

# TRACK



Newsletter of the Ski Touring Section

Loma Prieta Chapter

Sierra Club



[www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/sts](http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/sts)

## Next Meeting

**Annual Potluck Dinner  
Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

The next meeting of the Ski Touring Section will be the Annual Potluck Dinner and slideshow on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. The annual business meeting including selection of officers for next season will also be held at this event.

## ***Deadline for April TRACK submissions is January 24th***

Written descriptions of STS trips and private trips are encouraged, and will be printed as space permits. E-mail submissions (plain text or attached Word documents) to [xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx](mailto:xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx). Leaders are asked to submit trip descriptions and other key information as soon as possible after the planning meeting.

The STS Track Newsletter would like to obtain photos of STS skiers on relatively recent STS trips from STS members to use in future issues of Track. Please include any helpful information with the picture such as the location, a description of the picture, names of any skiers in the picture and a note that it is OK for Track to publish your photo.

## Trip Reports

**Bradley Hut  
26-28 January 2008**

Last year's report began "There are both advantages and disadvantages to doing a Bradley Hut trip when the weather is clear, cold, and dry and there hasn't been fresh snow in over three weeks." This year's trip fell in the middle of a 10-day storm period with forecasts of 4-6 feet of new snow Sunday (alone) and wind gusts over 80 mph on ridges throughout the weekend. Two people canceled before leaving the Bay Area. We also faced a potentially serious trailhead parking problem knowing that the hut was fully booked Friday night and that Snowlands Network had announced a day trip to Bradley Hut and upper Pole Creek starting Saturday morning. As it turned out, the conflicts were minimal and our timing better than we could have hoped. The only real downsides of the weekend were the "blessings" brought by large quantities of powder snow.

Randy May and Carol Greenstreet invited Tim Molinare and Rick Hubble to join them Friday night at the South Bay Ski Club cabin in Soda Springs, where they left Tim's and Rick's cars. Dan Tupper gave Bill Behrendt a ride from Pleasanton, and they stayed at Clair Tappaan Lodge. After my wife and dogs decided to stay home, I shared extra car space with Karen Davis and John Langbein. So we brought all

*(continued on page 5)*

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## 2007-2008 STS Calendar

### March

2/29-3/2 – Glacier Point cabin trip

**Leaders:** Terri Michel & Steve Scharf

**Skill Level(s):** Intermediate

3/7-10 – Echo Summit to Loon Lake (snow camp)

**Leader:** John Langbein

**Skill Level(s):** Strong Intermediate to Advanced

3/7-9 – Snow-shoeing in the Pinecrest Area

**Leader:** Joe Schmidt; **Skill Level(s):** Beginner

3/8-10 – Pear Lake snow camp trip

**Leader:** David Passmore

**Skill Level(s):** Advanced-Intermediate

3/13-18 – Rock Creek Lodge - Mosquito Flats

**Leaders:** Janet Hoffmann & Terri Michel

**Skill Level:** Strong to Advanced Intermediate

3/14-16 – Clair Tappaan Lodge

**Leaders:** Alan Hobbs

**Skill Level:** Beginner/Advanced Beginner

3/14-16 – Bear Valley to Sonora Pass

**Leaders:** Roy Lambertson & Stephane Mouradian

**Skill Level:** Advanced

3/28-3/30 – Trans-Lassen tour (snow camp)

**Leader:** John Langbein

**Skill Level(s):** Intermediate

3/28-3/30 – Butte Lake at Mt. Lassen snow camping

**Leader:** Steve Sergeant

**Skill Level(s):** Intermediate

### April

4/4-6 – Crabtree Snow-Shoe trip

**Leader:** Joe Schmidt; **Skill Level(s):** Beginner

4/15-18 – Colorado Hut trip

**Leader:** John Cordes

**Skill Level:** Strong Intermediate to Advanced

### May

5/5 – STS Annual Potluck (location and time TBA)

## Trip Basics

Trips are cooperative ventures organized and lead by volunteers. Trips range from leisurely single-day tours to strenuous multi-day expeditions. Each trip has a classification, which indicates the level of skiing ability and experience that the leader feels is the minimum required. The trip leader has the final say in whom may join a trip and may refuse anyone at any time that they feel has not demonstrated the required level of ability.

Trip participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from the trailhead. Leaders can, at their own discretion, make travel suggestions, but are not responsible for arranging carpools or other transportation.

CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

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## Trip Classifications

**Beginner:** Includes first time cross-country skiers. Leaders frequently provide some type of beginner instruction. 1-2 miles on gentle terrain.

**Advanced Beginner:** Skiers in good condition who have learned the basics of the diagonal stride on the flats and on easy hills. 2-5 miles over rolling terrain.

**Intermediate:** Uphill and downhill skiing on slopes that can be traversed if too steep. An intermediate has developed skill and confidence to snowplow, step turn, and control downhill speeds. Overnight hut trips with a moderate pack load. 3-10 miles average.

**Advanced Intermediate:** Same as Intermediate plus poor snow and weather skills, winter navigation, greater endurance, and snow camping. 10-15 miles.

**Advanced:** These tours are for the hardy skiers who can ski 10 to 30 miles in one day, are able to climb high mountains using skins, and descend with Telemark turns. The advanced skier must be in good shape, acclimatized to high altitudes, and have a working knowledge of map reading, compass, avalanche hazards, and winter survival.

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## Trip/Event Descriptions

### Rock Creek Lodge - Mosquito Flats

March 13-18, 2007 (Thur/Fri - Tue)

#### Strong to Advanced Intermediate

Try St. Patrick's Day in the beautiful Rock Creek area nestled on the eastern slope of the Sierra at the edge of the John Muir Wilderness. Six lucky people will take Thursday off work so they can have a leisurely drive to Tom's Place (near Mammoth) for Thursday night the 13th and ski 2 miles from the East Fork SnoPark into Rock Creek Lodge (RCL) on Friday the 14th.

We'll spend Friday night in a couple of their modern cabins at this unique lodge located at 9,400' <www.rockcreeklodge.com>. After ski-acclimatizing around RCL we'll have a great dinner and check out their sauna. The next day, after breakfast, we'll tour our way to their ski hut in Mosquito Flats on Saturday the 15th where we'll spend two nights all to ourselves and ski around Little Lakes Valley for the weekend.

Day trip possibilities from the Mosquito Flats area include Rock Creek Lake, Little Lakes Valley, Treasure Lakes, towards Bear Creek Spire, etc. On Monday the 17th we'll ski from Mosquito Flats back to our modern cabins at RCL and enjoy their good food and hospitality once more. On Tuesday the 18th we'll ski back to the East Fork SnoPark trailhead and drive home. Cost of \$410 per person includes 1 night in motel, 4 nights at RCL and hut, 4 delicious dinners and 4 breakfasts, and tip for RCL staff (trip cost estimate is based on 6 people). Limit 6. All participants must be comfortable skiing up to 4 miles and 1,000' elevation gain with an overnight pack, bring metal edged skis, climbing skins, a winter sleeping bag and an avalanche transceiver.

Participants must also sign a Sierra Club Liability Waiver and complete a Sierra Club Medical form and return both completed and signed to the leader prior to the trip. Send 2 long SASEs for trip sign-up application, medical form, waiver, and a check for \$410 per person made to "STS-Outings" to: Terri Michel, xxx xxxxx xxx, xxxxxxxx, xx xxxxx Part or all of deposit nonrefundable if you cancel after January 1st and we can't get a qualified replacement.

**Co-Leaders:** Janet Hoffmann, xxx-xxx-xxxx, xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.xxx; Terri Michel, xxx-xxx-xxxx, xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

### Clair Tappaan Lodge

March 14-16, 2008

#### Beginner/Advanced Beginner

We will be staying at the Clair Tappaan Lodge. Accommodation will cost \$110 for two nights, all meals included. On Saturday we will ski at Royal Gorge cross-country resort. Sunday, conditions permitting, we will ski in the forest behind the lodge. This trip is for advanced beginners, meaning that participants should have basic fitness and be able to ski diagonal stride on flats and gentle hills.

Total cost including lodging, all meals, Royal Gorge Ski Pass, and ski rental (if needed) will be approximately \$240. Optional lesson at Royal Gorge is \$25. To inquire about space on this trip, contact Alan Hobbs at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.

### Bear Valley to Sonora Pass (Snow Camping)

March 14-16, 2008

#### Advanced

Technically, our starting and ending points will be the Snow-Park west of Lake Alpine, and Pickel Meadow, on Highway 108 east of Sonora Pass.

We will do this three-day trip as a key exchange, with two groups traveling in opposite directions. The route from the Bear Valley end will be out Highway 4 to the Highland Lakes Road, then taking the route of the Pacific Crest Trail before diverging east and down Wolf Creek to Highway 108.

The distance we will cover in three days is about 42 miles. Possible ski ascents of Folger Peak or Stanislaus Peak. Severe weather or avalanche hazard will change our plans.

Roy Lambertson

xxx-xxx-xxxx (eve)

xxx-xxx-xxxx (day)

### Trans-Lassen Tour (snow camping)

March 28-30, 2008

#### Intermediate

This tour starts (or ends) at the southwest entrance to the park (where the ski chalet use to be) and ends (starts) at the northwest corner of the park near Butte Lake. If we have a three day option, a lay-over day will be in the Lake Helen area just south of Lassen

## Trip/Event Descriptions (cont.)

Peak. This tour is best done as a “key exchange” so I'm looking for a co-leader for the other half of the exchange. Contact John Langbein at xxx-xxx-xxxx (evenings before 9PM) or xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.

### Crabtree Snow-Shoe Trip

April 4-6, 2008

#### Beginner

The Pinecrest area is south of Lake Tahoe and north of Yosemite in the Central Sierra. This trip will take us up a gradual slope to Aspen Meadows and there we will head south on Crabtree trail toward Bell Meadow. At the end of the season, the streams are gurgling and the snow formations are so interesting.

We will stay at Lucille's Cabin in the Pinecrest Area. There are eight beds in four bedrooms and so the trip is limited to eight participants. Well behaved dogs are welcome to join us.

Cost of \$90/person includes two nights lodging plus two breakfasts, lunches, and Saturday night dinner. Interested folks should send a check made out to “STS-Outings” and sent to Joe Schmidt, xxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxx, xxxxxxxxxxx, xx xxxxx. No refunds after two weeks prior to the start of the trip. Be sure to include your name, address, phone and email. Very Important!

To view Lucille's Cabin, Google the name. To learn more about the area, go to [www.thegreatunfenced.com](http://www.thegreatunfenced.com) or [www.dodgeridge.com](http://www.dodgeridge.com).

Pray for rain here, snow there. Event covers 5 - 10 miles, with gradual 2,000 feet of elevation gain but we will adjust plans based upon experience and desires of the group ... let's make this fun and easy! Meeting location: Lucille's Cabin in the Central Sierra.

**Leader:** Joe Schmidt (xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx)

### Colorado Hut Trip

April 15-19, 2008

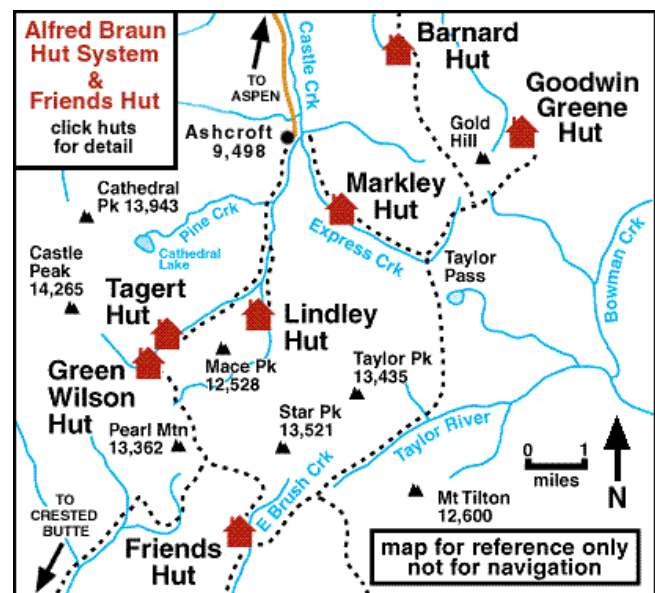
#### Strong Intermediate to Advanced

I am looking for 6 other strong intermediate or better skiers to join me for 5 days of XC skiing in the Colorado hut system in near Aspen, Colorado. I have hut reservations for 7 people for 4 nights beginning on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Tuesday through Friday).

The plan is to fly into Aspen, CO on Tuesday, April 15th and catch a shuttle directly to the trailhead. The trip officially begins at the trailhead. It is 5 miles on skis to Tagert Hut for the first night. We ski 8 miles over Pearl Pass to Friends hut for Wednesday night. Day trip around Friends hut and stay there again on Thursday night. On Friday, we ski back to Tagert Hut. We can either fly home after skiing out on Saturday or find some place to stay and hang out for one more day of skiing. I led a trip to the 10th Mountain system nearby last year and I am looking forward to exploring more of the Colorado Rockies this spring. These huts are in avalanche territory. Use of a beacon is required. To learn more about the huts, visits [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org). Remember, all STS trips start at the trailhead and the leader is not responsible for travel arrangements to and from the trailhead.

All participants must complete and sign a Sierra Club Liability Waiver & a 10th Mtn waiver form, a Sierra Club Medical form and send them to the leader prior to the trip. Send 2 long SASEs for trip sign-up application, waivers, medical form and check made to “STS-Outings” for \$180/person to:

John Cordes  
xxx xxxxxxxxxxx xx.  
xxxxxxxxxx, xx xxxxx  
phone xxx-xxx-xxxx,  
xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx



## Trip Reports (cont.)

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*("Bradley Hut" continued from page 1)*

nine of our people to the trailhead in only three vehicles. The Snowlands day trip included only four people (in three vehicles), and the Friday night group at the hut (nine people rather than the expected 15) left only a couple vehicles at the trailhead. We cleared 8-10 inches of powder that had accumulated overnight from the parking area in about 20 minutes and were ready to push off by 10:20 AM under unexpectedly sunny skies.

Breaking trail up FR08 was slow going (the Snowlands group had opted to use the old road on the north side of Pole Creek, which is shorter but has a much steeper initial ascent). There were icing problems for some, where warm sun had melted the top inch of powder. We stopped at the Pole Creek bridge for lunch at noon, and arrived at the hut about 2:30 PM, following the Snowlands trail beyond the bridge. John, Karen, Carol, and Randy explored the meadow and above while the rest of our party relaxed around the hut. The Snowlands group stopped briefly on their way out, reporting no more avalanche hazard than a cautious skier would assume under the conditions.



Dan Tupper and Randy May search for downhill that does not require breaking trail (IMG\_3491.JPG)

The stars blinked out about 9 PM and we woke to about a foot of new snow Sunday morning. All but Bill, who was suffering from a severe cold which had started during the drive up Friday, headed for higher ground. Bill maintained a minimal schedule through the rest of the weekend. It took almost 90 minutes to break trail across the meadow and climb about 500 feet above the hut. Rick turned back before leaving the meadow because his boots were falling apart. For the remaining seven, the downhill was only slightly less strenuous than the up; only when following

another skier was it possible to achieve any real speed. The second time around the loop was easier because of the broken trail; but visibility remained poor and everyone was ready for lunch after only two 500 foot descents.

Four day skiers joined us in the hut for lunch, swapping stories and bringing a new weather report, which included words like "dump" for the Sunday night snow forecast. Randy, Carol, and Karen headed out for meadow skiing in the afternoon while John, Dan, and I tried the morning loop again. It was obvious in the meadow, however, that the morning's work was mostly lost. Dan couldn't keep his skins attached to his skis and eventually turned back; John and I had to break a new trail, "feeling" our way between widely-spaced visible fragments of the earlier route by sensing whether the skis sank 12 inches or only 4 into the soft, windblown powder. It was worth the effort to find the 4 inch places because the crust that was developing made it very difficult to pull ski tips back to the surface. Everyone had returned to the hut by 4 PM; but Tim took a final tour, returning about 6 PM when it was mostly dark, the wind had picked up, and visibility was less than 100 yards.

Although we hadn't accomplished a lot in a skiing sense, there was a feeling Sunday night of having met and shared some challenges. Pending a review of the weather the next morning, however, we tentatively agreed that there wasn't much to be gained by planning more skiing from the hut — we would head down the hill and get started on the drive back, anticipating slow travel even with the weekend crowds gone.

The wind howled at times overnight, but it had calmed some by morning. Another foot of snow had accumulated and all tracks from the previous 24 hours (including paths to the outhouse) had been completely obliterated. We left the hut about 9 AM, chose to follow the old road below the bridge (hoping it would get us to Hwy 89 faster), and reached the cars about 11:30. With some frenzied shoveling (and encouragement from three carloads of fresh skiers waiting for parking), we cleared a path to the highway and were headed home about an hour later. Although there were chain controls over Donner Summit, the sun was shining in Truckee and the highway was in reasonable condition. There was snow on Mt. Diablo and the Mt. Hamilton Range as we returned to the Bay Area. I dropped John and Karen in Redwood City before 6 PM, just in time to be reconnected to the real

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world by the beginning of the President's State of the Union address as I drove the remaining distance to Palo Alto.



Skiing back to the cars along Hwy 89  
(IMG\_3505.JPG)

—Dick Simpson

### **Peter Grubb Hut 23-24 February 2008**

Weather forecasts for the weekend offered little comfort — up to 3' of new snow Saturday PM into Sunday (after 1-2' Tuesday and Thursday), wind gusts as high as 100 mph, and a snow level that varied between 4000 and 8000', depending on whether you favored Alaskan or tropical air as the source of precipitation. Fourteen of the 16 on my roster showed up; four said they would ski with us Saturday but the weather forecast was too risky. So we pushed off at 10:30 AM with an overnight party of 10 plus 4 day skiers.

We had a little blue sky as we reached Castle Valley, but an hour later it had darkened considerably and by 12:30 there was significant snow falling. The party became split as a "fast" group lost its way in Castle Valley; but everyone was at the hut three hours after starting. After lunch most in the group enjoyed skiing in Round Valley and on the slopes west of Castle Peak. Making a loop, however, took an hour, and no one did more than two loops.

I mentioned that we had the option to pack early Sunday and get a head start on the return; but only about 18 inches of new snow had fallen by morning, and several people were not ready to give up on skiing. Four climbed most of the way to The Thumb again (the most prominent buttress between Castle

Peak and Castle Pass and the site of a fatal avalanche in 2004), at least one skied in Round Valley, several played cards, and one went back to bed. The day skiing ended about 11:30. After lunch and cleaning up, we were ready to head out at 12:30.

The group briefly split again leaving the hut, but we reorganized before heading up the hill from Round Valley. Once out in the open, we were completely exposed to the wind, but our timing was good; the snow swirled rather than being driven at full force into our faces from the southwest. We dropped down from Castle Pass, where we found the Nordic Ski Patrol under a small tent. The sole patroller at the site said they had dug a snow pit earlier and found 5 feet of new snow resting on top of the crusty layer from the previous week.

The Ski Patrol coming in had left an excellent trail back to I-80. The knee-high walls along the trail were useful for gently nudging the skis back into the right direction or for braking if speed became a problem. We were safely back in the Sno-Park by 4 PM.

The cars were thoroughly snowed in, but we had them all free and ready to head home by 5 PM, though some headed to Clair Tappaan to see whether they could get a night's accommodation before tackling the drive the next morning. I hit drizzle at 5500' but there were chain controls all the way to Baxter. Amazingly, I saw only two other automobiles heading west on the freeway between Soda Springs and Baxter, a driving time of about 45 minutes.

Participants: Eric Bernheisel, Herb Bolz, Debbie Bulger, Liz Hanzel, Stephanie Kubik, Silvio Lopez, Eugene Miya, Jim Murray, Joe Schmidt and his dog Rhubarb, and Dick Simpson (leader and scribe). Michele and Ken Dauber signed in for the day trip. The other two who skied part of the day with us were more tentative in their plans and never signed in.

—Dick Simpson

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## Announcements

The following events are being hosted by Snowlands Network ( [www.snowlands.org](http://www.snowlands.org)):

### Join Snowlands Network and REI for the Banff Mountain Film Festival 2008 World Tour

Two different shows.  
Two unforgettable evenings.

Friday, March 14, 2008 at 7:00 PM  
Saturday, March 15, 2008 at 7:00 PM

Both shows at  
Los Altos High School Eagle Theatre  
Los Altos, Cs

**Experience adventure filmmaking at its best!**

For more information go to  
<http://www.snowlands.org/activities/banff.html>

## STS Bylaw Amendments

The STS Bylaw Amendments were voted on at the January meeting and passed (12 votes “for”, 0 votes “against” and 2 abstentions). The changes have been to the chapter Ex-Com for review and approval. Thanks to all section members who participated in this process.

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## Section Information

**Purpose:** The Ski Touring Section leads cross-country ski trips to the Sierra Nevada and elsewhere.

**Meetings:** The Section holds open meetings monthly from November thru January and an annual potluck in May. Date, time, and location of the next meeting are announced in TRACK. Newcomers of any experience level are welcome. A special program is featured at most meetings.

**Membership:** To be a member of the section requires membership in the Sierra Club and additional dues of \$5/yr paid to the section Treasurer. This entitles members to all the rights outlined in the bylaws and standing rules.

**E-mail list:** To join the STS e-mail list, send an e-mail to the list server at: <listserv@lists.sierraclub.org>.

Include the following one line in the body of the message (not Subject line): <SUBSCRIBE LOMAP-SkiTour yourfirstname yourlastname>. Be sure to send the email from the address at which you wish to receive postings and the newsletter, TRACK. You must be a member to be on the STS e-mail list.

**Newsletter:** TRACK is published monthly from October through May. To subscribe, send a check for \$15 (\$10 for paper newsletter and \$5 for annual section dues) payable to Ski Touring Section with your name, address, telephone number, and proof of Sierra Club membership to Treasurer John Langbein (xxx xxxxxxxxxxxx xx., xxxxxxxxxxxx, xx xxxxx). Proof of membership is one of the following: a mailing label from your Chapter newsletter (Loma Prietan) or Sierra magazine,

*(continued next page)*

## Section Information (cont.)

a photocopy of your Sierra Club membership card, or your canceled check for membership dues.

To join the Sierra Club, enclose a separate check for \$35 payable to Sierra Club with your STS payment.

To submit meeting announcements, trip announcements, and trip reports for publication in TRACK, email them to TRACK editor Kevin Flynn at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx, (plain text or attached Microsoft Word documents preferred) or submit them as text files. Photos in jpeg format may accompany trip report submissions and will be included if space permits. Advertisements will be carried for members free of charge on a space-permitting basis. Ads will

run for one month unless resubmitted and will be limited to 6 lines or one inch. Notices from commercial enterprises will be carried at the editor's discretion on the same basis.

**Trips:** Trips are scheduled by VC/Scheduler Janet Hoffmann. Current leaders should submit trip plans to Janet. Members wishing to become leaders should contact the Outings Committee Chair (also Janet). Potential trip participants should contact the trip leader listed for each trip. The trips are classified according to the minimum ability required of participants. The categories are listed inside under Ski Trips. The Sierra Club does not assume any liability for carpools to the "trailhead".

<b>Chair</b>	John Cordes	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>VC/Scheduler</b>	Janet Hoffmann	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>Secretary/Editor</b>	Kevin Flynn	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Langbein	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>Conservation</b>	Dick Simpson	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>Outings</b>	Janet Hoffmann	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx
<b>Committee Chair</b>			
<b>Webmaster</b>	Brenda Giese	xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx	xxx-xxx-xxxx

## SKI TOURING SECTION

Loma Prieta Chapter  
 c/o John Langbein  
 xxx xxxxxxxxxxxx xx  
 xxxxxxxxxxxx,xx xxxxx

## First Class Mail

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