

Skiers try sand

Schuss makes it on the beaches

United Press International

REDONDO BEACH, Calif. — The sea lion cocked his head to one side and stared. He dived beneath a wave and reappeared 25 yards from shore. The spectacle on the beach was as new to him as it was to the more than 150 onlookers.

About 35 cross-country skiers grunted, groaned and shuffled their way along a 2-kilometer race course as 6-foot waves crashed at their feet.

Known for its endless summer, palm trees and constant sunshine, snow skiing is common to Southern California. From November to April hundreds of thousands of snow buffs head into the nearby mountains, some within 50 miles of Los Angeles, to ski in eight to 10 feet of snow.

But the race last weekend was held on the beach, with surfers, bathers and curious marine life within a beach ball's throw.

The first annual Cross Country Skiing Sand Race sponsored by the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and various ski associations attracted the young and not-so-young. It brought a crowd to witness the event because, even in this land of turtle races, and this was truly unusual.

David Moe, publisher of Powder Magazine, a Western ski journal, jumped into an early lead. The blond, 31-year-old journalist from Dana Point, Calif., finished the course more than 400 yards ahead of his nearest challenger.

Moe's time was slightly more than 11 minutes. To better comprehend how grueling the race was, try running on a deep-sand beach — then strap two 7-foot long narrow boards to your feet and try it again.



Soviet Pentecostals seeking refuge, charge Americans with failure to help

United Press International

WASHINGTON — A group of Russian Pentecostals who have been seeking sanctuary in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow have charged in a secret letter to President Carter that embassy officials are trying to expel them, UPI learned Wednesday.

However, the State Department's top human rights officer, Patricia Derian, said the embassy has invited the group to go to the United States, but cannot give them American visas as long as the Soviet Union refuses to grant exit visas.

The letter was sent through embassy mails to two American students in College Park, Md., who spoke with the Pentecostals during a visit to the embassy in August. UPI obtained a copy of the letter.

The students took the letter to the White House and then met with Ms. Derian at the State Department Tuesday.

Ms. Derian, assistant secretary of state for human rights, said the Pen-

tecostals would do to the families. "Officials are demanding that we leave," the letter said.

"Today (the 27th of August 1978) and yesterday (the 26th) we were read a message from Ambassador Toon that we should leave the embassy immediately, with God.

"When we asked Mr. Combs (an embassy official) what would happen to us he replied, 'The embassy cannot help you and this is not a hotel. We gave you all the necessary things you needed while you were here, but now you have to leave, with God. We don't know what will happen to you.'"

The letter concluded: "We are asking you, Mr. President, if it is possible to help us at all. We are ready to go to any country together

with our families. May God help you make a wise decision."

The dissidents are Peter Vashchenko, 51, his wife, Augustina; their three daughters, Lidia, 27, Liobov, 26, and Lilia, 21; Maria Chymkhalov, 56, a family friend; and Timofet, 17, her son. They are from the Siberian town of Chernogorsk.

"We are asking you, Mr. President, if it is possible to help us at all. We are ready to go to any country together with our families. May God help you make a wise decision."

The Vashchenko family has been trying to emigrate to the United States for 17 years, but the Soviet Union refuses to grant them an exit

visa. They have sought sanctuary in the embassy since June 27 when they rushed two militiamen guarding the front gate.

The students, James Switzer and Ben Young, were in Moscow under a program sponsored by the U.S. Office of International Educational Exchange. They told UPI they

struck up an acquaintance with the families.

According to Switzer and Young, the Vashchenkos were victims of an upsurge of antireligious propaganda in the Chernogorsk area in the early 1960s which forced religious parents to withdraw their children from Soviet schools.

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In the letter, the Pentecostals charged American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Malcom Toon and other embassy aides are seeking to force them to leave the embassy.

Pentecostals are staying in the embassy's visitors' apartment, and acknowledged they were asked to leave.

But she said embassy officials have not pressed for the group's departure nor threatened to expel them.

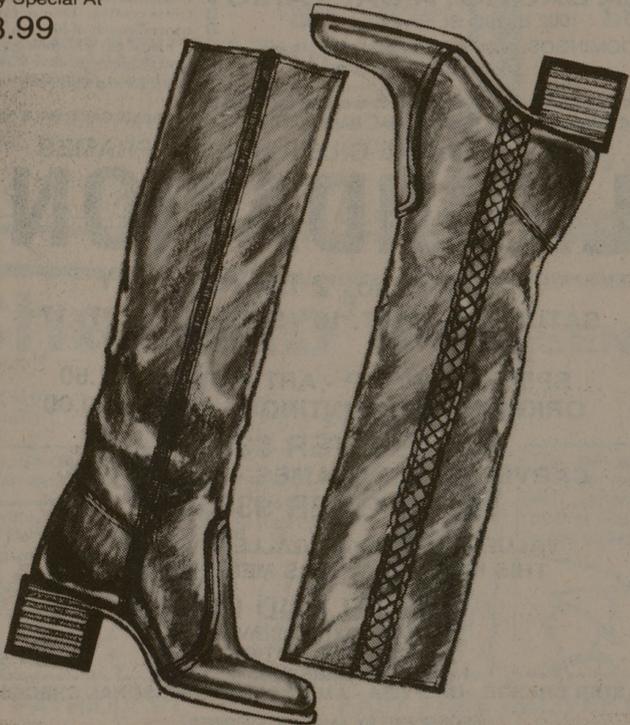
In the letter, the Pentecostals charged that American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Malcolm Toon and other embassy aides are seeking to force them to leave the embassy even though the officials acknowledge they do not know what the

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