

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

January 2020

Volume 63, Number 1



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"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

– Michelangelo

JANUARY MEETING: Wednesday, January 8, at 6:30 p.m.

Luc Mehl will give the presentation.

"To maintain, promote, and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating, and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering."

This issue brought to you by: **Editor**—Steve Gruhn **assisted by** Dawn Munroe

Cover Photo

Gabe Hayden high on Devils Paw.
Photo by Brette Harrington

JANUARY MEETING

Wednesday, January 8, at 6:30 p.m. at the BP Energy Center at 1014 Energy Court in Anchorage.

Luc Mehl will give the presentation.

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/BP+Energy+Center/@61.1900534,-149.8658586,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x56c897b71cdbd81d:0x5058f26b0a2567f1!8m2!3d61.1900534!4d-149.8636699>

Choate's Chuckle - Tom Choate

Q: Why did the rock climber spend days practicing with his pistol beforehand?

Answer: on page 23.

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Hut Needs and Notes

If you are headed to one of the MCA huts, please consult the Hut Inventory and Needs on the website (<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm/Huts/Hut-Inventory-and-Needs>) or Greg Bragiel, MCA Huts Committee Chairman, at either huts@mtnclubak.org or (907) 350-5146 to see what needs to be taken to the huts or repaired. All huts have tools and materials so that anyone can make basic repairs. Hutmeisters are needed for each hut: If you have a favorite hut and would like to take the lead on checking on the hut and organizing maintenance, the MCA would greatly appreciate your help!

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 11th of each month to appear in the next issue of *the Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. Send high resolution file photos separately, including captions for each photo. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically-oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please don't forget to submit photo captions.

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit <http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?useaction=members.form>.

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Online? Click me!



Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last-minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.

Announcements

Trips

December 21: Flattop Mountain Sleepout. No leader.

February 21-29, 2020: MCA Winter Mountaineering School

A comprehensive training program for individuals who are accomplished backpackers who wish to START learning mountaineering skills.

Course of instruction: Trip planning, food preparation, leadership, winter travel, gear selection/preparation, navigation, leave no trace, snow travel, snow anchors, running belay, rope handling, communication, terminology, knots, gear essentials, route finding, glacier travel, crevasse rescue, belaying, avalanche recognition, avalanche rescue, staying warm, nutrition/hydration, winter camp-ing, snow shelters, wilderness medicine, rappelling, ice climbing, winter survival, stream crossing, confidence building, and more. NO course fee; however, students share trip expenses. Certificate of Participation issued when student fulfills course requirements. Lead Instructor: Greg Bragiel.

The Mint Hut will be closed for training February 21-28. If you plan to be in the area, bring a tent and plan to camp outside.

Mentorship Program

Interested in furthering your skills? The MCA has a volunteer-driven Mentorship Program that connects beginner and intermediate folks seeking technical experience in specific mountaineering disciplines with mentors who help you gain and work on new skills.

If you would like to become a mentee or mentor, please email mentorship@mtclubak.org.

Award Nominations

The MCA's Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Hoeman Award, the Presidents Award, and Honorary MCA Memberships.

The Hoeman Award is the MCA's highest award and recognizes those individuals who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to the exploration, documentation, and promotion of hiking and climbing opportunities in Alaska. Nominees should have some association with the MCA, but may not currently hold elected office in the club.

The Presidents Award recognizes a current MCA member who has made significant contributions of time and effort toward an MCA project or other club activities during a calendar year. Nominees must be current MCA members. The current President may not be nominated for the Presidents Award.

Honorary Memberships recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the MCA and its purposes. Nominees need not be MCA members, but must be living and may not currently hold elected office in the club.

Nominations must be in writing and must include the name of the person nominating the candidate, a description of the contributions the candidate has made, and the names and contact information of other persons who might provide more information to the Awards Committee regarding the candidate's contributions.

Nominations may be submitted to the MCA's Awards Committee at P.O. Box 243561, Anchorage, Alaska 99524-3561 or to Tom Meacham, Awards Committee Chairman, at tmeacham@gci.net.

For additional information, please visit

<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm/About-Us/Awards> and review the MCA's Awards Committee policies at http://www.mtnclubak.org/layouts/layout_mca/files/documents/misc/MCA%20Policies.pdf

Geographic Names Decisions

At its November 14, 2019, meeting, the Domestic Names Committee of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names approved the name Gorgon Spire for a 7150-foot peak in the Matthes Glacier and Vaughan Lewis Glacier drainages of the Coast Mountains.

At the same meeting the DNC approved a change in the application of the name Mount Logan from a 6300-foot point on a ridge to the 8450-foot summit 1.4 miles to the west-southwest in the Shoup Glacier and Valdez Glacier drainages of the Central Chugach Mountains.

Also at the same meeting the DNC voted to change the name of Saginaw Bay, off the coast of Kuiu Island, to Skanáx Bay.

Volunteers Needed for Scouts Summer Mountaineering Trip July 17- 24, 2020

Greg Bragiel (Lead instructor, WFR) 350-5146 unknownhiker@alaska.net

Greg Bragiel is soliciting your help instructing for a Scout Summer mountaineering trip planned for July 17-25, 2020. The venue is the Bomber Traverse. This trip is for mature scouts, at least 14 years of age and first class rank. Consider helping for the entire trip or a day.

Itinerary/Instruction.

July 17- Meet at ChangePoint 8 a.m. Stage one vehicle at Reed Lakes Trailhead. Hike into the Mint Hut. Trip plan. Leave no trace, navigation, and route-finding.

July 18- Snow travel, anchors, running belay, knots, rope-handling instructions, 10 essentials, (service project: clean toilet/change barrels, paint outside)

July 19- Terminology, glacier travel, belaying, and ice-climbing instructions (service project)

July 20- Hike to Bomber Hut. Navigation. Glacier travel/crevasse rescue. (service project: Cleaning/painting inside/outside install two windows)

July 21- Visit bomber airplane, Bomber Pass. Crevasse-rescue instructions, wilderness medicine. (service project)

July 22- Hike Rainy Day Knoll. Navigation, bouldering instructions, crossing streams, unplanned camping trip. (service project)

July 23- Hike to Snowbird Lake. Navigation, route finding. Hike Snowbird Lake area.

July 24- Rappelling, rock-climbing instructions. Hike to Snowbird Hut.

July 25- Hike out to Reed Lakes Trailhead. Final Exam.

GPS WGS 84 coordinates- Mint Hut N 61 51.409 W 149 04.787

Bomber Hut N 61 52.757 W 149 08.121

Snowbird Lake N 61 51.828 W 149 11.795

Snowbird Hut N 61 51.528 W 149 12.068



*Bomber Hut
Photo by Greg Bragiel*

Mount Anno Domini (7650 feet), Talkeetna Mountains

Text and photos by Mat Brunton



Hiking above camp up to Mount Anno Domini.

What if it's not just human beings that are created "in the image of God" but, rather, All of Creation is the Image of God.

I think – feel – the notion that humankind alone is "in the image of God" is dangerous and destructive. Why? It puts humanity at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of existence, and hierarchies are inherently exploitative. Beyond that, the notion that humanity is superior to the rest of Creation isn't even worthy of being deemed infantile (my thoughts in this regard stem from my Sunyata Peak trip report, which can be found in the December 2019 *Scree*). It's a very young and immature notion.

Why is this notion (that humanity has dominion over the rest of Creation) beyond infantile? Because the anatomically modern human has existed for about 300,000 years, and for the vast majority of that existence (99.9% wouldn't be an over-exaggeration) place-based, indigenous, animistic worldviews were the human cosmology. A commonality amongst the varying indigenous animisms is that humanity is but one member of an incomprehensibly complex community of interconnected life. This cosmology, rooted in a reverence for all other members of the Community of Life, allowed humanity to live sustainably on the Earth in ways that are more characteristic of the symbiotic relationships other (nonhuman) species have with their habitats than the grossly unsustainable and destructive relationship modern industrial civilization (characterized by consumer capitalism and the insane economic ideology of infinite growth on a planet with finite resources) has with the biosphere.

Do we, as a species, move forward into the future further imperil-

ing the survival of our species and many others while imposing needless suffering on future generations by continuing to uphold the fantasy that we are entitled to "dominion" over the rest of Creation? Or do we awaken ourselves to the interconnectedness of the social, environmental, and spiritual decay that has resulted from the paradigm of (evolutionary or divinely ordained) human dominion over all other beings (that once included dominion of some human ethnicities over others)? The Christian priest and philosopher Thomas Berry posed this as a choice between "Technozoic" or "Ecozoic" Eras, as we leave behind the Cenozoic Era of the past 65 million years.

Besides, even if we were at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of existence and did have dominion over the rest of Creation, what kind of rulers would we be? Currently, any objective assessment would determine us to be cruel and tyrannical ones. We should at least strive to be wise and benevolent rulers. Although, ideally there are no rulers, and we sit at a roundtable with representatives of the rest of Creation. The eye-level relationship that comes from that (from us acknowledging our ignorance, ceasing to be the bully species, and seeking to learn once again from the other Beings with which we share this wondrous spaceship Earth) is how we really become wise (and deserve the title *Homo sapiens*, or wise man).

I think it's obvious the direction the Good Lord (the great Jewish Shaman and Trickster) would want us to go with the Church that purports to be His, and the prominent (and perhaps previously unclimbed) summit deep in the Talkeetna Mountains that this trip report is about is named in recognition of that.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot." – Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:13)

I spent July 18 through 23, 2019, deep in the Talkeetna Mountains with four clients, Robert and Justin Olive and Harry and Gillian Burn. We were blessed with wonderful weather: copious amounts of sunshine and just a couple weak thunderstorms from afternoon buildup. Thanks to my two British and two Georgian clients, whose good Karma made this possible.

On day one we hiked several miles up the large and prominent valley that's east of what I've now heard referred to as the "Cunningham Airstrip" to our camp for a few nights. Mike Meekin and Matt Keller dropped us and our gear at the airstrip via three Cessna 185 Skywagon loads. It was sad to hear about legendary Mike Meekin's impending retirement. It was even sadder to hear that he thinks a helicopter operation will soon replace him. Helicopters make it too easy and, in my opinion, will set an excessive precedent.

After feeding and putting my clients to bed, I set out late to bag the prominent 7600-foot peak due north of our camp. With the magical midnight sun lighting the way, I made it to the north summit after midnight and the south summit shortly before 1 a.m. I'm not sure which was the tallest. The easier-to-reach north summit required a bit of Class 3+/4- scrambling, and the more-difficult-to-reach south summit required more 4th class. The rock was granite. It was even more broken and chossy than the Talkeetna granite to the west, but was much more solid than the more volcanic Talkeetna rock to the south and east. It's a hell of a lot better than friable Kenai shale, and is better than some Chugach conglomerate – but worse than where the Chugach choss is actually "good."

We went for a sweet glacier hike on day two, climbing up to a pass overlooking the Oshetna River.

On day three we went for another great loop hike to another unnamed glacier. It was on that day that we defined the trekking in that zone as "rubble-rousing" (the loose rubble was endless).

I took an opportunity to nap in order to recover from the late night climb up Mount Anno Domini.

The river rose over the course of the day, leading to the most-challenging stream crossing of the trip (not that deep, but very cold and swift with numerous braids).

On day four we headed back toward the airstrip to explore the glaciated valley west of the airstrip.

Day five's hike was the most spectacular, and full of eye candy.

Day six consisted of a short hike to the airstrip, and amazing views on the flight back to Mike Meekin's place.

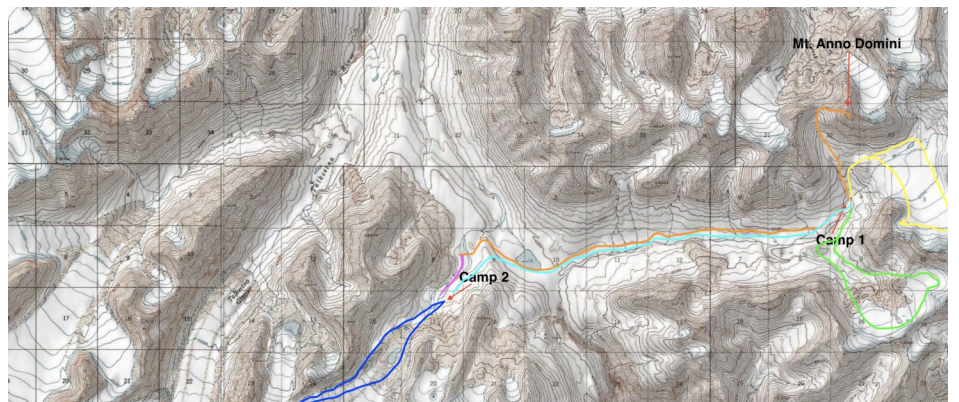
To view a video of the trip, visit

<https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/talkeetna-mountains/mt-anno-domini/>.



Above: Second camp location.

Below: Amazing views on the flight back to Mike Meekin's place.



Peak 2330 and Far Out Peak (5716 feet) Redux, Western Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne Todd



East view from base camp.

The low flight through The Gorge is spectacular as ever, with many large bergs floating and grounded, with two current pinch points (mental note: now is not a good time to try to float through The Gorge). Meg Inokuma's friend Jim lands us on one of the numerous gravel strips west of Wedding Knoll. One of the other strips is already occupied by another plane. We're planning a three-day trip to hike Peak 2330 and climb the northeast ridge of Whitecrown Peak, which was an incentive for Meg to join for more than just a solid bushwhack up a low bump. Jim accompanies us for the first section.

We have a rough idea as to the upcoming terrain, as we did a flyover before landing. Travel along the flats is easy, comprising endless gravel- and sandbars, the latter of which have tracks of many animals: large bear, moose, wolverine, wolf/coyote, sheep/goat ... Soon we're at the mini-gorge and decide to try a direct approach rather than hiking up the ridge above to the left (east). The quantity of water exiting is suitable for crossing and is even clear. The easy traveling ends, but the adventuresome scenery ramps up. Large, rounded boulders, from barrel- to house-size, are a foundation for water drops and pools, beckoning to be leapt into. Fireweed lines the interspersed flatter areas. The canyon walls vary from ultimate choss to artistic patterns to dark, vertical swaths seemingly of better quality. At a rock pile the water ends and then we're walking on a dry river bed. I imagine this gorge varies from water way too deep to travel through to completely dry. This level is a great balance between beauty and safety.



Meg Inokuma overlooking the very receded Lake George Glacier. Scree—January 2020

As the gorge tapers off, the receding toe of the Lake George Glacier comes into view with the expansive high and calving face peeling off with sounds of thunder. The river now flows by complete-

ly separate from the glacier (note to boaters). The small river reappears but at a 10-foot mini-drop, disappears into a sink hole pond. The next geology is vertical plates of slate that we easily shave off table size pieces with our poles. Around the corner, the river plummets from the mountainside to the flats as a double waterfall (what an amazing camping spot this would be!).



Meg Inokuma descending through brush.

Ascending the middle ridge that drops from the bump, we surprisingly initially find fairly easy travel of minimal brush and trees (because the glacier was here not that long ago). A lesser factor is these plants display fall foliage, that is dead leaves, but from our drought, not from cooling temperatures. For the first few hundred feet both the map and Gaia show us on glacier, which is now ½ mile distant on the flats and probably 400 feet lower. Abruptly this segues to serious brush, which is what we were both expecting. The leather gloves and glasses get deployed. The brush is mostly alder with lesser pockets of fern, amazingly with fewer flies than normal, elderberry, and hellebore with an occasional break of lower brush on mini-ridge tops. We also encounter more bear trails, which we utilize and discover they probably connect salmonberry orchards. And they are plentiful, ripe, and tasty. The brush gradually shortens, and soon after a short, but steep, slick (even dry) grass slope, we seem to be enter-

ing alpine. A few more brush patches slow our progress, but we're in the "highlands" and looking for one of the lakes we saw from the air and map. The first smaller lake is a bit stagnant, so we continue, and after a short rise there it is, with the mighty Peak 2330 just a half mile distant.

As we approach the lake, we note a rather straight swath in the low grass and – NO WAY! These are airplane tire tracks, from this year. I am quite taken aback. Though a great tent site, we walk around the lake to find a site not on a landing zone. After camp set up we walk through fields of fireweed, false hellebore, and grass to the mini-ridge of 2330. "Really," the top is covered in brush and a few cottonwood trees, so we briefly bushwhack to attain this pinnacle of mountaineering. It's not likely a hunter bothered to hike here, as the views are quite limited.

Back at camp, we enjoy a mostly bug-free flowered lakeside view of glaciated peaks that just continues to improve as the sun slowly sets.

Up early planning on a long day, we hike southwest over 2330 and encounter more small, but annoyingly thick, alder thickets. As we approach Finch Creek, the ground truth settles in: There is one place we might be able to cross the creek where it's braided, but how deep will it be later in the day? After that the toe of the Sparrow Glacier looks unfriendly with either a blue ice option at the very end with high risk/consequence from a fall, or slightly higher more blue ice with a bit of jigsaw-puzzle crevasses. After that the slope is fairly steep, gravel-covered remnant glacier. Then after lower-angle slopes at the base of Whitecrown, a middle section looks quite steep and scrambly. All to be repeated on the return. It does not take long for that misadventure to be dismissed. Meg is pretty quick to point to our right, "What about that?", being Far Out Peak.

So we head north across easy, mostly-barren rock terrain (very different than the heavy glacier that mapping shows*). We easily access the south ridge, which is mostly brush free, and soon even find a goat trail going our way. On this more-shaded west side, the flowers are prolific. We take many pictures of fireweed, lupine, paintbrush, arnica, with Whitecrown



Meg Inokuma alongside rock formations south of the gorge.

and Far Out backdrops. Back on the south ridge, the 2330 massif shows the myriad lakes below. Whiteout Peak and Insignificant Peak come into view above the blue and crevassed Finch Glacier to our left. The toe and expanse of the Lake George Glacier shows to our right. As the ridge narrows we find a clump of toilet paper, probably around 4500 feet, also highly unexpected.

On high, we pass by a small, blue, alpine, snow-laced pool, looking quite suitable for leaping. The terrain now looks quite familiar from Carrie Wang's and my visit here five years previous. After a few short snow sections, the last one on glacier, for which we actually use our crampons and axes (need to use some of the hardware we brought), we're on top. The views now include the deep Chugach Mountains and the east end of the Western Chugach. Not a real surprise, no one has signed the register since Carrie and I were here. A visit every five years, that's Alaska mountaineering. We dismiss Pass Out Peak, as the glacier is rather broken up and exposed this late in the year.

The Finch and Sparrow Glaciers are receding fast enough that soon there will be myriad individual smaller pocket glaciers that will likely then melt even faster. That will be a sad day when the Western Chugach is mostly glacier free.

We retrace our route and startle, and get equally startled by, numerous groups of fledgling ptarmigan. Despite seeing very recent sign of goats (including wet feces and urine spots), we never actually see one (perhaps they are more skittish, likely being hunted yearly).

All during this trip, there have been numerous bush planes flying about but two catch our attention as they circle lower and lower over the 2330 massif. Soon it's obvious they are making approaches, and then sure as "heck," one lands on the area we hiked over

and then the other. Admittedly, lazy little mind gremlins think, "Hmm, perhaps they'd like to give a couple wee people a flight off of there." But there is reality, and within a ½ hour, we hear them power up and it's hours before we attain camp.

As we're intersecting the sheep trail, I note an odd straight depression in moist terrain. Minutes later,



Meg Inokuma in the gorge.

Meg points out "bike tracks." In a pond on mountainous terrain at probably 4000 feet! Yet another shocking sign of human visitation. Perhaps a hunter with a wheeled cart? We decide probably a heli biker. I'm quite curious how recent of a track. At the base of the south ridge, I take a chilly, but sooo refreshing, dip in a pool.

We find a more-direct, and less-brushy, path back to camp, still passing by 2330 again. At camp, we enjoy fine views again, but now unfortunately also with insect friends.

Up fairly early again for pre-high-heat exodus. The descent goes smoother than expected, gravity does help, except when Meg calmly states, "Bees," I bolt forward through alders. She gets stung on the shoulder and forearm and within minutes her forearm is swelling. Luckily the swelling remains isolated to the arm. We eat even more salmonberries. And yell more frequently for bears, which are now annoyed that their crop is being plundered.

We pay attention to descend the proper sub-ridge to the flats, and the correct spot on the sub-ridge, but soon find ourselves at the double-waterfall pool. Water dipping to head level is again so refreshing, and by Alaska standards, not that cold.

After the sinkhole and "gorge"ous gorge (what else would it be?), we InReach Jim for a two-hour pickup, knowing he'll likely be early. Rather than angle hike around the low spit of land that juts onto the flats from Wedding Knoll, we intersect it, hoping for a trail. Sure enough, we find an obvious human trail that winds its way to the top of the spit. Someone has even topped all the high trees for unobscured views. I'm not able to find a trail that continues north so we backtrack and hike around the spit after all.

At the first landing zone we even find plane tiedowns. You wouldn't want to overshoot this one as you'd end up in the river. A couple planes fly overhead and we identify one of them as Jim's. Soon all grounded and sharing stories, Jim switched from volunteering for the Matanuska Peak Challenge the previous day when no slots were left to running the 9,000-foot race. A bit more elevation than we did. After the scenic Knik Glacier flight, he treats us to moose stew at his place.

*From the 1985 USGS map, the Sparrow Glacier has melted back 1-½ miles, and dropped hundreds of feet. The Finch Glacier has lost a mile. This is disappointingly why 2330 is now considered a peak.



The Lake George Glacier from the south ridge of Far Out Peak.



Meg Inokuma on Far Out Peak.



Wayne Todd and Meg Inokuma on Far Out Peak.

Devils Paw – Main Summit (8584 feet), West Face, Coast Mountains

Text by Gabe Hayden



Route of "Shaa Téix'i" on Devils Paw.

Photo by Brette Harrington

In early September 2018, Brette Harrington and I took advantage of a late-season weather window to climb a new route on the west face of the main summit of the Devils Paw that we called "Shaa Téix'i" ("Heart of the Mountain" in Tlingit). The climb followed a route Brette had first envisioned using grainy photographs she had found online and later scouted in person. I was honored to have been invited to climb that line with her, and it was certainly the highlight of my climbing career to date. Helicopter transport was used for both the approach and exit. The route was climbed in a single 27-hour push, and no bivvy gear was brought on the route. No bolts were placed, but some iron was used as protection on the route and a majority of the rappel stations were built with either pins or nuts. Despite the extensive scree slopes below the massif, and contrary to dominant local lore, the rock quality on the route was generally of high quality and very little dangerous loose rock was encountered. The most challenging climbing generally had scarce protection, and as such the route

was serious for the grade of 5.11a. The two cruxes of the climb were a thin face traverse at approximately one-third height, and a steep pitch at two-thirds height following discontinuous cracks through roofs. Packs were hauled for pitches harder than 5.10, and all ground easier than 5.10 was either simul-climbed or soloed. The summit was gained near sunset, and the rappel conducted almost entirely during the night. The rappel followed a significantly different route than the ascent line for the upper half of the face, following a gully for approximately half of the distance

between the main summit and the col between it and the west summit, then descending steep terrain to the climber's left of the ascent line before rejoining the ascent line to descend to the Hades Highway glacier.

The climb was conducted late in the summer climbing season, with the days being rather short and nighttime temperatures low. The summer climbing season at the Devils Paw shut down the day following the climb with a snowstorm; however, very little snow from the prior winter was encoun-



Brette Harrington soloing high on Devils Paw.

Photo by Gabe Hayden

tered on the route, making for dry climbing conditions and minimal natural rockfall. With the changing climate it will be interesting to observe if these late-season weather windows become more productive for climbing endeavors. The late-season weather windows offer the benefit of near-complete melt-off of the prior season's snowfields, but the challenge of extremely broken and melted-out glaciers on the icefield. The firn line on the Juneau Icefield at the time of this climb was higher than I had ever observed, nearing 5000 feet on many glacial branches.

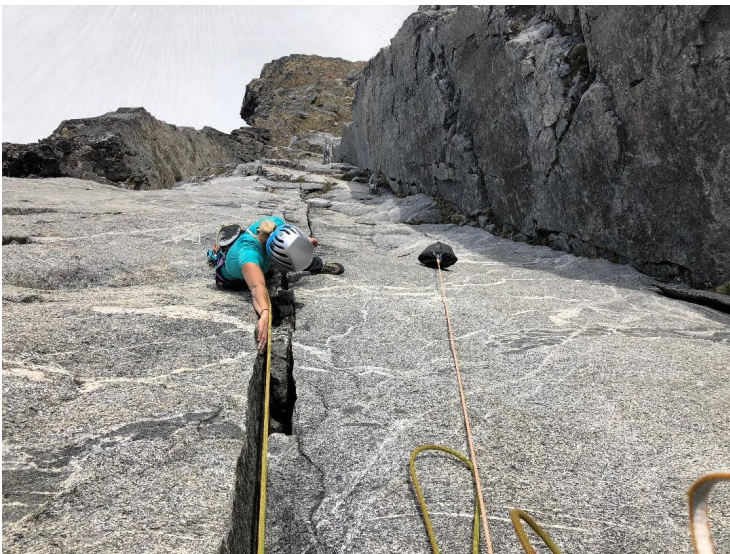
A long-form interview with Brette regarding the Devils Paw route can be heard on the American Alpine Club's "Cutting Edge" podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/american-alpine-journal/brette-harrington-and-the-devils-paw-ep-12>.



*Gabe Hayden climbing steep terrain on Devils Paw.
Photo by Brette Harrington*

North Taku Tower (6653 [±48] feet), Southern Face of West Ridge, Taku Range

Text by Gabe Hayden



*Brette Harrington climbing the final hand crack of "Sweet and Spicy" on North Taku Tower.
Photo by Gabe Hayden*

In June of 2018, I climbed two new routes on the southern face of the western ridge of the North Taku Tower on the Juneau Icefield over the course of three days with Brette Harrington. Helicopter transport was used for both the approach and exit. The first route we called "Sweet and Spicy" and followed a prominent crack sys-

tem from the glacier for about 1,000 feet to gain the western ridge of the North Taku Tower, then continued along the ridgeline to the summit. The granite was consistently very compact and of high quality, and we encountered less loose rock than would be encountered climbing at the more popular Mendenhall Towers to the southwest. The protection on that route was generally excellent, as the route followed a nearly continuous crack system.

The following day we climbed a steep buttress to the first day's climb that we called "Solar Sphere." The crux on that route was more difficult than the first day's climb, but was overall slightly less sustained. The 40-meter crux pitch was a thin corner through a bulge followed by steep climbing around a roof system to a stance where the difficulties eased. The pitch was initially climbed as two pitches, with Brette aiding the first corner pitch on beaks and installing a single protection bolt to protect the crux moves. Brette then redpointed that pitch and linked it into the following steep pitch for a long 5.12a pitch that was the highlight of the climb. The route then followed easier ground to a final steep 5.11 pitch up a gendarme to gain the ridge. The route could be continued along the west ridge following the same ground as "Sweet and Spicy" to the summit. We returned the following day and added an alternate second-to-last pitch to the climb that stayed nearer to the buttress than the original line and was comprised of

more challenging climbing than the original pitch. "Solar Sphere" did not follow a continuous crack system, and as such was somewhat more runout than "Sweet & Spicy," but the crux pitch protected very well with the addition of the single bolt.

Topos and more detailed descriptions for all of the Taku Tower routes are available on Brette's blog at <http://bretteharrington.blogspot.com>, and all routes are included in the 2019 *American Alpine Journal*.



*Brette Harrington leading the roof of "Sweet and Spicy" on North Taku Tower.
Photo by Gabe Hayden*



*Brette Harrington climbing steep terrain low on the route of "Sweet and Spicy" on North Taku Tower.
Photo by Gabe Hayden*



*Brette Harrington leading the crux pitch of "Solar Sphere" on North Taku Tower.
Photo by Gabe Hayden*



*Brette Harrington on the final pitch of "Solar Sphere" on North Taku Tower.
Photo by Gabe Hayden*

Randoism via Rosie's Roost

Text and photos by Mat Brunton

Here's a trip report for a five-day mission dubbed "Randoism via Rosie's Roost" in which Sam Inouye and I climbed and skied 6 of the 166 Western Chugach (500-foot-plus prominence) summits in three days (April 26 through 28, 2019) with a day each for the approach to and from the MCA's Rosie's Roost hut (April 25 and 29).

With 85- and 105-liter packs full of provisions for up to a week's worth of technical skiing and climbing (with daypacks inside of the hauling packs), we took the route from the Crow Pass Trailhead over the Raven Headwall to Rosie's on April 25, breaking trail through boot-top-deep fresh powder most of the way.

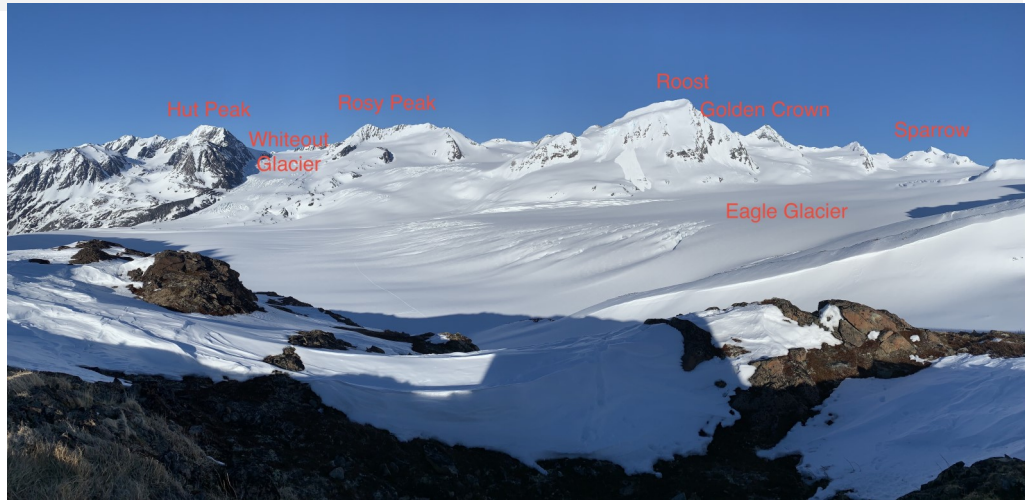


Rosie's Roost hut

We had the hut to ourselves for the first night, and awoke the second day to the first of a three-day stretch of splitter bluebird skies and absolutely perfect weather for Western Chugach ski alpinism. We set off

east across the Eagle Glacier for a couple miles before turning south and heading up the north ridge of Roost Peak. With incredible snow conditions we were able to skin all the way to the summit of Roost Peak (albeit with very technical and exposed skinning). We skied directly off the summit north-northwest down the steep headwall and over the small bergschrund at its base. We then aimed our descent north and eventually veered north-northeast on a trajectory toward Bunting Peak. The snow was exquisitely dense late April Chugach pow – perfect for steep skiing.

From there we skinned east up to a saddle at the base of Bunting's north ridge, from which we booted up the steep, scoured, and ICY north ridge to the summit. Interestingly, there was a very anomalous and unique reverse cornice failure on the ridge (it failed to the typically windward side). We skied directly off the summit down the steep and broad west face. It had slid naturally during the storm cycle a few days prior, with a big crown a couple hundred



The general area Mat Brunton and Sam Inouye climbed and skied from April 26 through 28, 2019.

feet below the summit. The bed surface snow on that westerly aspect had softened up a bit in the sun, but was excitingly firm (a fall would have resulted in a long and very fast slide-for-life).

We headed back to the hut after that run. Two parties had been dropped by Alpine Air on the Eagle Glacier, but they did not go to Rosie's. One of the parties camped between Roost and Bunting at about 5500 feet and the other headed to Hans' Hut. Another two parties arrived at Rosie's shortly before we got back to the hut, via human power, having followed the trail Sam and I broke from Crow Pass. They were doing the standard traverse. Our pal Nookie dog, who has inadvertently accompanied me on a few other steep skiing missions in the Crow Pass area (Rook Mountain south couloirs twice and the Goat Mountain Couloir) and is undoubtedly the most accomplished Crow-Pass-area mountaineer, tagged along with these parties. I'm continually impressed by Nookie's ability to send the raddest terrain in the Chugach naked, with no gear, and no food or water. When he rode the Goat Couloir with us, he center-punched the icefall chasing a wolverine, and miraculously appeared below it before we were able to ski around it.

On the sunny morning of April 27 we headed southeast up the Eagle Glacier to the base of Golden Crown's north ridge. After climbing the north ridge to the summit, we descended the north face to the Sparrow Glacier, veering increasingly east down to about 4300 feet. Snow ranged from rime and wind-blasted sastrugi near the summit, to dry wind-buffed powder, to moistening pow (on the verge of developing wet-avalanche danger) as we descended and the aspect became more easterly. From that elevation, we swapped leads breaking a trail southwest to a saddle below the north ridge of Sparrow. We booted the very aesthetically pleasing

and fun knife-edged north ridge of Sparrow to the summit and descended the very steep, wide-open, and puckering west face to a col that provided our egress back to the Eagle Glacier and hut via Sparrow's northwest bowl. A fun, mellow boogie north down the Eagle Glacier, followed by a short climb, brought us back to Rosie's. A new couple had arrived before we got back. They were also doing the traverse, having started at Eklutna and spent the prior night at Hans'.

On the third and final perfect bluebird day (April 28), we headed northeast across the Eagle Glacier and had lunch at Hans' before our ascent up Hut Peak. We had been told by one of the parties staying at Rosie's that Hut Peak reportedly had horrible snow by a party that climbed it a couple days prior. They didn't even take their skis to the top.

Sam and I are a different breed, and perhaps a bit deranged when it comes to mountain travel, so we weren't discouraged. We set off up Hut Peak's north face, eventually gaining the north ridge, and were actually able to (again) skin all the way to the summit! We noticed where the other party had left their skis. It was a shame for them, because the best snow was above that point. We descended directly off the summit down the north face (trending just below the north ridge) through perfect, dry powder. As we descended the snow quality deteriorated, but was still predictable hardpack and smooth wind scour. We liked that engaging stuff, so no big deal.

Once down to the Whiteout Glacier, we hooked around to the south for a bit and then eventually turned more to the east, transitioned to skins, and broke trail toward Whiteout Peak. We were able to skin up the southwest face-ridge of Whiteout all the way to the summit. There was again some steep and exposed skinning, but with good stability there was no sense in losing efficiency to try to boot up a route with less objective hazard. We descended Whiteout's beautiful northwest face directly from the summit. The snow was fantastic spring powder in full sun. The line wove through crevasses, 'schrunds, and protruding ice bulges. It was classic Western Chugach terrain at its finest.

We boogied southwest down the Whiteout back to the Eagle and back up the short climb to Rosie's. We had another night to ourselves. With weather moving in, we had to decide whether to take a rest day at the hut and ski more the following day, or head out the next day. Considering Sam's a family man and the ball of my foot had a massive blister from breaking trail for miles from Crow Pass with a very heavy pack, we decided to head out the next morning.

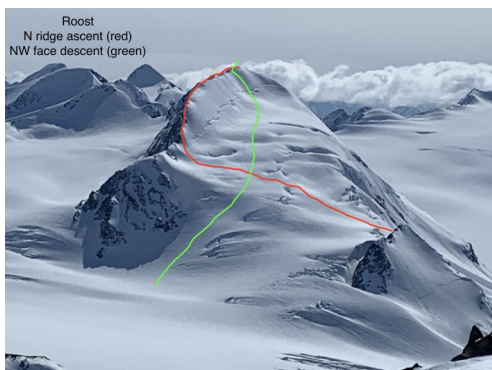
Weather deteriorated as we exited, and we were skinning up to the Raven Headwall inside the ping-pong ball. That was the first time of the trip we roped up, and it was fortunate we did. Sam fell in a crack while breaking trail. We couldn't tell the full nature of the crevasses given the poor visibility, but extracting him was easy enough as I just tracted him out by skinning in the opposite direction. Visibility improved a bit on the Raven Glacier side of the headwall, but the descent was burly with the still-heavy pack, sub-par visibility, and variable snow conditions.

For more photos and a video, visit <https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/western-chugach/randoism-via-rosies/>.



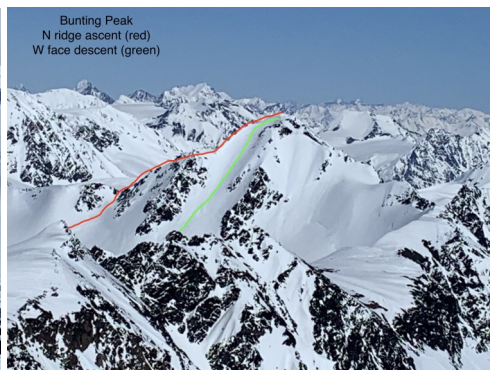
Above: Sam Inouye on south Sparrow Peak summit.

Below: Sam Inouye getting ready to drop the northwest face of Whiteout Peak.



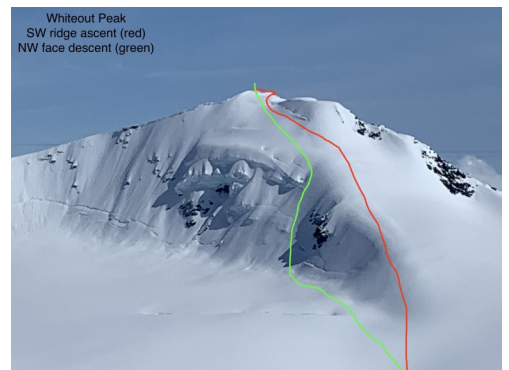
Roost
N ridge ascent (red)
NW face descent (green)

Ascent and descent routes on Roost Peak.



Bunting Peak
N ridge ascent (red)
W face descent (green)

Ascent and descent routes on Bunting Peak.



Whiteout Peak
SW ridge ascent (red)
NW face descent (green)

Ascent and descent routes on Whiteout Peak.

Berlin Wall (5740 feet), Central Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Mat Brunton

The Berlin Wall is about capitalism vs. socialism. That's fitting for this trip report because this discussion is about the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA). I passed a group in the AMGA advanced ski-guide course near Thompson Pass while climbing Berlin Wall's north ridge.

When I crossed paths with the AMGA advanced ski-guide course group on Berlin Wall's north ridge they were roped up for a short (and very easy) fourth-class section (corniced and steep snow slope on one side, scoured steep Chugach choss on the other). One student was hip-belaying the others as they climbed along the leeward and corniced side of the ridge. I soloed past them by scrambling up the steep choss. What I noticed when I crossed paths and chatted with the belaying student and the instructor at the belay was startling.

The hip belayer's stance was pitiful. First, he wasn't firmly planted with his heels solidly dug into a supportable surface by which he could brace against a fall. Rather, he was loosely planted on top of semi-exposed loose scree and heavily faceted snow. Second, as students made it through the section and unroped, they awaited their peers in a position that was exposed to the rope pendulum should a climber fall. That would have tripped and swept the unroped students waiting at the belay over the cornice and down the big, steep slope they had roped up to avoid. And, as mentioned, a fall would most likely have uprooted the precariously positioned hip belayer. That meant everyone besides the instructor (who, perhaps unconsciously, was positioned safely outside the swing of the rope pendulum) would have potentially been goners if a student on rope had fallen. Luckily, they all made it through that section safely.



Berlin Wall's north ridge

The crux of the north ridge, and where the AMGA group was roped up, is where the red ascent line veers slightly left around the first big rock outcropping. It's through this section

that the AMGA group climbed right along the cornice, while I climbed left (to pass them) through the scrambly choss. My second run of the day, down the north face, is shown in green. It was

steeper than it might appear in the photo and, despite scoping it closely on my second ascent of the ridge (after skiing the west couloir), was hard to navigate down, even with landmarks as the exit choke through the lower cliffs was very hard to identify on the descent due to the convex steepness. I unnecessarily weaved through rocks and went way skier's right trying to spot the exit choke through the cliff band.



A close-up of the west couloir of Berlin Wall in slide-for-life, melt-freeze conditions.

To view additional photos and a video, visit <https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/central-chugach/berlin-wall/>.



Routes on Berlin Wall: red = ascent, green = descent

Katmai and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes

Text and photos by Colleen Alexis Metzger

When I heard I could combine bear AND volcano viewing on my big summer hiking trip, I was sold. On July 21, 2019, our group flew from Anchorage to King Salmon then from King Salmon to Katmai via a tiny floatplane. Before we even landed we saw bears. Two bears were thwacking each other in the shallow water on the shores of Naknek Lake, splashing up great torrents of water. As we exited the plane we already had our cameras in hand, so excited to watch the bear throw-down. But as soon as we were on the beach, a ranger whisked us away for bear orientation, determined to keep Brooks Camp as safe as possible (valid). We spent the afternoon bear viewing, which was spectacular. Bears were literally everywhere: bounding past the lodge, napping on the beach, and ambling by the electric fence surrounding our campground. It was only \$18 for a campsite, a pretty groovy bargain for such dynamic wildlife and impressive amenities (cleanest pit toilets I'd ever seen in Alaska!). But the ritzy accommodations made more sense when we visited the main lodge and met the rest of the clientele. The lodge was heavily populated with older white couples, many paying dearly to stay in glamour cabins. To them, our motley gang of backpackers seemed almost as intriguing as the bears.

"You're camping? In a tent? Do they provide tents here?"

"No, ma'am."

"Where do you sleep? Do you have a cot?"

"No, ma'am, I have a sleeping pad and a sleeping bag."

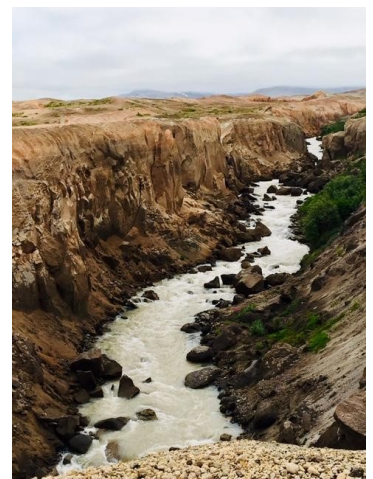
"So you just sleep on the ground?"

Like the animals we are, ma'am.

The next day it was time for us animals to head into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Maureen Peterson, Janetta Norvel Smith, Meghan McFarland, Kim Wysocki, Brian Cox, Stacey Tomey, and I piled into a van and the Katmai staff drove us the bumpy 23 miles to the trailhead that led into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Although we were entering a valley rendered lifeless from a spectacularly large volcanic eruption, the first mile we hiked down into the Valley was verdant; we ducked underneath towering cow parsnip and leapt over gnarled tree roots. The mountains were all blushing with huge swaths of pink fireweed. But we slowly emerged from the jungle, crossed Windy Creek, and entered a sandy flat area. After that, much of the hike was similar to walking on a beach: pumice gravel, ash, and flat for miles. As we topped a rise, Brian pointed out some gnarled branches: "Look, caribou!" he announced. I am old and blind and assured him they were probably just dead bushes. But as we trekked closer, the bushes stood up and trotted away: two caribou with racks so heavy it made my

head ache on their behalf. They loped across the sand, stark against the fireweed on the mountains, frequently pausing to examine us quizzically.

As we hiked across the sandy landscape, I kept comparing our desert-scape to the Sahara Desert. But then we came to the River Lethe. There was a Greek theme in the Valley (Mount Cerberus and Trident Volcano, for example) and the River Lethe – referencing the river of forgetfulness in the underworld – seemed fitting in that desolate landscape. At that moment the Valley stopped looking like a desert and started to look like the Grand Canyon: the River



The River Lethe

Lethe carved into the ash deposits from the 1912 eruption, leaving a deep canyon with a furious brown river raging at the bottom. We hiked along next to the Lethe and were surprised to find a knot of trees ahead, interrupting the barren landscape with a dense patch of greenery. That was promising – the Lethe, silty and far below, was an unappetizing and dangerous water source. The patch of trees, however, had several small streams running through it, which was great – water was usually scarce in the valley, and was even harder to find after the notoriously warm summer of 2019. The foliage only lasted about 1/4 mile, however, and we were soon back in the desert-scape.

At first the sandy terrain was relaxing to walk on, but after the first few miles, the ash became softer, and my feet sunk like I was walking in puffy new snow. So I was happy when our campsite for the night came into view. The creatively named "Six Mile Camp" was tucked in a lush canyon where we still had a view of the desolate desert-scape, but there were green bushes and a sliver of a stream. We soon discovered that the stream was teeming with what we deemed Sea Monkeys – every time we scooped up water, there were eager little creatures swimming merrily through out water bottles. We pondered the little sperm-shaped dudes, dark skeletons visible through their clear jelly skin, debating if they could be tadpoles or crawfish zygotes or baby mosquitos (any readers have a guess?). We filtered water carefully, avoiding the wriggling bodies, grateful to have located water in the notoriously dry valley. Though breezy, the afternoon was warm and sunny. After we pitched our tents we lounged lazily in the sun before

cooking dinner and heading to bed.

The next morning we packed up, lamenting how efficiently volcanic ash and glacial silt had invaded our tents, backpacks, and even underwear. It was going to be a sandy week! It was foggy when we packed up camp, but by the time we plunged back into the desert, another blindingly sunny day was blazing. Looming ahead of us like a mirage, frosted with glaciers that seemed impossible in our Sahara-like surrounds, was Mount Mageik. We headed straight toward it, knowing somewhere at its base was a lake we hoped to camp near. As we drew closer the smell of sulfur started wafting through the air, another reminder of the volcanic activity that was hardly dormant. The gentle beachscape we had been traversing got increasingly complex the closer we got to Mageik – deepening canyons were sliced into the ash, and our trek suddenly had a lot of ups and downs. Soon the canyons were so deep we started to weave around them, much like traversing a web of ice crevasses. One of the canyons was the River Lethe, which we were still paralleling. Crossing the river was necessary to reach our camp area, so we followed the riverbank, hoping to see a good place to cross. Unlike most river crossings, the Lethe has a fun twist: because it was carved into the soft volcanic ash, the riverbed reportedly can go from 2 feet deep to 200 feet deep instantly, making wading across its silty, murky expanse a potentially deadly affair. The other challenge was that the canyon walls it had carved were towering and steep. We hiked the edge of the river and eventually we were next to the river, not above it, as it widened into a flat expanse in the sandy ash. At one point it bowed out, the widest section we had seen all day. Meghan and I guinea-pigged across, inching our way along, searching the muddy waters with our poles for any drops or holes. Just above knee height, we deemed it a safe place to cross and the rest of our party ventured across the Lethe. We picked our way uphill to a bench dwarfed under the monumental Mageik, and at the top could finally make out the lake, a turquoise haven nestled in a ring of creamy sand, with snowy Mageik roaring up from the end of the lake. We pitched our tents on the beach, drooling over the stunning view.

The next morning we watched a line of caribou parade along the opposite shore of East Mageik Lake as we ate breakfast. We had a big day planned, and were happy to have another stunning, sunny



Heading toward Mount Mageik.



Brian Cox and Janetta Norvel Smith near lava boulders left from Trident Volcano's eruption. Mount Mageik is in the background.

day. We left our camp and headed out with blissfully light daypacks toward Novarupta. In 1912 the largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century blazed through this valley, one of the five largest eruptions in recorded history. But few people had heard of this volcano because no one was there to witness it, or perish in a newsworthy accident – that year the news was far more focused on the sinking of the *Titanic* than Novarupta. Because no one was in the valley when the eruption happened, for a

long time people believed that Mount Katmai was the source of the eruption ... especially because its top was missing, leaving the mountain visibly shorter than it had been. However, Katmai's dramatic deflation was in fact due to all the lava inside draining out through Novarupta, simply a weak spot in the valley floor. Today, Novarupta looks like a jumble of rocks surrounded by a moat, the volcanic plug nestled in the crater created by the blast. We could see steam curling off Novarupta, and we climbed up the rocky jumble, hoping to see a giant cavity inside. Instead, rock rubble was piled as far as we could see. The crater ringing Novarupta was a rainbow of pumice: rocks of purple, red, orange, yellow, white, and gray striped the ground as we walked. Fumaroles in the ground still blasted steamy warm heat around Novarupta, another reminder that another eruption could happen at any time – Trident Volcano erupted multiple times between 1950 and 1970. And there was still volcanic energy bubbling deep underground.

And speaking of Trident Volcano, after we left Novarupta we hiked into Katmai Pass, where we could see the lava flow from Trident rippling all the way down the pass, an epic multi-story snake of black lava winding its way down the valley to the south – Mageik Creek. If we kept following Mageik Creek, we'd eventually end up at Shelikof Strait – basically the Pacific Ocean, if not for Kodiak Island. Every once in a while I caught the briny scent of ocean air. But aside from the lava flow, the pass

was just an expanse of the volcanic ash framed by peaks – honestly not the most spectacular view. So we had a snack, then headed back out of the pass.

As the crow flies we weren't too far from our campsite, and we even climbed up on a bench and viewed our lake far below. The bench had large black rocks strewn around, which we realized were gigantic lava blobs from Trident's explosion; boulders larger than cars blasted all the way across Katmai Pass.

Our beach wasn't easily accessible from our perch high above, so we headed back down to the pass and looped around Mount Cerberus, a modest peak, in order to get back to our campsite. There was a caribou racing about as we hiked, leaping and looping around. We debated his crazy actions: having fun? Super lost? We were finishing a 17-mile day and were happy to have his antics to entertain us. After our long hike I was grateful to return to camp, where I promptly sprawled on the beach, kicking my shoes off and enjoying some sun before the drudgery of preparing dinner.

The next morning we awoke to rain. We raced to pack, the silt and ash clinging to every rain-sticky surface. We waded across the river flowing out of East Mageik Lake and hiked along the edge of the valley, picking our way through the increasingly deep dippity-dooos (our scientific name for the deep crevasses in the landscape). We were aiming for West Mageik Lake and the fountain of waterfalls that reportedly flowed down from the glacier. But the dippity-dooos soon became impassable. To visit West Mageik we would have to inch down a steep, icy canyon wall, fight across a raging river, and climb up the vertical cliff face on the other side. We could see the lake, teasingly near, but we weren't convinced it was worth the time and effort just to stand on the shores of the muddy, brown lake. I do want to note that a backpacker with more time could get to the lake, but we had quite a few miles to go in the opposite direction. We walked as far as we could and saw a few of the waterfalls, then started making our way back to the pickup point. After we worked our way back out of the labyrinth of dippity-dooos and crossed back over the Lethe (far more shallow and braided out toward the end of the valley), the going got a lot easier. We were back on the sandy desert-like terrain and the rain was firming the ash, making walking easy.

Everywhere were "sea monsters," humps of sand plated with multicolored rocks that looked like backs of scaly creatures heaving out of a sandy sea. We learned later they were caused by fumaroles, the heat causing the minerals in the rock to turn brilliant colors. Maybe the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes had far less visible smokes than it did in the past, but the colorful evidence of those volcanic vents was just as spectacular. We reached Six Mile Camp in the early evening, and the rain graciously paused just long enough for us to pitch our tents and the cook tarp.

The sun returned the next morning, and we lazily packed up camp, knowing we had a leisurely day ahead. The mountains that had been draped in mist when we had hiked out were stark and clear and stunning. We passed a few hikers as we neared the Visitor Center, and turned back later in the day to see that the gentle breeze in the valley had whipped into an epic sandstorm. The gold-

en valley we had just hiked out of was now totally obscured in a beige swirl. We had heard stories of harrowing, multi-day dust storms in the valley and were relieved to have escaped the dust. Our pickup was scheduled for the next morning, but we had opted to camp at the Visitor Center that night to make absolutely sure we didn't miss the early-morning bus. We were perhaps a little too laid back as we crossed back over Windy Creek. We had picked up the trail at last, and just had to follow blindly (so we thought) back to the Visitor Center.

But suddenly, the trail was gone. We had been following a well-established trail and ... then we weren't. We could see the aqua roof of the Visitor Center perched on its overlook; we could even see the ribbon of road peeking out through the trees. But we couldn't see the trail. Suddenly our ultra-conservative decision to return to the pickup point early didn't seem crazy. The jokes about our "easy last day" died down. The map, the GPS breadcrumbs, our eyes ... they were all failing us. I finally clambered up a large rocky incongruity and there it was, a narrow and glorious sight: our trail.



Camp on the shores of East Mageik Lake

It followed the sandy bank of the river, dipping in an unexpected direction. We gleefully reunited with the trail, and by 4:30 we had reached the Visitor Center, which was (surprisingly) unlocked. So we let ourselves in and had a snack while we perused all the displays. We had been expecting to camp outside or stay in the little windowless emergency shelter built into the back of the Visitor Center, and were excited to have the large, sun-lit center to ourselves for the evening. Everyone was spread out, contemplating sleeping, when we heard a rumble. Maureen paused shaking out her sleeping bag; Meghan froze in the middle of washing up. I saw the bus rumble up the dirt driveway ... a bus full of people. "It's a bus!" I called, and

suddenly everyone was in a frenzy: shoving gear back into bags, hurriedly cleaning up, hiding fact that we were planning on sleeping in the Visitor Center. The bus contained a group of hikers whose delayed flight pushed back the start of their hike, not some patrol out to punish us. We caught a ride back to Brooks Camp with the bus driver, and rather than killing time in the Visitor Center, we were gratefully back in the company of breakfast buffets, showers, and (most importantly) a bar.

We straggled into the lodge as the other guests stared at us. Brooks Camp is a small community, and we were way past float-plane landing time. *Where did you come from?* folks inquired, and we told them we had been hiking. *You HIKED here?* they said with amazement. We spent the last day reveling in the admiration of old married couples, enjoying hot showers, and gazing in amazement at all the bears.

Peak of the Month: Old Snowy, Delta Range

Text by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Alaska Range; Delta Range

Borough: Unorganized Borough

Drainage: Old Snowy Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 63° 28' 41" North, 145° 23' 46" West

Elevation: 9750 (±50) feet on Mt. Hayes (B-3);
9640 (±40) feet on Mount Hayes B-3 NW

Adjacent Peak: Black Cap (9860 feet)

Distinctness: 1440 feet from Black Cap

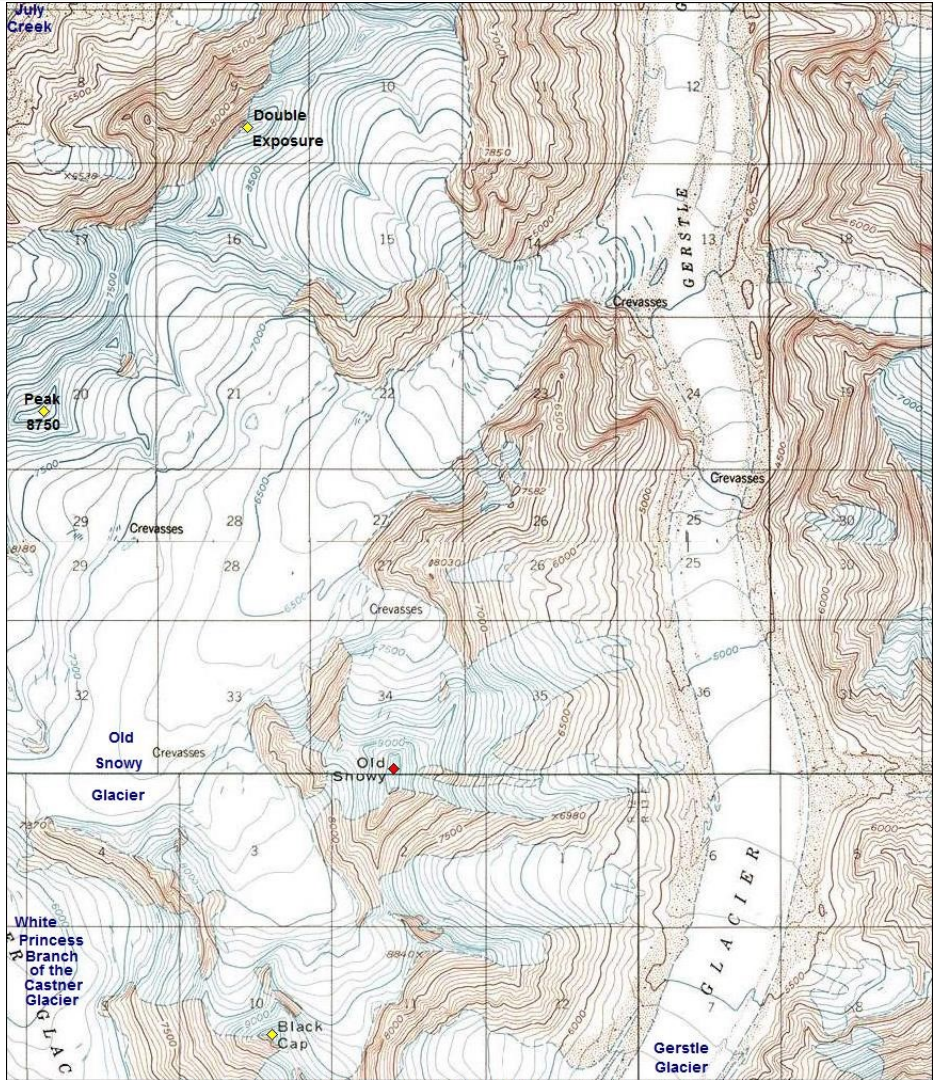
Prominence: 1440 feet from Black Cap

USGS Maps: 1:63,360: Mt. Hayes (B-3) and
1:25,000: Mount Hayes B-3 NW

First Recorded Ascent: March 25, 1961, by Anore Bucknell, Paul Dix, Dave Gilbert, Keith Jones, Howard "Howie" Kantner, Jim Mack, Herbert R. Melchior, Eleanor "Teri" Viereck, Leslie A. "Les" Viereck, Eugene Michael "Gene" Wescott, and Charles R. "Buck" Wilson

Route of First Recorded Ascent: South ridge

Access Point: Richardson Highway



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

In late July 1950, Gottfried Ehrenberg, Don MacAskill, Lawrence E. Nielsen, and Austin Post explored the area of the Canwell, Castner, and Eel Glaciers. On August 7, the team climbed White Princess (9870 feet). As part of their exploration, Post made a map of the area. The map included a peak north of the Castner Glacier that Post labeled "Old Mt."

On March 23, 1961, Gene Wescott and Buck Wilson led a group of 11, including Anore Bucknell, Paul Dix, Dave Gilbert, Keith Jones, Howie Kantner, Jim Mack, Herb Melchior, Teri Viereck, and Les Viereck, up the Castner Glacier from the Richardson Highway. That evening they camped northeast of the Silvertip Branch of the Castner Glacier at about 4900 feet. Their campsite would later become the location of the Alaska Alpine Club's Thayer Hut. After another day of skiing, they established a base camp at 7200 feet on the Old Snowy Glacier southwest of Old Snowy. On March 25, in fine weather, the party ascended the south ridge wearing

crampons. The next day the team skied from their base camp to the Richardson Highway in less than five hours. By the time of Gene Wescott's report in the 1962 *American Alpine Journal*, the journal of the American Alpine Club, the mountain's name had changed to Old Snowy. Doug Buchanan later reported that it was Post who was responsible for the name change.

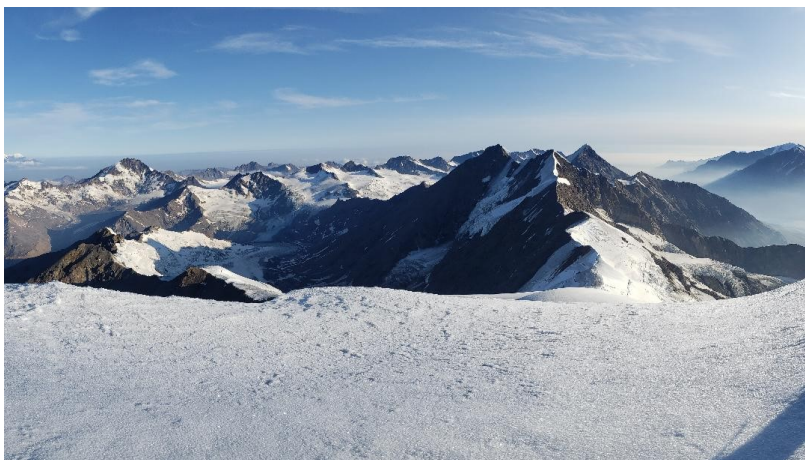
In the spring of 1970, Mike Sallee and Gary Schilt climbed White Princess and Old Snowy, making the second ascent of the latter peak.

In mid-May 1974 Buchanan, Jerry Johnson, and Ola Royrvik set out from the Richardson Highway up the Castner Glacier. After several days they established a base camp on the Gerstle Glacier at the base of Old Snowy. From the base camp an easy four-hour climb up the east face brought the trio to the broad summit, where they enjoyed views west to Mount Deborah and southeast to Mount

Kimball. The next day they moved their camp to the 9000-foot level of the south ridge of Black Cap. The following day the party climbed Black Cap. The team then moved camp by descending to the Old Snowy Glacier, descending the O'Brien Icefall, and ascending the White Princess Branch of the Castner Glacier to its 7000-foot level. The process of moving camp around Black Cap took two days. After establishing their 7000-foot camp on the White Princess Branch, the party climbed White Princess and the next day skied to the highway.

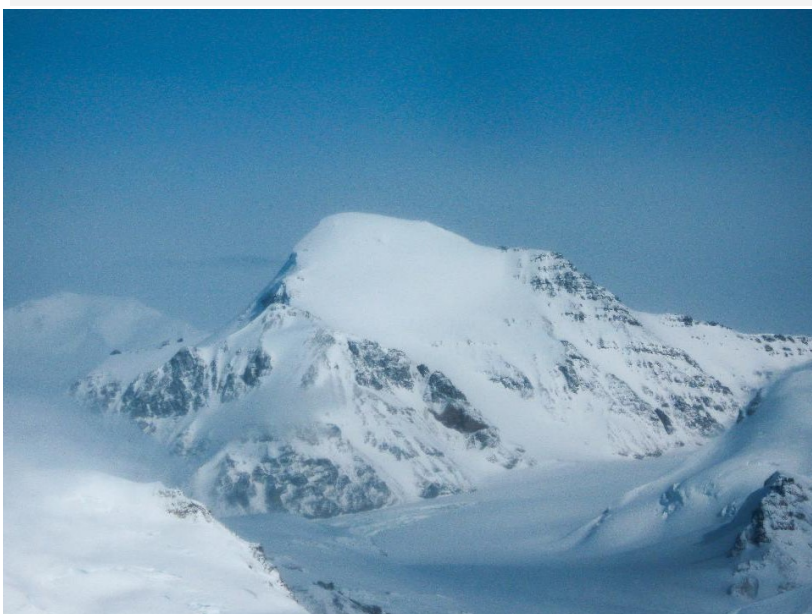
In April 1980 Kate Bull and Peter MacKeith, president of the Alaska Alpine Club at the time, attempted the west face of Old Snowy. Without placing protection the two simul-climbed up a gully, reaching a 30-degree ice face, which steepened to 50 degrees as they ascended. While traversing off the west face toward the north ridge, MacKeith fell, pulling Bull down 1,200 feet to the bottom of the face. Both climbers were knocked unconscious. When Bull regained consciousness, she realized that she had broken her leg, ankle, and wrist. By the time she reached MacKeith, he was no longer breathing and didn't have a pulse. After initially attempting cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the slope, she realized it was futile to continue; MacKeith's body kept sliding down the slope and in her condition she was unable to adequately compress his chest. Leaving MacKeith's lifeless body, she attempted to self-rescue. She was able to crawl two miles by 5 p.m. the following day, when another climbing party stumbled upon her and initiated a rescue. MacKeith's death left a void in the Fairbanks climbing community and prompted the Alaska Alpine Club to name its hut on the upper Canwell Glacier in his honor.

The information for this article came from Nielsen's report titled "Climbing in the Eastern Alaska Range," which appeared on pages 429 through 432 of the June 1951 *Appalachia*, the journal of the Appalachian Mountain Club; from Wescott's report titled, "Old Snowy, Alaska Range," which appeared on page 198 of the 1962 *AAJ*; from a note in the September 1970 *Descent*, the newsletter of the Alaska Alpine Club; from Johnson's trip report titled "Notes on Climbing in the Castner Glacier Area and Mt Kimball," which appeared in the February 1975 *Descent*; from Buchanan's "Mt. Whatchamacallthehillnexttotheotherone," which appeared in the December 1977 *Descent*; and from Alison Osius' "In the Balance," which appeared on page 139 of the September 2000 *Climbing* (issue 197).



South aspect of Old Snowy (to the right and behind the double-summitted Black Cap in the foreground) from the summit of White Princess.

Photo by Nathaniel Bannish (used with permission)



West aspect of Old Snowy, as viewed from Mount Silvertip.

Photo by Galen Vansant (used with permission)



Southwest aspect of Old Snowy as viewed from the west ridge of Black Cap.

Photo by Galen Vansant (used with permission)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2019 at 6:00 p.m., UAA 105A CPISB

Roll Call

Mike Meyers (President) - Present
Gerrit Verbeek (Vice-President) - Present
Jordan Haffener (Secretary) - Present
Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Present
Tom Meacham (Director) - Present
Jonathan Rupp Strong (Director) - Present
Lila Hobbs (Director) - Present
Andy Kubic (Director) - Present
Heather Johnson (Director) - Present
Nathan Pooler (Director) - Present
Visitors:

Scribe: Jordan Haffener

Committee Reports

President (Mike Meyers)

- T-shirts - people want T-shirts. Mike doesn't have time to tackle this and needs someone to head up this task.
- Communication within club
 - Listserv - contact Carlene Van Tol about archiving information since the Listserv is going away/defunct.
 - Idea for facebook group to be closed to only members – does not seem feasible to enforce.
 - Need another source for information sharing other than facebook.

Vice President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- Christmas party – currently set up like last year with no live music.
 - Ideas – slideshow of photos from a projector.
 - Will use calendar submission photos.
 - Andy to coordinate a Mount Baldy hike before the party.
- Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking appreciation.
 - event ideas:
 - ◆ Grill out for them alongside MCA members to thank them and to remind members to patronize AMH.
 - ◆ Contact crevasse-rescue course members about material requirements and to use AMH to procure their items.
 - Gear budget – instead of purchasing gear, reserve budget for AMH rentals for trip leaders who need equipment.
 - Could we hold information/introductory training sessions like introduction to backcountry skiing or ice climbing at AMH? That could facilitate spending at the store

Secretary (Jordan Haffener)

- MCA general meeting reservations are up to date.
- New board meeting location – plan to revert to BP Energy Center in January 2020.
 - December board meeting – December 18, 2019 (unanimously approved during board meeting).
 - ◆ Location options include Heather's house or Andy's office.

Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- Budget has been submitted to the Scree and will be run in the Scree for two months.
 - Has not been changed to include potential grant and will require revision if grant is pursued.
- Katherine has filed the taxes.

Liability Committee (Tom Meacham)

- December 3 meeting with Kurt Hensel planned.

Parks Advisory (Tom Meacham and Ralph Baldwin)

- Tom is planning on attending the next Chugach State Park Advisory Board meeting.

Trips Committee (Needs chair)

- January – Icefest event in either Caribou Creek/Knik Gorge/Hunter Creek.
 - Mike and Nathan to work on this.
 - Martin Luther King Day could be a good day to do it.
- February – Serenity Falls Hut – the usage request for the hut has been submitted, but we have not yet paid.
- March –
- April – Eklutna Traverse trip led by Mike (tentative).
- May – Hut-to-Hut event – discussion of if we should make it mandatory to have a partner.
 - Two groups:
 - ◆ Beginner - race to Bomber Hut
 - ◆ Advanced - race to Bomber Hut, then Holden, and back to Bomber Hut.
 - Intentions for an overnight.
 - Going to keep working the plan.
 - Cost: \$20 discount for members.
 - Will need required gear list.
 - Will need to develop a plan to reduce liability – i.e., forecast plan, safety plan, gear and skill requirements.
 - AMH for beacon/shovel/probe rentals.
 - Plan to be set and reviewed by February.
- June – Summer Solstice Campout on Flattop Mountain.

- July – Hub meet up to break into side trips – event format over rigid trip format.
 - Powerline Pass, Rabbit Lake, Rainbow Ridge.
- August –
- September – IceFest.
- October –
- November –
- December – Christmas Party

Training Committee (Gerrit Verbeek)

- Crevasse-rescue class training – December 7 and 8.
 - Meeting Friday, November 22, to discuss teaching methodology.
 - venue has not been landed yet - Andy to ask on his location idea
 - Smiley video – instructors to review and discuss viewing during training.
 - ◆ Gerrit to send watching information to the board .

Scree (Steve Gruhn, Dawn Munroe)

- Reminder that monthly submission deadline by the 11th of each month.

Huts Committee (Jonathan Rupp Strong, Greg Bragiel, Cory Hinds, Vicky Lytle)

- Ten-Year Master Plan.
 - Financial numbers and timeline have been adjusted based on most recent forecast/estimates
 - Unanimous approval during board vote to approve 10-Year Master Plan as is currently written (including writing a grant proposal in 2020 for use of awarded funds in

2021 and addition to plan that requires grant reviews by the board before submission).

- Future grants.
 - Unanimous agreement that the board needs to review all proposed grant submissions prior to submission. Grants need to be sent to board four months prior to intended submission.

Awards Committee (Tom Meacham, Charlie Sink, Max Neale)

- Nominations running in *the Scree* again.

Communications Committee (Lila Hobbs)

- No updates.
- Discussion of necessity of a standing communications position.
 - This job can now be done on an as-needed basis .

Calendar Committee (Mike Meyers, Lila Hobbs, Vicky Ho, Andrew Holman)

- Calendars sent to local loactions.

Mentorship (Lila Hobbs, Katherine Cooper)

- Forty people have filled out mentee forms looking for mentors.
- Short on mentors – should we send out a high-level list of activities needed for mentorship .

Library (Charolette Foley)

- Charlotte has officially stepped down. Looking for someone to take up the reins.

Date and Location of next Board Meeting

- December 18, 2019, 6 – 8 p.m.; Location to be determined.



At left, Carpathian Peak (6020 feet) in the Kenai Mountains; taken from Portage Flats on April 26, 2019. Photo by Frank E. Baker

Proposed 2020 Budget

REVENUE		Budget 2020	Budget Change	Actual 2019	Approved 2019	Actual 2018
Membership Dues	received during calendar year	\$16,000.00	\$2,680	\$15,607.99	\$13,320.00	\$11,985.00
Scree subscriptions		\$180	\$0	\$225.00	\$180	\$225.00
Training	<i>BMS, ice climbing, rock climbing, other</i>	\$5,500	\$100	\$5,086.00	\$5,400	\$4,760.00
Photo Calendar		\$3,000	\$700	\$2,423.00	\$2,300	\$2,901.00
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$400	\$200	\$710.00	\$200	\$95.00
Interest on Accounts		\$100	(\$4)	\$0.00	\$104	\$96.00
Other - Donations, etc	<i>Donations, check reimbursements</i>	\$500	\$500	\$455.00	\$0	\$10,140.00
TOTAL REVENUE		\$25,680	\$4,176	\$24,507	\$21,504	\$30,201.00
EXPENSE						
Training	<i>campsite, access fees, instructors, trip leaders</i>	\$4,500	(\$1,245)	\$3,701.67	\$5,745	\$3,914
Scree	<i>postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$2,000	\$200	\$1,239.95	\$1,800	\$2,164
General Meeting	<i>rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$1,800	\$336	\$42.63	\$1,464	\$1,091
Administrative	<i>supplies, PO box, web site, ads, travel, misc.</i>	\$1,000	(\$30)	\$578.64	\$1,030	\$514
Hut Construction & Maint.	<i>materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees</i>	\$20,000	\$7,210	\$3,176.09	\$12,790	\$30,002
Insurance	<i>reincorporation fees, insurance</i>	\$110	\$0	\$100.00	\$110	\$104
Club Equipment	<i>climbing gear, misc equipment, storage</i>	\$800	\$91	\$480.24	\$709	\$452
Library	<i>new books, periodicals, storage</i>	\$150	(\$262)	\$0.00	\$412	\$259
Other:	<i>miscellaneous expenses</i>					
Photo Calendar		\$1,800	(\$28)	\$1,530.00	\$1,828	\$0
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$500	\$500	\$300.00	\$0	\$0
Other - Awards		\$500	\$395	\$0.00	\$105	\$102
Other -		\$0	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$981
TOTAL EXPENSE		\$33,160	\$7,167	\$11,149	\$25,993	\$39,584
DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE			(\$7,480)	\$13,358	(\$4,489)	(\$9,383)



FANCIFUL FIVE:
*Chugach Mountain peaks near Eagle River, from left:
 Eagle Peak (6909 feet),
 Eagle River Overlook (5104 feet),
 Hurdygurdy Mountain (5994 feet),
 and Points 5764 and 5597.*
 Photo by Frank E. Baker

Choate's Chuckle - Tom Choate
A: The guide said he needed a quickdraw.

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Mike Meyers	mcmeyers24@msn.com	Director 1 (term expires in 2020)	Jonathan Rupp Strong	202-6484
Vice-President	Gerrit Verbeek	903-512-4286	Director 2 (term expires in 2020)	Lila Hobbs	229-3754
Secretary	Jordan Haffener	Jordan.haffener@gmail.com	Director 3 (term expires in 2021)	Tom Meacham	346-1077
Treasurer	Katherine Cooper	209-253-8489	Director 4 (term expires in 2021)	Heather Johnson	hjohnson@mdausa.org
			Director 5 (term expires in 2021)	Andy Kubic	andy.kubic@gmail.com
			Director 6 (term expires in 2021)	Nathan Pooler	Nathan.lee.pooler@gmail.com

Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$30

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the Club Membership Committee at membership@mtnclubak.org.

The Scree is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to MCAScree@gmail.com. Material should be submitted by the 11th of the month to appear in the next month's *Scree*.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to vicepresident@mtnclubak.org.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by the monthly meeting to pick one up or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Katherine Cooper—209-253-8489 - membership@mtnclubak.org

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Hans Schlegel—hans.schlegel@live.com or hcc@mtnclubak.org

Mentorship: Katherine Cooper and Lila Hobbs—mentorship@mtnclubak.org

Huts: Greg Bragiel—350-5146 or huts@mtnclubak.org

Calendar: Vicky Ho—512-470-8640 or hovcky@gmail.com

Librarian: Gwendolyn Higgins—419-376-7304 or library@mtnclubak.org

Scree Editor: MCAScree@gmail.com Steve Gruhn assisted by Dawn Munroe (350-5121) dawn.talbott@yahoo.com

Web: www.mtnclubak.org

Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MCAK/info>.

*Meg Inokuma scrambling up Far Out Peak.
Photo by Wayne Todd*

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