



**JANUARY MEETING**  
**Wednesday**  
**January 20, 7:30 pm**  
**Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets**  
**Downtown Anchorage**

**Slide Show: Derek Nelson and Dan Oberlatz will present a program on climbing, hiking and whitewater in Lake Clark National Park.**

**Preview next month: Kilimanjaro, Ken Zafren**

**HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE**

- Jan 23            Pyramid Peak  
 Class C. Non-technical ski-mountaineering trip of 3,500 vertical feet. Need randonee or telemark setup, skins that work, avalanche beacon, shovel and probe. Ability to ski variable terrain and conditions is recommended.  
 Leader: Wayne Todd 563-3989 w, 522-6354 h
- Jan 24            McHugh Peak  
 Class B. Meet in the Carrs on Huffman coffee shop at 9:00. A beginner trip, but can get pretty cold. Need heavy leather or plastic double boots with stiff sole (no tennis shoes or light hiking boots allowed!), ice axe, ski poles, extra warm clothes, maybe snow shoes.  
 Leader: Joe Anders 345-3917

**TRAINING SCHEDULE**

- Jan - Feb            Basic Mountaineering Skills  
 Weekends.  
 Prerequisites: Alaska Winter Camping / Backpacking Skills & Gear and Basic Mountaineering Gear  
 Where: Chugach or Talkeetna Mts.  
 Coordinator: Gary Runa 275-3613 msg.
- Mar - Apr            Expedition Mountaineering Training  
 Weekends.  
 Prerequisites: Alaska Winter Camping / Backpacking Skills & Gear and Basic Mountaineering Skills & Gear.  
 Where: Chugach or Talkeetna Mts.  
 Coordinator: Gary Runa 275-3613 msg.

## May - June Glacier Travel & Crevasse Rescue Training

One weekend and one week.

Prerequisites: Alaska Winter Camping / Backpacking Skills & Gear and Basic Mountaineering Skills & Gear. (Air Transport Cost approx. \$250)

Where: Alaska Range or Wrangell Mts.

Coordinator: Gary Runa 275-3613 msg.

### TRIP REPORTS

## North Couloir of O'Malley Peak

by Cory Hinds



O'Malley Peak (5150) is one of the more impressive summits in the near Chugach. Viewed from Anchorage, O'Malley is the sharp summit set between the triangular Wolverine Peak on the left and Flattop on the right. An enjoyable day scramble can take you to this

summit from the south via Hidden Lake or from the west via the "ballfield". Many of you may have taken in the panoramic view or eaten a snack on top after such a scramble. Did you ever peer down the north side? I did; it looked steep. Has anyone climbed that nonsense I wondered? So I did a bit of homework and scouting and this October, MCA member Paul Templeton and I went to check out the north couloir.

We committed to the climb only the night before and were running late that morning. I hoped we'd not regret our alpine - 9:00 A.M. start. We approached via the "ballfield" (passed a record 11 moose) and dropped down the other side (toward Williwaw Lakes) to Black Lake beneath O'Malley's north face. The glimpse of the upper couloir from the edge of the "ballfield" was pretty sobering (I believe Paul's exact words were "damn dude"), the angle looked very steep and we noted several rock constrictions towards the top of the couloir. I tried to take a mental picture of possible bailout routes.

The crux of the climb, we found out, is actually getting to the couloir. There is a rock band that extends the width of the north face at the bottom, barring easy access to the couloir. The weekend before I had scoped several options to get over this band. We chose the lower angle ice on the left side of the rock band. (Note: the thin ice smear on the right side was also climbed this season.)

A scramble up the snow and scree took us to the base of the wall and we kicked steps to the base of the ice on the left side of the rock band. We ate and drank a bit on a nice shelf left of the base of the ice. It was noon. The ice was thin but low angle (grade 3) and we thoroughly enjoyed the first pitch.

We were a bit short on ice protection, having just one 10-cm screw and two specters, but the angle was mellow and we felt ok. We used slings and a few cams in the rock at the belays. Paul led the committing second pitch over smooth icy rock as the angle eased off onto the first bench. We found an old 1/4" spinning bolt with a piece of old red webbing on it, which confirmed that we were not the first to explore this route.

From the first bench we needed to get around the next rock step then move higher into the couloir. Traversing up and right, I chose to climb what I thought would be a short step of ice spilling out of a notch rather than trying to traverse right along some snowy ledges where the protection looked bad. The "short step" turned into a full pitch of tricky mixed rock and ice climbing up through a narrow gully (again, grade 3 angle, but minimal protection).

At the top of this gully the angle increased and there was a small overhanging lip. I looked around for another option, but couldn't find anything else. So I slammed a specter into the moss below the lip, got a good tool placement above the lip, and carefully pulled over using a hand on some rock; my adrenaline was flowing! The gully was finally visible ahead as I set a belay in the snow. I was worried that I'd made a mistake spending so much time on this section; surely there must have been an easier way.

As Paul followed the pitch, the wind picked up and I watched in amusement as huge volumes of spindrift funneled down the gully onto him. Paul was cursing as he reached the top and excavated the snow that had gone down his neck.

As we dropped into the gully, I glanced at my watch, 3:00 P.M. already! Two hours of daylight left... beginning to worry. We took a minute to look down the gully from our entrance point. It did not look like there was a straightforward way to access the lower gully.

The angle of the couloir at our entrance was about 35 degrees so we unroped and put the ropes in our packs. The snow in the couloir was deeper and less consolidated than we had hoped and we got a serious aerobic workout as we put some vertical distance between ourselves and Black Lake. The angle steadily increased and we passed several short



steps of ice and rock but we were making good time. The late hour, curiosity and consequences of what lay around the next bend kept our pace up. We broke out a rope once at a constriction near the top that was particularly exposed. The angle at the top of the couloir reached a maximum of approximately 50 degrees, not as steep as it looks from below or above. With perfect timing, we topped out at 5:00 P.M., just as it began to get dark.

From the top, we were able to assess possible escape options from the couloir; there were none. We realized that we would have had to down climb and rappel the lower portion if we had not topped out. Not an appealing prospect.

It was snowy, windy and cold on top, but we were warm inside as we descended towards the lights of the Anchorage Bowl. This is a classic climb right here in our backyard.

Summary: Not a first ascent, North Couloir of O'Malley Peak  
2500 feet elevation gain (approx.)  
Technical Difficulties: route finding, grade 3 ice, mixed climbing, marginal pro.  
Protection Used: ice screws, specters, pitons, rock pro., snow pickets  
Hazards: avalanche, rock fall, exposure

## To the South Col with Tensing

by Tom Choate



The Everest of the Western Chugach is Bashful (8005). After seeing the south side of this peak, with impressive cliffs leading to easy slopes up by the summit, I resolved to make an attempt to climb there. I guessed that mid-June would provide enough snow to access the cliffs and hopefully be past the avalanches. It turned out that the cliffs were bare and rotten, but lots of snow filled the "s" shaped gully leading to the south col (the 6850' low spot on the ridge between point 7125 "Benevolent" and Bashful ... a pass so high that there is no true peak on the long ridge between Baleful and Bashful.

Mark Miraglia and I were so interested in this shy giant that we commissioned a close inspection by airplane in 1997, but still had a hard time choosing a route to attempt. I enticed Mark into the Tolchina Cirque over the weekend of June 27-28, but fortunately

we were late arriving at the falls and decided to camp rather than attempt what turned out to be a steep and brush-bashing route into the cirque. Unknown to us, two other MCAers (Wendy S. & Jeff J. with 4 dogs) had bashed up to Peak 5495 but came down very late and didn't wake us up.

We were off at 7:30 AM, climbing the steep hunter's trail that goes nearly directly up onto the shoulder of 5495. Mark and I cleared some brush, ferns and logs and put more ribbons in place, especially on the no-trail traverse where we lost the route several times before its entry through the willows at the lowest point on the cirque. Just above here seems to be the best place to camp, but all the sites we saw were sloping. We turned left and ascended snow and rocky tundra to the "box canyon" below the S. face cliffs. Here three waterfalls leap out from the high valleys, two falling free for hundreds of feet.

We thought we saw a ledge leading to the upper part of the right hand waterfall, but after scrambling around (up to 5.4, with considerable tensing) for 2 hours, we found only short ledges that soon faded into steep rotten walls. Rather than get involved in technical climbing with dubious outcome, Mark and I scrambled back down into a gully and descended the snow below, with barely enough time left to ascend the curving chute that winds up to the south col. Half way up we were spattered by debris from a wet snow avalanche that ran in the deep groove in the middle of the chute. There was soft, wet, postholing snow in the upper part, but we still reached the col (some 1800 feet of climb) in 1 1/2 hrs. The views of the nasty walls of Baleful were great, but we couldn't rest long, because it was late and the steep cliff above looked like a barricade between the south summit and us.

Surprisingly, both the route I explored near the ridge crest, and the one Mark pioneered some 40 ft. to the east both went well (with some tensing at the places the grade reached 5.4 with exposure). After some 200 feet the cliff ends on a small ridge which marks the beginning of easy ground above. We stuck to the S. ridge, scrambling for several hundred feet until the ridge got narrow with exposure onto the east face. We passed several small gendarmes on the left and attained the thin ridge again where it steepens to the first of 3 south peaks. We moved to the right and climbed past a hundred foot pinnacle, and crossed through a pass to the crux: a 20 ft. exposed traverse left on rotten crud leading to a mini ridge behind which is easier ground. Scrambling up and right to the first south summit, I called to Mark who was concerned that it was now 6:45 and clouds were gathering below. So, to save time, I dropped off the ridge and skirted the 2nd and 3rd south summits on the snow to the west,



regaining the ridge at the last col before the true summit (30 min.).

The last scramble up and left brought me to a point 15 feet west of the summit. Joyfully I opened the big Tupperware register to find that I was the first for '98. After a hasty entry (no time for the view), I rushed back to the southernmost peak where Mark was patiently waiting. Showing his usual remarkable rock-climbing ability, Mark kept well ahead of me all the way down, reversing the climbing moves all the way to the south col, enabling me to keep the rope in the pack, but creating another bout with tensing. The snow chute was a long series of giant plunge steps that brought us down to the cirque in only 1 1/2 hrs. from the summits, leaving sufficient time to find the alder trails and work our way down to camp in the valley below.

The midnight arrival meant a late start on Sunday, back up the now reasonably clear trail into the cirque. This time we followed the tracks of our fellow MCAers onto 5495, arriving on top in continuing good weather with great views of the East fork and our Bashful cliffs. Staring up there, it was hard to believe we had found a moderate route through.

## KNWR Ridge Traverse

by Tim Kelley



Most everyone who reads Scree is familiar with 'ANWR'. Pronounced as 'an-whar', this acronym refers to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A similar sounding acronym exists for a lesser know refuge, but one that's just down the road from Anchorage. It's 'KNWR'. The

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

For years, while skiing, running or mountain biking at Kincaid Park, I would often pause at the top of the Lekisch Trail to check out the long range of peaks across Turnagain Arm to the south. The KNWR peaks were always there, beckoning. Seeing these peaks I would resolve to put them on my 'peaks to climb' list. Finally on June 26, 1998 the KNWR peaks made it to the top of the list.

At 10:30 AM Wiley Bland and I left the Cooper Landing trailhead of the Resurrection Trail. Our plan was to take the Resurrection Trail to the Swan Lake area and then follow the ridgelines that form the

eastern border of KNWR, finishing in Hope. To climb the 16 true peaks on this route over 50 miles of traveling and about 24000 vertical feet of climbing would be involved.

Under a hot sun we hoofed along the trail in shorts and running shoes for 13 miles. At the top of the Juneau Creek switchbacks we veered off the trail and headed north. Soon we summited our first peak, the 4450 peak at the southern head of Abernathy Creek. It felt good to be away from the herds of hikers and bikers on the Resurrection Trail and back in the high country again.

Continuing northwest, as we reached the imaginary line of the eastern KNWR boundary we were greeted by three members of the Kenai caribou herd. The caribou escorted us to American Pass and we then climbed the 4450-foot peak on the north side of the pass. Glissading down the north side of this peak we entered the Hungry Creek drainage, crossed it and climbed the 3950-foot peak on the north side.

We were definitely in caribou country now. Small bands of 'boo could be seen on surrounding ridges. There were also a lot of antler drops in the area. Another interesting phenomena were the "caribou craters". Often one could see distant snowfields near the ridge-tops that were sculpted smooth by winds except for areas with a unique pockmarked look. These areas looked like a meteor shower had rained upon the snowfield leaving a band of craters. Once we reached these divots we found 3 feet in diameter by 2 feet deep cups in the snow with caribou dung pellets at the bottom. The low albedo of the dark dung coupled with long periods of hot sun had caused this snowmelt phenomenon. Yes, the amazing wonders of shit never end!

The last true peak that we climbed on our first day was Peak 4156 at the headwaters of Hungry Creek. From here we descended to Big Indian Creek, filled our water bottles with marginal swamp-water and ascended the ridge to the north. Our goal for the day was at the top of the ridge. We wanted to traverse the whole length of Seward C-8 topo map the first day before we camped. At 11:00 PM we crested the ridge at the 3700-foot level and pulled out our bivy bags for the night. This site would be exposed, but the ridge top breeze would allow us some mosquito free sleeping.

To the northwest lights of Los Anchorage could be seen through a col in a distant ridge. Until now I had never imagined that one could see caribou from Anchorage. But now I realized that with a telescope looking at the right place at the right time, it would be possible from Anchorage to see members of the Kenai



herd wandering the ridges of KNWR.

This night's camp-out would be typical one for the crew I climb with. We have these unquestioned rules for summer camping: no sleeping bags, no sleeping pads, no tents, no stoves and fuel, no whining. In place of this gear we bring extra food and climbing hardware.

After changing into dry clothes I rolled my bivy bag out on the tundra, slid in and choked down a few bagels lubricated with swamp water. In this dehydrated state, I knew it was going to be a cold night. Luckily I had mistakenly brought my insulated bivy bag. I hoped that Wiley wouldn't notice this infraction to the rules. But he was already in the depths of his unlined bivy bag, no doubt shivering in the fetal position. During the night the cold woke me a few times and I had to rub my legs and arms to warm up. Wiley, with lower body-fat and no more clothes than I, was undoubtedly freezing his ass off too. Each time I woke, for a moment, I would feel sorry for Wiley in his low-rent cocoon. But then I would come to my senses: "Hey! He's young ... suffering is good for the little bastard!"

We slept until direct hits of morning sunlight coaxed us out of our bags at 7:30. We hurriedly ate and packed as we had a long day ahead of us. We started the day's ridgeline peak bagging by climbing Peak 4330 at the head of White Creek, Peaks 4140 and 4355 at the head of Cannonball Creek and Peaks 4450 and 4560 at the head of the Wolf Creek drainage. There were often times as we were climbing up these peaks that we could see caribou above us on adjacent ridges silhouetted against the radiant blue morning sky. The sight made it feel like you WERE in ANWR, instead of being only 40 or so air miles from Anchorage.

The descent from Peak 4560 to the head of Gold Gulch was about the only tricky part of the trip. A bit of route finding was necessary to avoid unnecessary exposure. Past this area we continued hitting the peaks on the KNWR border: Peak 4250 (Gold Gulch), Peak 4550 (Bedrock Creek), Peak 4020 (Wildhorse Creek) and Peaks 4050 and 3955 (Cripple Creek).

At midnight we reached the top of Peak 3950, an air-mile southwest of Hope Mountain. After 16 hours of ridge hammering we had some good 'body-frys' going. Or as Wiley says, "We were writing checks that our bodies couldn't cash". Under summer's tenacious midnight twilight we glissaded a prominent snowfield into the Johnson Creek drainage. The vibrant howl of a wolf welcomed us to the valley, the metropolis of Anchorage glowed to the northwest. Below the snowline we found a semi-flat patch of

tundra protected from the night breeze by a clump of krummholtz spruce. We settled in for another chilly bivouac.

In the morning we hiked down the snowfield that covers the upper reaches of Johnson Creek. Where the creek emerged from the snow pack, we filled up our empty water bottles and then scrambled up Hope Mountain. We reached the top at 8:00 AM and were cooled by a stiff wind. This peak was the 16th, and last, true peak of our trip. We summoned our pick-up in Hope via a cell phone and began the descent. As I had managed to concoct a large blister on the ball of my right foot the day before, the descent turned into a long hotfoot hobble for me. In Hope we bought some ice cream and lazed on the grass of the town park as we waited for our ride. It was easy to enjoy the lazy mid-day sun because we were thrashed to contentment.

As expected, our route was definitely a private way to traverse from Cooper Landing to Hope. Once we left the Resurrection Trail the first day, we saw no people until Hope. This part of KNWR definitely has its solitude. In comparison to ANWR, on a ski-trip across ANWR a few winters ago and I met more people there than I did on the off-trail section of this KNWR trek!

Of the 16 peaks we climbed we found a cairn on Peak 4450 at the head of American Creek, a tranquilizer dart on Peak 4156 at the head of Hungry Creek and cairns on Peak 3955 (Cripple Creek) and Hope Mountain. No cairns were found on the other peaks. We left small cairns on these unmarked peaks. Because of the prevalently non-technical nature of these peaks they most likely had all been climbed in the past. Either they were climbed by prospectors (when the Hope area had thousands of residents with gold fever), by hunters or by the occasional hikers bushwhacking up from the Resurrection Trail.



## 1958-1998 Scree Index is Done!

Name the two club members that have lead over 50 club trips? How about the two that wrote over 50 trip reports. Now for the easy one: What is the most club climbed mountain?

The ad-hoc History Committee has finally finished an index of Scree information. The Scree Index reports contain lists of:

- Club officers and directors
- Trip leaders and trips
- Individual member contributions
- Peaks and mountains
- Trip reports (info on 399 different peaks!)
- Club trips
- Presentations

The project took hundreds of hours to gather data, enter into a database and proof. The club members to thank are:

Richard Baranow, Tom Choate, Mark Flanum, Mark Fouts (chair), David Gilmore, Steve Gruhn, Dave Hart, Susie Hartigan, Willy Hersman, Elena Hinds, Ron Kruse, James Larabee, John Mander, Mark Miraglia, Neil O'Donnell, Michele Potkin, Lavonne Rhyneer, Ron Rickman, Chris Riggio, Bill Romberg, Gary Runa, Larry Rundquist, Wendy Sanem, Dave Storkel, Neil Tieszen, Wayne Todd, Kirk Towner, Curtis Townsend and Steve Wilson

A copy of the Scree Index report is available for review at the MCA Vin Hoeman Library at Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking.

**ADZE**



For Sale

Scarpa Denali Randonee Boots,  
Mens Size 8 Brand New, Never  
Worn \$295  
Call Jill, 345-4345

The Banff Mountain Film Festival

Friday and Saturday, March 5, 6. It  
was a sellout last year, looks like  
they went to 2 nights to accommo-  
date more viewers.

Slide Show

Climbs done in Eagle River valley,  
by Richard Barranow, and Wendy  
Sanem. Jan 29, 7:00. Eagle River  
Visitor Center. Free show. \$3.00  
parking fee.

## History Corner

Joe Anders

Bill Romberg and Kirt Towner's recent encounter with a cold stream under a snow bridge reminded me of the story of Jeffrey Rudd. On Christmas Eve, 1994, Mr. Rudd set out from the Glenn Alps parking lot for a ski up valley towards Powerline Pass. He was last seen about a mile from the Glenn Alps parking lot near the bridge across Campbell Creek. Several days of searching did not locate him. Mr. Rudds body was found in May '95 in the creek bed. He apparently broke through some ice, fell into the creek and was unable to extract himself.



PLEASE POST



# ALASKA MOUNTAIN SAFETY CENTER, INC. and the ALASKA AVALANCHE SCHOOL

## 1998-99 SCHEDULE

Date	Number/Name Workshop	Location	Cost*
1/16-18	1. Backcountry Aval. Haz. Eval. & Rescue	Hatcher Pass, Talkeetna Mts.	\$225
1/30	2. Avalanche Hazard Recognition	U of AK, Anchorage, Library, Room 118	\$ 25**
2/13-15	3. Backcountry Aval. Haz. Eval. & Rescue (Special field group open to snowmachiners)	Hatcher Pass, Talkeetna Mts.	\$225
2/22e,24e,26-28	4. Level II, Traveling Hazard Eval. Workshop	Talkeetna or Chugach Mts.	\$225
2/23 (eve.)	5. Physics for Climbers and Rescuers	Anchorage	\$ 15
2/26-28	6. Backcountry Aval. Haz. Eval. & Rescue	Thompson Pass, Chugach Mts.	\$225
3/4e,6-7(am)	7. The Art of Snow Shelter Construction	Anchorage(e), Chugach or Talkeetna Mts.	\$ 95
3/5e, 6	8. Level II, Steep Terrain Hazard Evaluation	Anchorage(e), Chugach or Talkeetna Mts.	\$ 70
3/8e,10e,12-15	9. Crevasse Rescue Workshop	Anc(e), Matanuska Glacier, Chugach Mts.	\$250
3/16e, 3/18-21	10. Glacier Travel Workshop	Anc(e), Matanuska Glacier, Chugach Mts.	\$245
4/15-18	11. Mountaineering Skills Workshop	Turnagain Arm, Chugach Mts.	\$240
4/22-25	12. Mountain Rescue Workshop	Turnagain Arm, Chugach Mts.	\$240
5/21-24	13. Ocean Kayaking Workshop	Resurrection Bay, Seward	\$235
Open	Custom Workshops for your Organization	Open	Open

Cost does not include required reading materials, food, or travel but in some cases, does include accommodations (see below & course descriptions. Matanuska Glacier access fee of about \$5/day per person is not included).

Cost is \$20 per person for students under 18 or families of three or more.

Abbreviations: e =evening session from roughly 6:30-9:30 p.m., a.m. = workshop ends by noon.

Contact Alaska Mountain Safety Center  
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Eagle River, AK 99577  
345-3566; 696-3490