

# SCREE



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

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## JANUARY MEETING

Wednesday, January 18, 8 PM, Pioneer School House, Third & Eagle, Anchorage. Henry Santeford will give a talk on "Alaska Snow and Why Its Different". Henry has a doctorate in Snow Hydrology - this talk should be quite interesting and informative! Dave Klinger will be giving the mini-slide show on a do-it-yourself backpack trip to the Anaktuvuk Pass area of the Brook's Range.

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## WINTER SKI SCHEDULE

GOOD NEWS: As your new temporary winter ski trip coordinator, I am attempting to resurrect the Mountaineering Club's outdoor program by scheduling something every weekend, as seen below. Don't be discouraged if the trip's description sounds exhausting -- you don't have to (or even intend to) go all the way; and even going part way is fun and shows you a route to some good (?) ski country.

LEADER: Charles A. Kibler-277-8464 (ski Trip Coordinator) unless otherwise noted.

TIME & PLACE: All trips start at Fred Meyer's, on the corner of Northern Lights Blvd. and the Seward Highway, at 7:00 AM on the day indicated below.

Jan. 21, Sat. TINCAN PEAK 4764', 3 miles SE of highway near Turnagain Pass.

Gain 3800' in 4 miles up Taylor Cr. to summit, lose 3800' in 6 miles down Lyon Cr. and/or Tincan Ridge back (a loop). If you skip the peak, you still have a 2400' gain/loss, 7 mile loop.

Jan. 22, Sun. PROSPECT HEIGHTS-MIDDLE FORK-GLEN ALPS LOOP. Bill Stivers 277-2869.

Gain 1500' in 7 miles; gain 200', lose 500' in 5 miles to Glen Alps; easy 1200' loss, 4 mile run down Powerline back to Prospect Heights.

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Jan. 28, Sat. KERN CREEK, 4 miles south of Girdwood. Unless you decide to try Peak 4710' at the end (4 miles) or top a 3000' or 3500' pass into Winner Creek, this is a short, less than 3 miles round trip, exploration of Kern Creek.

Jan. 29, Sun. ROUND TOP 4755', near Eagle River, 4 miles East of Fire Lake.

Swiss Alps Sub.-Round Top gain 1000', lose 300', gain 2000' in 3 miles; than a 4500' loss, 6 mile downhill run down Little Peter's Creek. If you skip the Peak, you still have a 1000' gain in 2 miles, and a 2700' loss 5 mile downhill run.

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Feb. 4, Sat. KICKSTEP 4660', 5 miles SE of Seward Highway up TinCan Cr. near Turnagain Pass. Gain/loss 3800' in 10 miles roundtrip. Ned Lewis 333-0003.

Feb. 5, Sun. Turnagain Pass-Ingram Creek via scenic North Ridge. Gain 1500' in 2 miles to Crest, 4 miles along gently rolling ridge, lose 2500' in 3 miles to Ingram Creek.

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SKI SCHEDULE cont.

Feb. 11-12-13, Sat-Mon., BALD MOUNTAIN RIDGE west through Capitol Site. Gain 3500' in 6 miles to ridge crest via Government Cr. (10 miles NW of Palmer); lose 4000' in about 30 miles west along crest (with a tremendous view!) as it gradually lowers and broadens into Deception Cr. drainage, and down Deception Cr. through the Capitol Site. Good chance to see our future capitol while its still wilderness.  
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Feb. 18-19-20, Sat-Mon., HOPE COOPER LANDING via Resurrection Trail. Gain/lose 2000' in about 37 1/2 miles. Bill Stivers 277-2869. Half the group starts at one end, the other half the other end, eliminating the car shuttle & giving both parties a packed (snowmobile??) trail when they meet. Cabins reserved.  
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P.S. If you have a good place you would like to go to or explore with a group on skis, try calling 277-2484 (ski trip coordinator) and volunteer to lead a ski tour there.

Charles A. Kibler

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THE BIG HIKING TRIP OF THE YEAR IS FOR THE WRANGELL MOUNTAINS

The trip will be from July 21-30. We will start by driving to Northway and from there fly to Horsfeld. We will hike from there to Chisam - which is about 25 miles- over varied terrain. Hikers can choose between several groups. One group will cross a glacier and then a higher pass; another group a less strenuous way through a lower pass. We will be able to inspect abandoned mining camps in addition to viciwing the wilderness. Approximate cost of the round trip fly-in will be about \$75.00. See DONA AGOSTI for details or reservations - 279-2901

Dona Agosti

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MINUTES OF DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

Wednesday, December 21, 1977, Pioneer School House, Anchorage

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 PM by President DENKEWALTER. Business Meeting: previous meeting's minutes were approved. Treasurer's Report: Checking: \$854.50, Savings: \$448.53, Cash-On-Hand: \$44.50. Past month's income: \$130.00, expenses: \$50.40, net income: \$79.60. The President reminded members and newcomers that dues for 1978 are now payable, at the meeting or by mail to MCA's post office box. New membership cards are now available. Board member DAVE KLINGER reminded members to fill out the questionnaire attached to the December 1977 SCREE and turn in at a meeting or mail to the MCA's post office box. Secretary ROBINSON asked any members having suggestions for improving the descriptions of or access to the hikes inn 55 WAYS to notify Club officers soon to assist in preparing for the third printing. Board member DICK THALER reported on a proposal by Far North, which takes skiers into the mountains by helicopter, to repair the MCA's Eagle Glacier Hut, including new roof, insulation, and a heater. After some discussion on alternative materials, lenght of the agreement for Far North to use the hut ( one year ); and the fact that the MCA can not lease the hut, it was MSP that the MGA pay for the materials (except the heater).

After the intermission for refreshments, MIKE WARBURTON presented a slide show

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MINUTES cont.

of his climbs with Russian mountain climbers as part of the USA-USSR exchange programs in Yosemite National Park on El Capitan and in several mountainous areas of Russia. Only a good American hard hat saved Mike from the Russian mountaineer's special graveyard!

Meeting adjourned at 10.00 PM.

E. Allen Robinson, Secretary

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#### MOUNT MCKINLEY

1977 was a pleasantly quiet year on Mt McKinley. After the large numbers of climbers and the many accidents in 1976, it was a relief that the situation was more settled this year. Nearly 150 fewer climbers registered for mountaineering within the park, perhaps lending some credence to the theory that many parties were on Mount McKinley in 1976 simply to celebrate our country's Bicentennial.

However the number of successful climbers on Mount McKinley in 1977 was nearly as high as the previous year. With another season of exceptionally good weather an amazing 79% of all those who attempted Mount McKinley were successful. Mount Foraker was climbed by only 48% of those who attempted it. It is not an easy mountain to climb by any route.

Some exceptionally fine climbing was accomplished in 1977. A party of two put up a new route on the South Face of Mount Foraker, after completing a difficult new route on the North Face of Mount McKinley. ( Actually, it was the North Face of Mt. Hunter - Lowe/Kennedy. Ed.)

The West Ridge of Mount Foraker was also climbed for the first time ( the expedition approached the ridge from the southwest).

The original ascent route on Mount Foraker, the Northwest Ridge, was climbed for the second time.

On Mount McKinley, two new variations were made on the South Face. A Japanese party climbed the Centennial Wall via a more difficult route, to the west of the original route, up to the 16,000 foot level.

A Canadian party climbed a variation of the West Rib.

The West Rib was climbed solo for the first time by a climber whose party of four registered for the Cassin Ridge and split up soon after reaching the mountain.

The 1963 route on the East Buttress of Mount McKinley was climbed for the second time in 1977.

One Japanese and three American guide services led a total of nine expeditions on Mount McKinley in 1977, all on the West Buttress route. Just under 40% of all those who registered for the West Buttress this year climbed under the leadership of professional guides.

Only five climbers required emergency evacuation this year, a dramatic decline from the 33 in 1976. Two climbers were injured in a fall on Mount Foraker in March and were evacuated by commercail helicopter. On Mount McKinley, a Japanese climber suffering from high altitude Pulmonary edema was evacuated by military helicopter, an American climber with torn knee ligaments was evacuated by airplane from 14,000 feet, and a Japanese climber with a broken leg was evacuated from 9,000 feet by airplane. (The use of fixed wing aircraft is much less expensive than helicopters for evacuation though not nearly as versatile.) Several parties paid the cost of their own rescues and the

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McKinley cont.

National Park Service spent less than \$4,000 on rescues in 1977.

There were no fatalities on Mount McKinley or Mount Foraker.

For the first time, in 1977, the National Park Service stationed two mountaineering rangers in Talkeetna for the climbing season. The rangers checked groups in and out of the mountains, advised climbers on the potential hazards of high altitude arctic mountaineering, and helped to coordinate rescue activity. In addition, they carried out two-ten day patrols on the West Buttress of Mount McKinley reaching an altitude of 17,000 feet. On these patrols, they were able to assist three injured climbers who did not need air evacuation. We feel that having the two rangers in Talkeetna was very successful and, budget permitting, we will continue to do so in the future.

All interested climbers are reminded that to climb Mount McKinley or Mount Foraker, you must register in advance with the National Park Service, submit a signed physician's certificate for each climber, carry a two-way radio on your climb, and check in on your return. For smaller peaks, you are required only to register in advance. All trash, equipment and unused food must be removed from Mount McKinley National Park. If you carry it up the mountain, you can carry it back down.

For information, write to:

Superintendent  
Mt. McKinley National Park  
P.O. Box 9  
McKinley Park, Alaska 99755

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#### SEWARD HIGHWAY

Sandy Habinowitch from the Alaska State Parks is interested in talking with climbers' opinions about the climbing areas along the Seward Highway. The Parks and Highway departments have gotten together over climbing along the highway. Habinowitch told me that the two departments plan to areas or gardens along the highway! That's right. They are planning to make special areas along the new, widened Seward Highway. He needs opinions from interested climbers. He hopes to be at the January meeting, if he can possibly make it. If not, or you are not, call him at 274-4676.

P. Denkewalter

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#### SOME CLIMBS IN THE ALASKA RANGE

by Brian Okonok

THE ROYAL TOWER - pk. 8130' via east face and northeast ridge. We peeked from the tent at 1:00 AM, but low clouds obscuring all views and a lightly falling drizzle persuaded us to crawl only deeper into our sleeping bags. A morning break in the weather aroused us to depart even though it was still quite unsettled and could go either way. We'd just hope for sunny side up. The first 1,000' went quickly as the bergschrund and runneled face presented no problems. Luckily so-far as we gained the rock almost the entire face below us was involved in one big mush snow dance celebrating the coming of the sun! The first two belayed pitches led up a narrowing steepening ice gully which was plagued by falling rocks anxious to join the dance below. Luck was on our side once again for we weren't invited to join in the fun down there. At the end of the ice Ken Cook changed to EDs and began to show us what a Californian rock climber was all about. He lightly moved up over some loose blocks and

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## SOME CLIMBS cont.

seemingly floated up a slimy wet vertical section to where the real climbing began. As it ended up I had to warm up my jumar where Ken cooled his hands. Being slightly out of sight on the second half of the pitch only Ken's verbal struggles enlightened our senses giving some hints of the climbing ahead. Grunts, groans and excited laughter fell our way and at any moment we expected that perhaps Ken himself might fall our way too. He cursed of cold hands, of leaving the hardware he needed behind, and of the fact that he should have aided sections and we kept trying to set up a better belay as the voice began to sound more and more desperate. About the time we were ready for a crater Ken gained the ridge and was off belay. Pitch three had gone free at 5.10. We continued up super enjoyable 5.7 - 5.8 cracks, crystals and dimples wandering here and there up the rock band. Ken found friction climbing up ice patches in EBs quite challenging. The eighth pitch got us above the rock band and onto mixed ground along a narrowing ridge. We once again donned crampons and ice gear and continued toward the summit in puffy clouds. The summit ice fields which had looked steep and horrendous from below took on a more easy nature as we climbed across them to reach the summit on the 15th pitch. It was a good feeling for Roger Robinson and I as we surveyed the view from the summit blocks as we had thought of getting to this point for a long year. We added another fine memory to our minds, more slides to our dusty collections, and many a fine peak to anticipate some more first ascents on. Our descent lasted through the dusky night. I can remember Ken falling asleep hanging in his seat harness between rappels and Roger jumaring back up a jammed rope over several overhangs and watching my hands tie knots in slow motion feeling I wasn't attached to them. The snow always looked so close, but it took eight 160' rappels to reach it and even though we hurried, the sun beat us to it. But what I remember best is that orange juice and canned peaches that quenched our thirst 24 hours after leaving camp.

SOUTH TROLL - pk. 6950' via west face. As usual the mountains must strike in revenge for overcoming one of their stoney face neighbors and we payed our dues with several days of cards in the tent. One fine clear and warm day can easily wash away the sour memories of several inactive storm days and this day was no exception to the rule. A long stretch got us over the schrund, then five pitches of snow took us around the shattered rock of the lower west face to the better rock of the upper half. The flowers, the moss, the pika, the ptarmigan, the fine view, and hot sun made this a most delightful spot. The kind of day one dreams of! We changed to rock shoes to enjoy the fine rock to the utmost. Four pitches of 5.7 found us on top completely satisfied with a fun day of climbing. The trek back to base camp was under the unique lighting that only evening can bring; patterns in the snow etched by shadow and far off peaks crimsoned by the low sun made a scene that no artist could ever duplicate.

YOUR HIGHNESS - pk. 7050' via west face. Ken had departed for home and Roger and I had been foiled on two good attempts of the Crowned Jewel and now we were once again paying our dues for treading on the peaks with days of inactivity in the sodden tent recounting the adventures of the last few days. On one of the attempts of the Crowned Jewel while belaying the 6th pitch I noticed a black bear wandering up the glacier below. We just watched him amble along sniffing all the while and skirting numerous cravasses very much thrilled at seeing a large animal like this on the glacier. Then suddenly it dawned on us that he was on our tracks and following them toward base camp. What a drag it would be to have camp mutilated by our furry friend and be forced to abandon the mountains because of the lack of food and shelter.

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## SOME CLIMBS cont.

With this in mind we started yelling at him with a purpose hoping for the right results. The echoes that bounced around the cirque helped us out by making the bear think he was vastly outnumbered or in a haunted valley for he quickly beat a retreat after several confused and baffled moments. Pancake mix cobbler desserts made the storm days bearable and added a new taste treat to our burned tongues.

Once again the weather cleared and we wandered off a side glacier to do your Highness. The crisp morning air made the walking condition peachy easy and we enjoyed our near and far off horizons to the utmost with roving eyes. We circled to the west face of Your Highness following a glacier to within four pitches of the summit. The rock was magnificent - solid and sound; rough and warm to the touch. The climb was somewhat of a pushover going much easier than we had expected it to. We got pretty lethargic on the summit when we found large belvedere boulders complete with drinking pool and lounge chair dips. Such is the rough life of a mountaineer!

ACROSS THE GRAIN - From the Kahiltna Glacier Roger and I traversed over to the Granite Creek Glacier to explore its upper regions and then continue east. We climbed peak 5610' on our way over to the Kanikula Glacier. The two summits of Mount Goldie (pk. 6315') and pk. 6182' were climbed in raunchy weather as we cut over to the Tokositna Glacier. Many a rough and tumble step got us over the moraines of this messed up glacier to a lake where we cooled our heels. We met a few of the neighborhood "wooly buggers" as we rambled and grazed our way to the top of the roly ridges above the Ruth Glacier. A well rusted kerosene can in a collapsed cairn proved we weren't the first summer visitors along these ridges, but the summits of peaks 5412' and 5600' were void of human markings. Many an eagle, owl or hawk feather marked the sign of a previous ascent though, and a shin bone found along the ridge perhaps signified that a sheep had once hoofed its way over the summit in search of better grazing ground. We descended to the Backside Glacier and put in a heroic effort on one of the Ruth Gorge peaks only to be chased back by a wind-driven downpour that spelled hypothermia city after we had climbed some 4,000' up the thing. The radio being broken and food supplies running short we passed up many a planned-on climb and hussled across the Ruth Glacier and up the Glacier Point Fork past Fake Peak. At the pass before dropping down into the Coffee Glacier we found more signs of human activity in the way of weathered case gas boxes, cairns, and a much out of place willow stick. From here we descended to the Coffee Glacier and made our way to its terminus in a series of controlled stumbles on the moraine piles. Meadows of lush fireweed welcomed us back to the low lands, but we knew the alders ahead awaited us with outstretched arms and we couldn't get too excited in anticipating their greeting. There is no doubt about it - the 12 miles of alders we encountered on the way to Spink Lake were terrible. The only thing that made it easy was the juicy Water Melon berries we munched upon - when one patch ran out we'd move to the next. At times we were able to pass long stretches of brush by wading down the river; half swimming and half grabbing for alders to keep from getting washed away with the current. As all stories should end well this one has a very favorable note in the last hours. We arrived at Spink Lake with a days worth of food left, wet and tired, and low and behold right after supper while we were indulging in some pudding ( Roger's theory is to full right to the end) my Dad and McCrudden found us after many hours of aerial search time. Not wanting to be missed we used some survival book techniques and set the

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## SOME CLIMBS cont.

Beach on fire and madly waved white foam pads. My Dad wondered who the nuts were. We had trekked through much fine country that we will someday return to it for a longer visit.

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FLATTOP SLEEP-IN Saturday, December 17th. Among the intrepid MCAers that climbed up Flattop for the annual sleep-in were Bill SIVETS, DAVID NEWCOMBE, MIKE & SALLY RICHARDSON, BILL BRICKLEY, KATHY L. MORRISON, PAT McMANNUE. Also, the now infamous Sunday Morning Times Phantom Delivery Boy!! That's right. Someone delivered the Sunday Times to the tents of some of the snuggled-up MCAers early that morning. The question is not who was it, but rather where were the roles and fresh milk??