed frequently with Ruth Dyar in 1939. They made first ascents on Strawberry Pk locally and in the Whitney area. The peak of that season was down in the valley, however: John and Ruth were married on Sept 22, 1939. Their honeymoon included a climb at Pinnacles National Monument.

John became the third RCS chair in the Fall of 1939. In 1940, John and Ruth broke out of the local scene and entered the ranks of internationally active climbers by attempting difficult Mt Confederation in the Canadian Rockies--a big step at a time when only one other party of local climbers had ventured so far afield.

The war years took them out of the state; their daughter Vivian was born in Alabama in 1943. These years saw more Sierra first ascents, climbs in the Tetons (including a first), and various local trips.

The Mendenhalls returned to Southern Calif. in 1945. Their second daughter, Valerie, was born here in 1946. The years after WWII were too full to permit anything resembling a complete account. Some of the highlights of John's climbs follow:

--Trips to Canada, all with Ruth, resulting in the first ascent of Mt Confederation (1947); the first ascent (f.a.) of the N. Pk. of Mt Lowell (1948); ascents of several Bubaboos (1949); first ascents of Mt Synge, Midway Pk, and difficult Aiguille Pk. (1952); the f.a. of Mt Palmer (1953); a weathered-out attempt on Mt Robson (1954); and the f.a. of the NW Ridge of Mt Temple (1957).

--Myriad Sierra climbs, including the f.a. of Palisade Crest pinnacles (1954-55) and the f.a. of the N. Face of Mt Williamson (1957), both with Ruth. The record of technical firsts is far too long to list here. John made the first winter ascents of Mt Sill (1957), Middle Palisade (1960), and Mt Gayley (1961).

--Innumerable climbs at Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks, including f.a.'s of the Open Book (1947), Human Fright and Super Pooper (1952), and Consolation (1953).

John served as a volunteer in many club activities over the years. He (and Ruth) served on the SMS central committee at various times, led many ski tours, and helped build Keller Hut. He was Keller and Baldy huts treasurer from 1945 until 1978. In the RCS, John led more days of climbing than any other leader (over 100 days). He served a second term as chair 1958-59. He was a member of the Safety Committee from the first one in 1946 until 1978. In addition, he served a number of years on the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee and taught in the BMTC.

1978 was the climax of John and Ruth's years in So. Calif. At a special Mugelnoos meeting in May, they were given certificates of RCS honorary membership for 40 years of loyal support and climbing achievement. At the same meeting, a member of the Board of Directors presented them with the Farquhar Award, the highest Sierra Club recognition for mountaineering. Shortly thereafter they moved to Seattle following John's retirement.

John continued to be active in the mountains until his death. He served as chair of the Cascade section of the AAC in 1981 and was active in the Seattle Mountaineers.

John's friends in So. Calif. remember with gratitude his (and Ruth's) years of helping to teach beginning climbers and skiers. Few (if any) climbers of John's caliber have befriended so many. That he never lost the desire to meet new friends and help others find joy in the mountains was a great gift to us all.

--John Ripley

SUICIDE SPLASH (June 18-19, 1983)

The most spectacular event of the weekend was the hot tub party at DeRusha's cabin Saturday night. A detailed account must be left to rumor and innuendo, but the two worst falls of the weekend--one a grounder out of a living room chair--occurred there, both by the same individual. The party ended when this individual, who shall forever remain nameless, approached the hot tub, assumed proper attire for the situation, and demonstrated an incredible belly flop upon stumbling over the tub rim. No drownings were reported, but survivors quickly closed up shop in the wake (I'll bet there was some wake; ed) of the event.

The climbing was also interesting and enterprising but seemingly much safer. The leader failed in his second annual attempt to direct climbers to Root Canal. A year ago the party, one member of which is capable of climbing all the peaks in the San Gorgonio mountain range in half a day, returned at day's end without having found anything. This time the leader met the party of TB and DH while he was descending to the base of Paisanno Pinnacle. As they emerged from Paisanno Chimney, they asked whether they had climbed Root Canal. Another noteworthy incident was recorded among sign-out sheet comments. It told of a well known hard man, who, having given his all on the Flower overhang, "had to be lowered ignominiously to the ground, a limp, spent washrag." There was much additional climbing, a lot on the weeping wall, but the heaviest concentration on this warm weekend was on the north side.

--Bob Lindgren

<u>F O R S A L E</u>	<u>OVERHEARD AT LUNCH ROCK</u>
EB's size 6, good shape: \$30	There is a rumor going around (what is it going around?; ed) that next year's Fossil Falls bus will be hijacked to Owens Ridge by a well known RCS member. Any Clues?
Snow saws, new: \$10 each	
Salewa crampons w/neopreme straps in good shape: \$25	
Robert Somoano h 213-790-2123	
b 213-354-2213	

OF POTENTIAL INTEREST TO SMS MEMBERS

From the Newsletter sent out by the manufacturer of the Ramer ski touring bindings (Alpine and Nordic) comes the following words of caution:

ARE YOU FRUSTRATED BY DIFFICULT SNOW?

In the last few years there has been a tremendous increase in "telemarking", more accurately the use of narrow skis for downhill skiing. While this can be a lot of fun at lift-serviced ski areas, it can be very discouraging in the backcountry when dealing with difficult snow and heavy packs. The result is that many telemarkers are now buying complete alpine/touring systems for their backcountry skiing, even though they still use and enjoy their telemark gear.

Many salespersons still try to convince their less experienced customers that telemark equipment is an equal alternative to alpine/touring equipment. It is not. Most intermediate skiers can comfortably manage the worst imaginable snow with good alpine/touring skis, boots and bindings. The same person will find 55mm skis and soft boots to be hopelessly inadequate. The only telemark skiers I know who can handle such conditions manage at least 100 days of skiing each year. Recreational skiing is a sport to be enjoyed. Don't be overpowered by a salesperson's "skinny is better" sales pitch.

One of the most commonly heard representations is that "telemark equipment is a LIGHTWEIGHT alternative to alpine/touring gear". This is simply false. Modern alpine/touring skis, boots and release bindings WEIGH THE SAME as telemark boots, beefed-up 3-pins and sole supporting gadget, and telemark skis. If you compare true ski flotation the alpine/touring equipment actually weighs less. Skiers are beginning to realize that the media has sold them a bill of goods with the "telemark craze". If you really want to enjoy backcountry skiing, buy equipment that suits your needs.

RAMER HARDSHELL KNEEPADS

A surprisingly popular accessory last season. Almost every telemarker has a story to tell about bashed or lacerated knees. Soft pads give no protection against steel edges and sharp rocks. The injection molded plastic cup and thick foam padding of the RAMER KNEEPAD gives maximum protection without interfering with knee flex. It keeps your knees warm also. Available in large and medium sizes. Retail price \$29.95.

Write for catalog to: Alpine Research, Inc.  
765 Indian Peaks Road  
Golden Colorado 80403

--Barbara Lilley

SIERRA DENALI MCKINLEY EXPEDITION

The Sierra Denali Expedition left for Alaska on June 18, 1983. The trip was organized and led by Dale Van Dalsem with Ron Hudson as deputy leader. We landed on the Kahittna air strip June 19 with 17 members and departed on the West Buttress route the following day. Jacki Van Delsam was killed in a crevasse fall at 10:00pm Monday night (an accident report will be published soon). After this tragic accident, the team returned to the airstrip and several members returned to Los Angeles. The expedition was reorganized into a team of 8 with Ron Hudson as leader and ROBERT Somoano as deputy leader. The remaining members were; Larry Gendreau, Vic Henney, Delores Holladay, Jon Lutz, Larry Machleder, and Sue Wyman.

The team left the airstrip on June 23, reached 14,000 ft. 11 days later, and were on the summit July 10. The weather was quite good during the entire trip with only 3-5 days of wind and snow. The West Buttress route is a physically demanding route involving considerable "pack mule" type activity. There are two exciting exposed, but nontechnical, ridges above 14,000 ft. High winds at Windy Corner and on the upper ridges can increase the difficulty considerably. Sleds were carried to 14,000 ft. and sherpa snowshoes w/tucker crampon bindings proved to be of value. Five members reached the summit: Larry Gendreau, Vic Henney, Jon Lutz, Robert Somoano, and Sue Wyman. We had an excellent summit day with virtually no wind.

--Robert Somoano

*Bombeck*



*Nice kid. Told me about the new ethics...  
I told him about the old...*

EXCOMM REFUSES TO ALLOW OUTINGS PEOPLE  
TO RUN FOR EXCOMM

The August-September issue of the Southern Sierran will contain a ballot to determine whether the Angeles Chapter Council Chair should be a voting member of the Executive Committee. SPS members should support this proposal.

Currently, the Council Chair is an ex-officio member of the ExComm; that is, he attends the meetings but can not vote. Since the Council consists of a representative of each of the Groups, Sections, and Committees (GSC's), the Chair is in a unique position to be in contact with the views and interests of the grassroots members of the activity and area groups of the chapter.

This may seem of minimal interest to most people. However, the current ExComm has refused to allow Barbara Reber even to be nominated (!) to run for a seat on the ExComm this year, although she was first runnerup last year for a seat. They have stated that this is because she does not have enough conservation experience. In light of this consistent relegation of outings to second class status, it seems reasonable to urge section members to

remember to vote for a measure to guarantee that at least one spot on the EXCOMM will always be occupied by someone sympathetic to outings issues. Conservation is certainly the primary business of the Sierra Club.. It seems wise, however, to ensure that it does not become the only business!

--Kathy Crandall

MUGELNOOS LEGIBILITY

Just because an occasional issue of this authoritative periodical tends to strain the eyes of those attempting to decypher its minimal imprint type, is no reason to phone the next editor at 3:00am with complaints. Also, I wish to remind all of our readers that it is against federal law to mail explosive devices by the U.S. Postal Service.

Threats of violence notwithstanding (I always wanted to use that word), I have gone to extraordinary lengths to make this issue legible. Other editors, however, do not have the resources that are available to me. John Ripley is making an effort to insure that future editors have an electric typewriter at their disposal. That will help with the stencil quality.

Normally (not this issue) the Mugelnoos is run off on the Sierra Club's mimeograph machine. The RCS pays only for the paper and stencils. If anyone has access to an offset press or xerographic copier and can donate the use of that equipment to the RCS for the Mugelnoos (approx 400 copies/month), please contact John Ripley 213-692-5050 or at work 213-922-3978.

Remember that your annual \$5 subscription is used for stamps and paper, the use of the mimeograph is donated, and each editor gives his or her services at no charge.

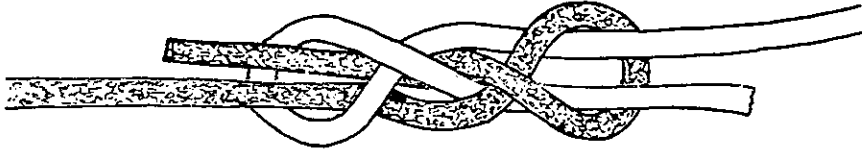
--Ed.

IDENTIFY THE KNOT CONTEST

In an attempt to fill space (as there was no safety column this month), we are introducing the "Identify the Knot Contest". All entries must be postmarked the day before yesterday, and there are absolutely no prizes for late entries.

All entries must be on a standard size postal card, or written on the back of a \$100 bill. Send the postcards anywhere, send the \$100 bills to me. You must answer two questions correctly.

1. What is the commonly used name of this knot (the latin name is not acceptable)?
2. What are the three usual uses for this knot?

INVITATION FROM BACK EAST

If anybody from RCS is in Boston, just call me (I'm in the book) and I'll try to hook him/her up with local climbers.

--Lois Malone

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Stamp