



Vol 10, no 4
February 1968

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happenings on the way

February meeting... Ben Crawford Memorial Park, 3rd and Eagle, Monday, February 12, 8 p.m. Program attractions will be (1) Art Davidson's photo phantasmagoric display of Cathedral Spires and the Revelation Mountains (SW tip of Alaska Range, summer '67), and (2) Hans Van der Laan's pictorial record of the first ascent of 8675' or Ice Cream Cone Mountain or Skybuster or whatever name you might like to choose (none has yet been officially given to this peak at the head of Carpenter, Metal, and Friday Creeks in the Chugach), which was made in July '67. (see July Scree for Dave Johnston's account of this trip.)

MT. ALPENGLAW (Turnagain Peak), Saturday-Sunday, February 10-11. (4850') High point across Turnagain Arm at Sunrise near Hope. Two-day climb from sea level. Requires good physical condition and winter equipment for overnight. Requires skis or snowshoes for three-mile approach through forest. Leave town Friday night to allow an early start Saturday. Leader: HANS VAN DER LAAN, phone 277-4251. (Note: This was incorrectly listed as Turnagain Peak in the Hiking and Climbing Schedule published last month. The name approved by the State Geographic Board is Mt. Alpenglow.)

WILLIWAW, 5445', Saturday-Sunday, February 17-18. Long eight-mile approach from 1400' over 4100' shoulder of O'Malley into middle fork of Campbell Creek behind Anchorage. Steep snow gully to summit. Overnight along the way somewhere. Skis preferable. Requires good condition and winter equipment although the peak is not a difficult one. Leader: VIN HOEMAN, phone 277-7871.

McHUGH PEAK, 4301', Saturday, February 24. Easy one-day trip right near town. Probable approach from the Potter Creek side. Snowshoes or skis. Easy ridge hike if the snow is blown off higher up. Leader: DAVE DEVOE, phone 333-5492.

SHIP CREEK TO INDIAN, Saturday-Sunday, February 24-25. Somewhat over twenty miles in two long days. Snowshoes or skis. Over Indian Creek Pass at 2350', overnight somewhere along the way. Requires good condition and winter gear; otherwise no difficulty. Leader: GAYLE WILLENHEUSER, phone 277-9330.

PORTAGE PASS TO WHITTIER, Sunday, March 3. Six to twelve miles one way depending on Portage Lake road condition. Cross Portage Lake and Portage Glacier. Over Portage Pass at 550' and drop down to Whittier. Skis preferred. Leave very early and come back on the afternoon train. Leader: FRANK NOSEK, phone 272-2966.

happenings that were

Executive committee meeting, January 30, appointed Peter Vlasveld as the new MCA treasurer to replace Bob Hansen. Discussion of cabins resulted in Hans Van der Laan's agreeing to be in charge of repair operations for Crow's Nest in Crow Pass. Hammer-nail-paint parties will be set up in late spring/early summer. Plans are still on to have the Whiteout Glacier cabin materials flown in and put together by one or more building parties this spring. The idea of MCA scheduling and giving some financial support to a major expedition to some significant unclimbed peak in the Chugach or elsewhere was discussed with general approval and referred back to the Hiking and Climbing Committee for further planning and possible scheduling. The status of the relationship between MCA and the Alaska Rescue Group was again discussed.

SOME INTERESTING LEGAL ASPECTS OF MOUNTAINEERING

Frank Nosek, attorney

Like everything else, mountain climbing is subject to the influence of the various laws we have. Here are a few which may provoke some thoughts. Remember that in applying laws and legal principles, you are not dealing with a science and will rarely get mathematical certainty; someone usually has a different slant. References and citations are available if wanted.

1. Club Liability. MCA is a corporation and can be liable for injury if it was negligent, but probably not the individual members, unless it was that member who was negligent. Example: MCA-er rolls rock over cliff without looking below. He's responsible for the dent in the helmet of the climber down there, but the club is not.

2. Assuming the Risks. A climber assumes the obvious and necessary risks of climbing, but does not assume the hazards resulting from the negligence of a fellow climber usually. If a climber shares in the organization of a climb, he has a chance to evaluate the endeavor and to plan for the inherent risks, and therefore assumes such risks or turns the trip down.

3. Obedying the Leader. The individual mountaineer should exercise some degree of independent judgment during a climb. That this view is not unanimously held is shown by the oath "to obey the leader in everything regarding the expedition in which he may command me" taken by the 1950 French expedition to Annapurna in the Himalaya. Mutiny on a mountain could be disastrous. Continuing to follow faulty leadership may also end in catastrophe, and might bar a climber from any later complaint in regard to the faulty leadership.

In Wyoming in 1963, a climber died who was a member of a party that blindly obeyed a foolish leader's attempt to climb the Grand Teton. The climbers had had inadequate experience in the snow and ice techniques vital to the ascent; only the leaders were acclimatized to the altitude. Contrary to National Park regulations, the party did not register at the ranger station. The rangers would have told them that using the route chosen by the leader was absurd at that time of year. The party was too large to be able to complete the climb in one day; the climbers carried only a day's food and no equipment for a night out at high altitude. When only a small portion of the climb had been completed in the time allotted for reaching the summit, and several members of the party were asking to return to camp, the leader refused to turn back. The weather deteriorated into a severe electrical storm (really can get bad there!) followed by snow before the end of the first day. The fact that only one of the climbers was killed was due to a hazardous and expert rescue operation. Tough decision--to follow the leader or mutiny.

4. Rescue. If a mountaineer undertakes to aid a distressed companion, he must exercise due care. The "Good Samaritan" may be liable if his negligent rescue attempt causes injury to the victim. He may even be responsible for a capricious termination of his aid. Of course, a sudden emergency can alter the standard against which the climber's conduct (be it as rescuer or not) is measured so that actions taken, which at other times might have been unreasonable, under such stress become reasonable.

5. Death on the Mountain. The instinct is strong to tell the decedent's family of his death, although no duty to do so exists. The person who undertakes to inform the relative must act with due care. It is not reasonable to telegraph or telephone such news to a complete stranger. A delicate duty has been assumed and the informant could, with the help of the local telephone operator or an amateur radio operator, perhaps find someone such as the minister, doctor, or a friend to break the news gently to the family. Unwarranted publication of photographs of the body may be an invasion of the closest relative's right to privacy. The surviving spouse or next-of-kin of a deceased expedition member has the right to control the disposition of the body, but consideration must be given to the decedent's requests as expressed in his will or elsewhere. A passenger who dies during an ocean voyage may, at the command of the captain, be buried at sea. Neither the captain nor the ship's company has a duty to bring the body to port. In analogous cases, an expedition leader may have the right to bury the dead climber on the mountain.

Insurance companies must be supplied with proof of death of the insured before payment will be made to the beneficiary under any policy. In addition to establishing the fact of death to the satisfaction of the

LEGAL ASPECTS OF MOUNTAINEERING, cont.

company, under most policies there must be proof that the insured died before the policy had expired due to failure to pay premiums. In Alaska, there is a presumption of death after an uninterrupted absence of seven years. By presenting convincing evidence that the insured was subjected to a specific peril at the time that he vanished, a judge may issue a "Presumptive Death Certificate" which will satisfy the requirements of the insurance company. From the disappearance of a climber near the summit of a mountain, it has been inferred that he was faced with such a specific peril and could be judicially presumed to be dead.

6. Products Liability. Climbers have almost utter dependence on their equipment. A failure in equipment can make a climb difficult or even perilous. A chain of events directly stemming from the breaking of a crampon strap led to one death and several serious injuries in a climb in the Himalaya in 1957. (See Barker, The Last Blue Mountain) Goods that are designed and sold for one particular purpose, e.g., mountain climbing and not merely for general use, must be fit for that special purpose. Almost any offerings in a mountaineering catalogue are okay, but may still let you down.

7. Random Notes. (a) Because much climbing is done with 2 or 3 people tied together on a rope for safety in the event that one falls, each comes to rely upon the others, and the link thus formed requires that each act with reasonable care. (b) The safety rules must be obeyed. Just as a golfer must yell "Fore!" to warn anyone in the path of his ball, so a climber should yell "Rock!" to inform those below to beware of a shower of stones or worse. (c) Homework. Mountaineers have chosen a sport requiring skill and split-second timing; they must have the necessary training and aptitude. The climber who has envisioned the breaking of a cornice supporting his companion and realized the necessity of jumping to the other side of the ridge is doing his homework. (d) Medicine. Giving drugs, pep pills, or other medicines without competent medical direction may be negligent.

SNOWBIRD MINE-REED LAKES

13-14 January

Bill Hague

On a cold and windy Saturday, our brave group gathered at the Eagle River Shopping Center, then drove to the Talkeetnas, parking at the Snowbird-Fern mines turnoff above the defunct Little Susitna Lodge. The previous week's powder snow had become wind-hardened and the cold gusts made us somewhat uncomfortable. However, the sun soon came over the ridge and brightened our spirits as we proceeded toward the cabin.

Our party included Peter Vlasveld, John Merrick, Lotte Kramer, Marge Maagoe, Rod Wilson, Ed Fisher, John Wolfe, Roger Crosby, Marie Lundstrom, Karen Courtright, Bill and Sally Hague, Bruce and Judy Van Dusen, Mac Myers, Dave and Carol DeVoe, and Bob Smith, visiting from the Appalachian Mountain Club. The majority were on skis, though four used "injun webs."

The first of the group reached the cabin in about 3 hours to find the interior a chilly minus 4°. The rest of the afternoon was spent reconnecting the stove pipe (really building a "new" part), eating, and disparaging the efforts of Ed Fisher, Rod Wilson, and Roger Crosby to build a snow cave. These hearty diggers were convinced they would be more comfortable than in our "cozy" cabin. (I doubt that they were!)

After a very involved dinner (with 16 people all trying to cook and eat at once in a very small room, dinner has to be an involved operation! Dave and Carol DeVoe made a day of it and went back to their car before the involvement of dinner.) the evening was warmed by Karen's harmonica, Marie's songbook, and Roger's pressed-sawdust logs (highly recommended). The outside temperature dipped to minus 12° that night, so most of us weren't coaxed from our sleeping bags until the stove was again lighted the next morning around 9.

Sunday was bright with scattered clouds. Rod Wilson, Lotte Kramer, Bill Hague, Mac Myers, Roger Crosby, Peter Vlasveld, and Bob Smith strapped on skis and skied to the shores of the uppermost of the Reed Lakes below 5500+ ft Lynx Peak, which stood out magnificently mantled in white against the blue sky. At 4300 ft, the thermometer registered -8° and our feet quickly began to get frostily stiff as we rested. Skiing down was a

SNOWBIRD MINE-REED LAKES, cont.

matter of out-maneuvering the breakable crust, but we all were sorry to see the run end as we neared the final slopes above the cabin.

The Reed Lakes "expeditionary group" then had a late lunch with John Wolfe, John Merrick, and Ed Fisher, who had remained behind when the early-to-the-cars-and-out-of-this-cold-cabin part of the party left late in the morning (They had their own adventures when the Maagoe Scout wouldn't start and a kindly Independence Mine skier family towed the Scout two miles to start it). We left the cabin at 3 p.m. and arrived at the cars at 4:30 with the full moon casting shadows on the brilliantly illuminated snow.

CHIMBORAZO, 20,563'

Vin Hoeman

One can fail to climb nameless little mountains and forget about them, but to fail in an attempt on a well-known mountain is to have it hang over your head and remind you of your defeat every time you hear its name mentioned. To rectify such errors can seem quite important. Thus Grace needed high-altitude experience and I knew just the right mountain, the nearest one available higher than McKinley, Chimborazo, only 4710 miles from our giant (the Nan Shan Range in China rises higher only 4385 miles away, but it is presently unattainable). Sickness had robbed me of Ecuador's high point two years ago while my companions reached it.

We flew to Ecuador in the closing days of 1967 and were soon trucked with our gear and food we'd bought in Quito from Ambata to 13,000-foot Pogyos, a grazing station on the road over the Cordillera Occidental to Guaranda. Such an abrupt rise made acclimatization difficult, and we took 3 days to pack in to the refugio at 15,700', a trip that can be done in 2 or 3 hours when properly acclimatized. We found fellow Alaskan Helmut Tschaffert's name among those scribbled on the refugio walls from his successful climb 25 June 1966.

Chimborazo is a long-extinct volcano, relatively easy of ascent with weather much the same year around at its location only 1° south of the Equator. The first two complete ascents were made by parties led by Edward Whymper (of Matterhorn fame) in January and July 1880, and as far as I've been able to determine, the route of his second ascent, the NW Ridge or Red Wall Route, is the only one that has been used since in what must now number over 30 ascents. We decided to try the West Ridge lying between the two Whymper routes. Our way lay across the foot of the Stubel Glacier and up steep snow slopes to a rotten-lava, castellated gendarme that caps the ridge, close under its wall on a ledge to the ridge beyond where we'd place our high camp about 17,900'. This was the most difficult part, and we felt confident that night as we put up our tent on schedule, but a wind had sprung up and an evil-looking cloud made a dark mushroom of the summit. So what, we had food for an extra day or so and everyone knows tropical storms are short! Well, we learned it was we who were in the bag, not the summit, and for four days and nights the wind continually tried its best to bust us out and blow us off. We rock-walled the tent, but twice it started to rip at the peak. We tied off those portions and built an emergency rock shelter to use if the tent tore to bits. We were unable to go up, unwilling to go down. I read the whole of Gone With the Wind aloud and we ran out of food before we finally gave up and retreated to the refugio. The reserves of food we'd left there were stolen, so Grace waited there while I went all the way to Ambata and back in a day for more provisions.

Finally on the 10th of January, we set out to climb the mountain "Alpine style" round trip from the refugio in a day by the standard Red Wall Route. The steepest part is around the west end of the Red Wall, but it was simple cramponing, no step-cutting. The last rocks are at 18,900' and not far above them the infamous soft snow begins, a filled-in rime into which one frequently sinks thigh-deep. Breaking trail was tedious and slow. Once the surface shook and settled, and cornices on a distant ridge toppled into crevasses in an earthquake. The slope eased, and I talked Grace into trying the single pair of plastic snowshoes we'd brought along. Then I couldn't keep up as we reached the col between the peaks and started up the final rise. Grace reached Point Whymper, the highest summit, five minutes ahead of me at 4:40 p.m. This is reputed to be the furthest point from the Earth's center because of our globe's greater equatorial diameter. It was 14° F. as we floundered around taking photos

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HIMBORAZO, cont.

and reading instruments for 15 minutes. Not many husband-wife teams have reached such heights. Back in the col Grace waited while I climbed Point Ventemille too, then we hastened down to get below the Red Wall before dark. Later the moon appeared to light our way to the refugio and our hidden packs, ending a good 14-hour climb.

Four days later we traversed another mountain, the rock peak of Illiniza Norte, 16,733'; then we went to Aconcagua, where a long walk in proved in vain when the Argentine military turned us back to Plaza de Mules, saying they had the mountain reserved for all of January...but we'll be back--great mountains demand it!

O'MALLEY PEAK, LEFT WEST GULCH January 28, '68 Bob Spurr

January 28 found Ned Lewis and me turning our attention to O'Malley after a forced change of plans. After donning skis at the base of the Upper Huffman switchback, we marched up the Sno-Go Highway, crossed the South Fork, went over the saddle on O'Malley's west ridge and up the Glacier." After depositing skis near the "Deep Lake" bowl, we ascended the left gully on the west slope to crest out in dazzling sunshine at the junction of the north and west ridges. A scramble over snow-covered verglas put us on the summit about noon, where we languished for an hour.

Soon after starting down, we met Steffen Maagoe, vanguard of the MCA party, bent on an ax-less ascent, who gladly accepted Ned's crampons. After a ticklish descent down "Wilson's Gully" (right west gulch--see Scree, vol. 5, #4, Feb '63), we regained skis and trekked out by sunset.

bits and pieces

NEW AND NEWLY PAID UP MEMBERS: Lee W. Harrell (Office of Post Surgeon, Rich, wk ph 862-8104, hm BOQ 55), R. Bruce and Judy Van Deusen (221 Myer St, 7, Anc, wk ph 756-1102, hm ph 277-8171), Ruth E. Moutton (741 13th Anc 99501, wk ph East Hi, hm ph 272-3301), Rusty Kendall (2801 Collie Ave, Anc, wk ph 272-5124, hm ph 277-6907), Robert Lee Smith (72 Central Park West, Apt 8L, New York 10025), Beverly Steveson (1712 Siena Vista St, Bakersfield, Calif 93304), Kerstin Pettersson, Paul & Marie Hillburn, Dave Johnston, Bernie Kazmierczak.

January 21 Dub and Harry Bludworth, Jim Lethcoe, and Bob Spurr rushed the NW ridge of Wolverine 4455', deposited an MCA register supplied Joanne Merrick, thence rushed back by the medial ridge.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Dale and Doris Hagen, 516 Stanyan St, Apt #2, San Francisco, Calif 94117; Bill Hauser, 62 Harrison Avenue, Kenmore, N Y.

Now caves must be sturdy! In the Dec '67 issue of the Chicago Mountaineering Club Newsletter, Olle Swartling writes that the Minnesota Mt McKinley Expedition found and used several igloos built by the Winter McKinley Party. The Minnesota group climbed McKinley in May-June '67.

Scree is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, which is affiliated with the Anchorage Department of Parks and Recreation. Staff: Marie Lundstrom, Callie Van der Laan, Sharon Cissna, Joanne Merrick, Carol DeVoe. Articles on trips and other material to be published in Scree should be sent to Box 4-964, Anchorage 99503--Call 277-0846.

FROM ANTARCTICA

27 November 1967

Dave Johnston

83° 16' South

156° 35' East

Miller Range, Antarctica

Yes the Antarctic is really a rugged place to explore! I was beginning to believe it after our first week in the field. Partly, it was due to the fantastic contrast to the plush existence of McMurdo Sound Base. No movies, no food ready to eat most any time you wanted it. No overheated bunk houses. Really we hadn't anticipated these things in the field. We were ready for setting up tents, cooking our own food and doing without the nightly movie. We were ready for the same windless, warm (-10° to +10°F) weather they had last summer too. But things weren't like that... weatherwise. But first I'd better tell about how we got here and all that.

After a false start (seems Mother Nature still tells off-too-bigity MAN and his 2 million C-130s what to do and when to do it down here) on a blizzard day during which everything went wrong, we finally took off in the huge C-130 -- just the five of us and our 7000 lbs. of gear for a little more than a month. It was nice weather (-5°F, 10 mph wind) when we landed on the 40 mile wide Marsh Glacier at about 6890'. We loaded up all our gear on Nansen sleds (slender ash frame & skis all tied together with twine and rawhide -- made in Norway) and towed it with our three snow cats to the edge of the Queen Elizabeth Range and set up base camp.

John Gunner (British geologist) and I sorted out our needs for a month of sledging at base camp. Two days later, we motored off with our two sledges and 500 lbs. of stores across the Marsh Glacier to the Miller Range. We averaged 4-5 mph loaded and marked the route with 6' bamboo poles with flags every 1/4 mile. We skirted crevasse fields of course. Until we were half way across the weather was great. But then we got into the cold polar ice cap air that drains down off the plateau, down the glaciers through the Transantarctic mountains to the Ross Sea. The wind was a steady 20-30 mph for a week. Temperature was between -16°F and -22°F with hardly any variation. For a week we struggled to do geologizing along the range as the polar winds roared. Man, this wasn't at all what we had expected! Travelling as many as 9 hours a day sitting on a sled or snowcat in the wind had us thinking of Hawaii and all kinds of things... at least it was warm in our 9 x 9 double walled tent.

After 10 days of this we had gotten used to it when we woke one morning to find it -6°F and No Wind! It seemed like Hawaii and it's been like that ever since. Right now, we've called a day off and are sitting on the blinding snow in our sleeping bags -- +5°F, only a gentle breeze. The low rambling Miller Range ridges bump along around us. Now and then a fine granite cirque (like "Hockey Cirque" in which we played hockey on miles of blue ice with a rock and ice axes) breaks a gentle ridge. The sun circles round and round, never setting. The days fly by... we cook twice a day. Breakfast is oatmeal, peaches, strawberries, eggs, bacon, tea, cookies, bread & butter. Suppers are a combination of steaks (usually have that for breakfast too), pork chops, shrimp, hamburgers, rice, taters, vegetables, fruitcake and fruit. We have a great rivalry going, seeing who can outdo each other in preparing the most exorbitant banquets. Our liquor ration... two bottles of Jim Beam and a jug of chianti with which we lace our hot drinks in the evening to warm up. Yup, it's rough exploring Antarctica!

John and I have a small radio with which to call our base camp every night. Base Camp has a 1400 Collins radio on which they are supposed to call McMurdo each night. Three days without a contact and a C-130 flies out to investigate (at \$5000/flight, taxpayers!). Their super radio hasn't worked for a month and so every few days the C-130 comes with radio technicians. Quite a mess for them but at least they get mail every few days.

Two more days and we start the 2 day, 85 mile trek to base camp. Then back to McMurdo for a week or two before flying back in the field for 6-7 more weeks. John has patiently taught me a bit about geology but I find I'm more interested in glaciology. We've had time to climb a bit. Yesterday we climbed the highest rock peak in the range (nothing has been climbed before -- only 3 people have been here before -- a New Zealand survey party in the 50's). You'll see the slides!