

SCREE

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA BOX 2037 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

FEBRUARY 1977

VOLUME XX, No. 2

FEBRUARY MEETING

NOTE CHANGE IN MEETING PLACE:

Wednesday, February 16, 8 PM, West High School cafeteria, 1700 Hillcrest Dr., Anchorage, Alaska

The program will be a mini slide show on the MCA Ice Climbing School presented by TOM MEACHAM, and a maxi slide show of the First Winter Ascent of Mt. Drum, presented by EARL REDMAN.

SKIING SCHEDULE

February 19-21 Resurrection Trail ski tour from Cooper Landing to Hope and vice versa. Parties will start at both ends. Cabins have been reserved all along the trail. For information call BILL STIVERS, 277-2869.

February 27 Nordic Ski Club Heart Association Ski-A-Thon. Starts at Goose Lake at 11 AM, follows part of the sled dog trail through the AMU campus, and returns via the bicycle trail. Laps are three miles long. Noone may start a lap after 3 PM; everyone to be off the trail by 5 PM. Call the Ski-A-Thon Committee, 279-9541.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Wednesday, January 19, 1977, Pioneer School House, Third and Eagle, Anchorage, Alaska.

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by Treasurer BILL STIVERS in TOM MEACHAM'S absence. Preceding the business meeting a slide show of last year's Arctic Valley to Birdwood ski tour was presented by BILL STIVERS and DAVID NEWCOMBE. There were no corrections to the Minutes of the previous meeting. There were no committee reports.

The Treasurer's report showed cash-on-hand, \$41.00; checking account, \$369.69; savings account, \$428.37; for a total of \$839.04. There were no expenditures for December. After a request from BILL STIVERS, volunteers came forward to provide refreshments at future monthly meetings. It was announced that the Forest Service has scheduled a hearing on snowmobile use of the Resurrection Trail at Denali Elementary School Multi-purpose Room, 148 East 9th Avenue, on Monday, January 24, at 7 PM.

After a fifteen minute recess, JIM HALE presented an exciting slide show of the Mt. McKinley hang glider expedition this past summer. The meeting was adjourned.

David Newcombe, Secretary

THE GARBAGE PROBLEM ON DENALI
BY JIM HALE

Garbage and trash have been a part of Denali's story ever since it was discovered by mountaineers. An environmental awareness came about during the early 1970's and the problem was recognized and publicized. Since that time I feel the situation has improved. This can be attributed to the growing awareness and the educational opportunities available. The trash problem runs a very close parallel to the rescue problem, the better informed the climbing public is of the special requirements of arctic mountain like Denali, the less the problem. Many people talk of the problem as if they were experts. But few really know what it means to try a high altitude climb, much less spend the extra effort to keep things clean! The University of Oregon has done a good job in bringing the situation out in the open. It is mainly due to their efforts that the situation is improving. However, people involved seem to be resorting to scare tactics with reports of "garbage-filled crevasses" and "planning in shit." In three years and six climbs of Denali, I have never witnessed any of these observations. It seems their efforts have switched to an attempt to keep people off the mountain. Nothing short of government regulations can keep the masses off Denali, so believable observations and further educational efforts seem the only solution to the problem.

On the mountain there are really only three bad areas. Two are high altitude ridges and snowfields that cannot dispose of the trash and human waste by glaciation, the other is the 7,000' landing camp where summer melt uncovers the latrines left by earlier expeditions. The only solution to the problem at the higher camps is an effort on the climbers' parts to carry their trash and waste to a nearby crevasse. A simple effort would do a lot. The base camp is another thing. Garbage is flown out by the pilots, but human waste isn't. A separate latrine area would help, but collection and crevasse burial would do more.

Another subject of debate is what climbers should do with their extra food and supplies once they climb the mountain. The obvious is carry it out, but some expeditions would be hard pressed to add 20-30 pounds to an already heavy load on the descent. A possible solution would be paid clean-up teams whose main objective would be to clean the mountain, not climb it. Once or twice a season would keep the area passable. Possibly the Sierra Club or Friends of the Earth could come up with some money to help. It's not that the climbers don't have every intention of being environmentalists, even the most well-intentioned lose their drive at high altitude.

To say that there are concrete answers to any of the Mountain's problems would be wrong. But it does all seem to lie on climber education, which has been a problem for years. Some say, "Shut off the Mountain." But would that be smart? Why should people who will devote a month of their lives to try Denali be allowed to climb? Should we say no air access or rescue. Just because people would have to walk farther doesn't make them any smarter, plus they would then be moving over a large area of tundra and alpine terrain which might never recover from abuse. As for the no rescue thought: I would like to see those people at 17,200', sick and dying from altitude sickness on a nice sunny day. Would they say "I told the park service no rescues"? Would they give up their lives when they could be rescued? I think not.

GUNSIGHT MOUNTAIN

January 8, 1977

by DICK THALER

On January 7, MCA members MIKE BROOKS, JACK DUGGAN, and DICK THALER drove to mile 118.5 on the Glenn Highway to climb Gunsight Mountain (6441'). We parked at a turnout and camped that night by the side of the road.

GUNSIGHT MOUNTAIN continued.

We set out for the summit at 7 AM on January 8 on snowshoes over windslabbed snow, by first light at 8:30 AM. It was apparent that we were not on the route described in 55 Ways. We headed west over rolling terrain through deep, sugar snow, and finally reached the ridge leading to the southeast summit about 11 AM. JACK DUGGAN was having equipment problems with his Alaskan Trail snowshoes and cached them at this point.

We continued up the ridge to about the 5000' level which we reached about 12 noon. At that point we dropped our packs. JACK DUGGAN, who had been postholing for the last mile, considered turning back at this point, but decided to continue. We plodded upward through deep sugar snow with some relief from an occasional windslabbed area. JACK finally turned back at the 5500' level after postholing for over a mile and a half. MIKE and I continued along the summit ridge. We cached our snowshoes about 300 vertical feet below the summit and kicked steps the rest of the way to the summit which was reached about 2 PM.

The temperature on the summit was about 20 degrees, and we enjoyed beautiful views of the Chugach, Wrangells, and Talkeetnas, as well as the sunbathed ridge between the southeast and northwest summits and the notch. Because we were separated, MIKE and I began our descent after about 15 minutes on top and reached our car where JACK was waiting at about 5 PM.

Note: The directions in 55 Ways are incorrect. Camp Creek crosses the Glenn Highway at about mile 116.5 rather than mile 118.5. By following the directions, we turned a $4\frac{1}{2}$ mile round trip into an 8 or 9 mile round trip.

SKI TOUR: BUFFALO MINE ROAD (MOOSE CREEK) TO FISH HOOK ROAD

January 29, 1977

by DONA AGOSTI

We found it! Yes, we found piles and piles of skiable snow in Palmer, thanks to leader WES HOWE. WES had already left a car at Mile 8 (the bridge) on Fish Hook Road when we met him in Koslosky's parking lot at 9 AM Saturday morning. With him were PAT SPITE and MIKE OLINK of Palmer; from Anchorage, MERRILYN SWANSON and DONA AGOSTI; and from Eagle River, TONY BOCKSTAHLER.

We drove to milepost 53 on the Glenn Highway (3.7 miles beyond Fish Hook Road), then turned left on the Buffalo Mine Road and drove two or three miles to an easement trail (These trails are public access routes.) We couldn't believe the excellent snow conditions as we skied through the spruce trees. There was little evidence of snow machine use, either. We continued at a leisurely pace following trails and meadows, then lunched at a scenic spot. After lunch we started climbing, and many hours later realized our error. We found spectacular viewpoints of the Mat River Valley, Pioneer Peak, and all, but we also encountered alder, open streams, and precarious snow bridges. Many grunts, groans, and spills later we found ourselves at the edge of a deep canyon, and far below saw the bridge on Fish Hook Road. We retraced about one half mile of trail in order to get around the canyon. It was almost 5 PM and already dark when we saw below us the lights of the cabin belonging to WES' friend. The trip down the slope in the dark was an event. We had covered about six map miles, but I won't even guess at the actual mileage in zig-zags to get around ravines and alder. WES' advice for this trip was: "If you get into alder, you are too high. Stay in the spruce."

We fell into WES' van and drove back to our cars, but not without a slight right-of-way argument with a cow moose and twin calves. It had been an energetic outing, but there wasn't a single complaint. We had found snow.

TREE TOP TALES
by EL ROJCHONÉRE

It was a two foot spruce tree and it went on top of those terrible packs and other stuff that mountain climbers carry. A Christmas tree, you understand, since it was Christmas Eve. Off into the sky in that flying machine and over to a hill called Drum. Had a nice fly, saw a nice view, and then proceeded to crash. Fine crash, indeed, when you can dig a hole with a 185 that is four feet deep, stop the machine in less than a hundred feet, and still be able to flounder out into deep snow muttering various sorts of gibberish about still being in one piece. Took quite a while and much wielding of a shovel to get that flying machine flying again; but in short order, four of us were trying to figure out how to get those packs off the ground and onto our backs.

The little tree rode uppermost on the pack and waved merrily up the southwest ridge in distinct contradiction to the feelings of the poor fellow below. Day collapsed at about 8200 feet.

Fine day that Christmas is--the sun refused to shine. There came a few muffled curses and failing appendages as that ridge tossed out a couple little difficulties to increase the enjoyment of 80-pound packs. Distinct dirth of light up there--finished the day with dark tip-toeing on skinny ridges. Parked the tree at 9900' and celebrated Christmas with a chopped chili-spiced glop.

Came a cloud and a breeze for three days. Created a walled city, then retreated to a cozy cave. Playful breeze, kept knocking down our wall inside of which were tents and stuff. Reconstruction did help keep away boredom.

Poetry by Walt W., several bad books by famous authors, and a couple junk books led to the creation of the Mt. Drum Literary Society which hold loud and lengthy discussions of demerits of various literary works then being read.

Ignored the wind and it went away, so we wandered on up the hill. Glaciers seemed to be hungry as they kept trying to gobble the plodding morsels. Did some good steps, some hikes, and finally disappeared into the sky. Dug a hole about 11,450' and crawl in to watch the ceiling sag. Enjoyed the fresh mountain air every couple hours the next day as we unearthed the cave's door again. Can't say I appreciated the humor of leaving a warm bag at 2 AM just because the shovel was lonely.

Last day of the year seemed to be an appropriate time to climb a hill, especially since the sun had grown curious to see what had become of us. High noon saw that strange summit celebration--the planting of a two-foot spruce tree, minus several branches and a bunch of needles, atop Mt. Drum. St. Elias looked on dolefully.

Enjoyed waist-deep snow conditions and ground blizzards on the north face for the descent. Hid behind a serac at 11,000' for the night.

The day of the Rose Bowl, the Orange Bowl, the Snow Bowl. Finally got to change games and play skies in the afternoon. The day was concluded with powder skiing by moonlight--as fine as the Snow Bowl was foul.

Another day and into the trees and onto the Sanford River. And yet another day, to be stopped by notes from the sky saying that the Copper was still trying to be a river. Built a fire on the ice and roasted braunschweiger until the roaring bird carried us away.

NOTICE!

For those who are new to mountaineering and to long-time climbers and hikers as well, we would like to reiterate one of the basic rules of this outdoor activity. No matter whether it is a simple day hike in the Chugach or a major McKinley expedition, one rule is absolutely basic. THE LEADER CALLS THE SHOTS. In my seven years with the Club, I have seen this rule violated many times by extroverts who must always rush ahead of the group without notification to the leader, by the side-trip simpletons who don't have the courtesy to tell anyone what they're up to, and by unpleasant types who must always argue with the leader. Let it hereby be known that any hiker who takes part in MCA-sponsored activity will have to abide by the leader's decision or find himself unwelcome on future trips.

Dona Agosti
Hiking Chairman

FOR SALE

Kelty Mountaineer Medium Packframe; never used; offers; retail price, \$35. Call SUE WRENN, 277-3344.

White Korean VB Boots; size 11; good condition; offers. Call SUE WRENN, 277-3344.

Woolrich Expedition Parka (good to -50 degrees); red; worn once; size large; \$90 or best offer; and,
Salewa Crampons; adjustable, with neoprene binding; \$25 or best offer; and,
Two sets Neoprene Snowshoe Bindings; brand new; both for \$15 (or will sell separately and,
Black Bunny Boots; size 11; brand new; \$45 or best offer. Call KERWIN WHITE, 277-699 after 3:30.

Note: Please send articles for the March SCREE to JANE MEACHAM, 1410 H Street, 99501
