


* Bhutan announcement

THE  UGELNOOS

February 2005

Issue # 792



Kid Mountain

January 22, 2005 *Craig Connally*

After their delicious experience on January 17, Wally Drake and Craig Connally were determined to have another helping of Kid Mountain. Despite having spent the previous two days skiing their legs into oblivion at the Mammoth area, on Saturday, January 22, they and Brian McElwain (who needed no persuasion) steeped from Brian's truck onto the snow at 7 am. Conditions--and avalanche danger--appeared even better than for the trip a few days earlier. The intrepid telemarkers followed Monday's skin track up to Wally and Brian's high point in about 2 hours, or somewhat better than 1000 feet/hr; then we moved onto the ridge to the west. We flushed out a grouse, saw lots of critter tracks, and came across a snow cave rimmed with frost from a coyote's breath. Ascending the ridge, however, turned out to be a really bad idea so we continued west into the next gulley, taking the west option when the Y-shaped couloir branched. When kick turns became too terrifying (example: you can't arrest a fall onto steep, breakable crust because you'll just ride down on the blocks of crust even if you manage to break into them), we resorted

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NEXT ISSUE

Next issue deadline is Mar 15th, 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!

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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.

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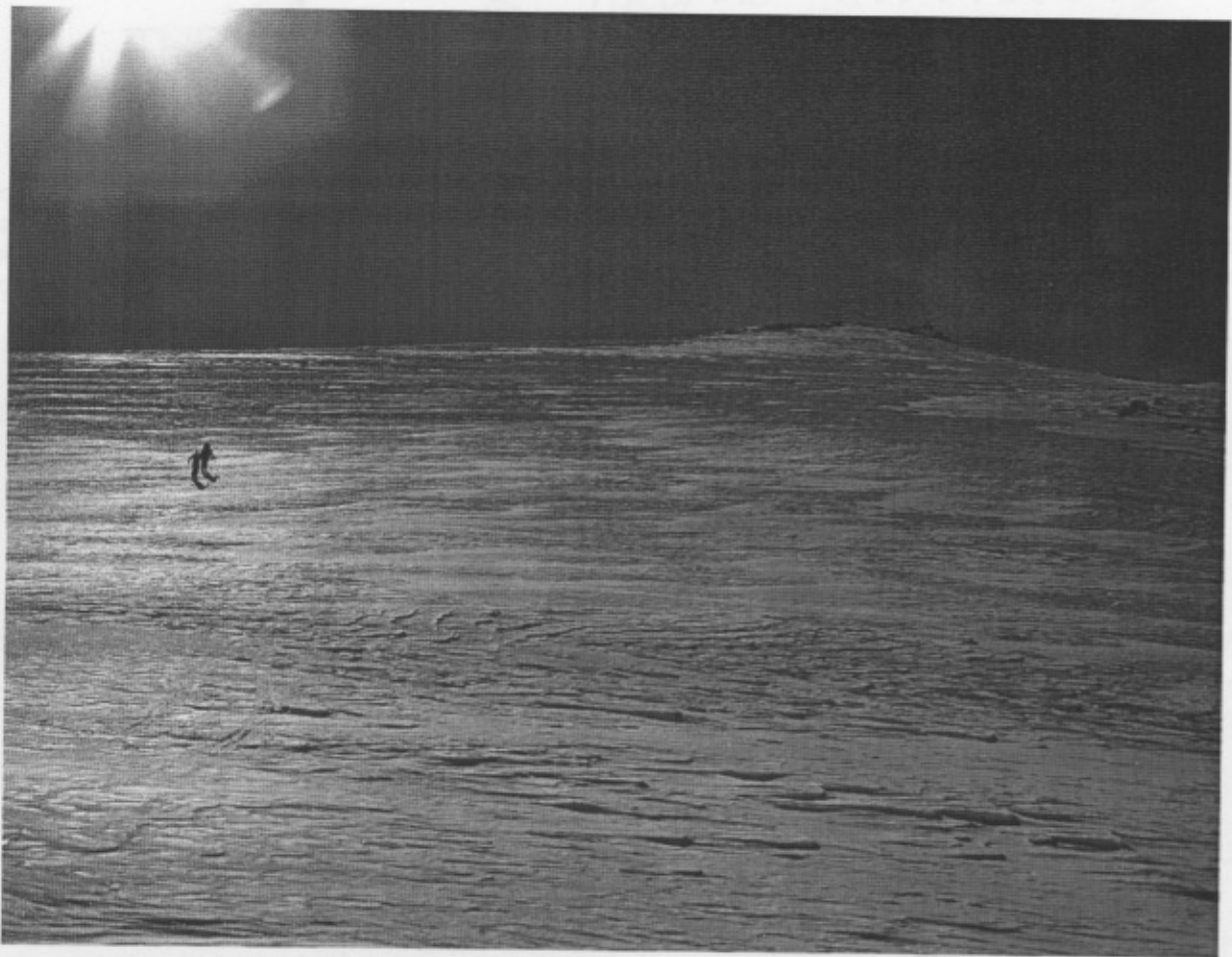
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Cover photo:

Wally and Brian cast long shadows as they head for the stash.



Wally and Brian go for the summit, over the horizon about a half mile; their reward: hiking over rock bands and skiing curbs.

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to kicking steps up the 40-degree slope. Soon we reached a knoll at about 11,300' atop the ridge that separates the east and west branches of the gulley. After a brief break, Wally and Brian continued up wildly sculpted wind slab and rock bands to the summit while your author enjoyed a leisurely lunch in the 27-degree, endless sunshine. An hour and a half later we dropped into the east branch of the Y-shaped couloir, coming in from the east in order to minimize our experience of the steep (35+ degrees) rock garden where the gulley tops out. After a few thought provoking turns, the couloir eased up to about 30 degrees, serving up a blend of powder, alpine ice, and lightly breakable crust, with occasional piles of avalanche debris to add texture. The gulley never relaxed to less than 25 degrees as we descended in long series of quad-burning turns, but it ended in a steep, narrow chute having every flavor of snow served up in short order. Beyond the chute the snow-covered avy debris eased off until it left us, exhausted, at

the tricky creek crossing and the short ski to the truck--a continuous descent of about 4000' over two and a quarter miles from the lunch break knoll. A truly magnificent day on what passes for excellent back country snow.

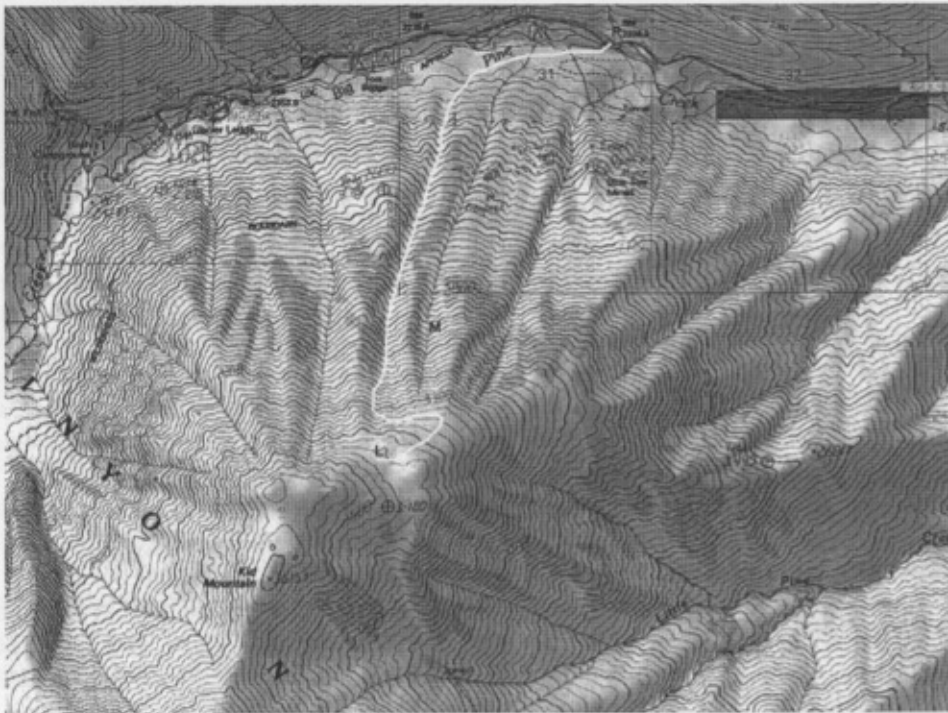
Kid Mountain (11,896') deserves more attention from the SMS. It lies just to the south of the Glacier Lodge road out of Big Pine, which is plowed to the National Forest boundary (just before Sage Flats, about 7300'). You can glass many of the options, and guess at avalanche conditions, from the comfort of your vehicle. After crossing Big Pine Creek, a short approach on snow leads to the chutes, of which there are about 10, all appearing roughly equivalent in difficulty. Most are on the north side, but some on the northwest might require a traverse of the summit to reach. Going own, the chutes can be skied back to the road, some after joining up with the South Fork trail. Kid isn't for kids, but for ski mountaineers it's almost perfect.

Quatro amigos na montanha do Kid

January 17, 2005 *Jonathan Meagher*

On Martian -Luther King Day (17 Jan) after two days of skiing at June and Mammoth mountains Mountain, Craig Connally, Wally Drake, Brian McElwain, and Jonathan Meagher headed up the Glacier Lodge road from Big Pine to ski one of the northern gullies on Kid mountain Mountain as a private trip. Luckily, the road had been ploughed plowed to around 2220m, so after crossing a snow bridge across the creek we were able to start skinning up the lower slopes of Kid mountain Mountain. Most of the gullies had avalanche debris at their bases, not a surprise given the amount of snowfall from the storms from of the previous week. After traversing up a 4WD track and ridge, we crossed into the largest of the gullies and continued straight up. The snow in the gully varied from soft powder to hard packed powder to light breakable crust. After approximately two and a half hours of

climbing from the cars Craig and I decided it was morning tea time and kicked out a small platform below a tree at 2840m, on the ridge to the west of the gully. Wally and Brian continued up the steepening gully to earn a few more turns. After a quick food stop, Craig and I put on our skis at our small platform and got ready for Wally and Brian to ski down. This allowed us plenty of time to contemplate the first turn off the platform. After our first nervous turns off the platform, we continued down the 30-degree, 2000ft descent with Wally and Brian. We descended in sections to recover from the skiing (and falls), and to shoot some video. Dealing with the transition from hard pack to softer snow caused a number of falls, but no major face plants. A small amount of traversing delivered us to the snow bridge across the creek and back to the cars. All in all a great day of skiing in fine weather with easy access; there's a lot of potential for more of this on the slopes of Kid Mountain.



Map of Kid Mountain, popular destination of SMS ski mountaineers this past January!

Bhutan Cultural Tour — Rich Henke is leading a 15-day trip to Bhutan in Oct 11-25, 2005. This hotel-based cultural tour will include visits to festivals and short day hikes to monasteries and other points of interest. It is suitable for almost anyone. The cost is \$4300, which includes everything except international plane fare to Bangkok. People with more time can combine this trip to other nearby Asian destinations such as Cambodia (Ankor Wat) or Northern Thailand for minimal additional cost. Call or e-mail Rich if you want more information. 310-316-5050 (rich@adventureplus.org).