



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

FEBRUARY 1992

Volume 35, Issue 02

FEBRUARY MEETING

February 19 7:30 pm Wednesday, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Sts.,
downtown Anchorage, Alaska

Slide Show Denali's West Buttress will be shown by Julius Brecht.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- | | | |
|----------|-------|--|
| February | 23 | <u>LITTLE O'MALLEY</u>
Short ski trip to the notch on Little O'Malley. Meet 10:30
at the Glen Alps parking lot. Bring climbing skins.
Leader: Dan O'Haire 561-1141 |
| March | 7-8 | <u>MT. EWE</u>
Little-visited peak near little-visited Flute Glacier.
21 miles round-trip, 4200' elevation gain. Skiable to
within 600 feet of the summit. Class: GLACIER TRAVEL.
Must have passed a basic mountaineering class or equivalent.
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132 |
| | 21 | <u>ARCTIC - INDIAN</u>
Celebrate the first day of spring with a 21-mile ski trip.
Must be a strong enough skier to make it through in one day.
Class D.
Leader: Joel Babb 688-3885 |
| April | 16-20 | <u>MT. RAINIER</u>
You can still get low-cost airfares to Seattle. Climb this
spectacular volcano via the standard route (Disappointment
Clever). Class: GLACIER TRAVEL. Must be a competent
climber.
Leaders: Dan O'Haire, Maxine Stoddard 561-1141 |
| May | 2-17 | <u>GRAND CANYON</u>
Ten-day backpack trip into remote west end of the Grand
Canyon. Limit 6 people. Class C.
Leader: Bill Wakeland 563-6246 |
| July | 4-16 | <u>PORCUPINE RIVER</u>
See article this issue.
Leader: Marty Bassett 694-3917 |

TRIP REPORTS

MCA Takes Over Whittier Again

Willy Hersman

It looked like lemmings pouring over the pass. I turned around from my vantage point just below and watched as skier after skier kept coming, some skiing, some walking, most falling. It was quite a sight, made blurry by the blizzard that was going on. I did my best to count them, since it had been difficult to do at the lake. They numbered 80, the largest group to ever participate on an MCA trip.

I can't report that we saw much on Superbowl Sunday, including much of a football contest. Travel across Portage Lake was by compass. The ascent to the pass had fooled everybody again, lulling them into a sense that it isn't very steep after all. Not only was the Whittier side steeper, but it was icy in places. And though I was a little concerned at first to watch a young couple go down with a baby in a sled, it worked out alright. The whole day seemed to work out alright, in fact. Even the Alaska Railroad came through, bending the rules so we'd all fit onto the train.

So, finally after I knew everyone had been accounted for and most of the skis had been claimed and the cars had left the lake for Anchorage, I relaxed, went home, had a shower, went to bed. Slept a while. Then the phone rang, it was my friend Gordy.

"Jees, Willy, you hadn't told me to start at Portage Lake. I was beginning to wonder if you'd canceled the trip. I had a heck of a time trying to catch up," he laughed.

"Where did you start skiing, Gordy?" I asked.

"At the Whittier shuttle stop!"

Make that 81 people.

Lane Glacier Hut

Tom Choate

January 25-26. A group of four assembled at 8:30 am on Saturday and waited 20 minutes for missing persons (and Jim's breakfast) before heading up for the Little Susitna valley. My recy of the week before showed that the big winds of the January "tropical storm" had crusted or blown away the previous snow at elevations of 2000 feet or higher. We had about two inches of new snow over that crust, and with clear weather, the ski trip in was a real pleasure.

We met Dianne and her dog at the start and left marks at junctions so Tara and Jon who were coming in later would not miss the way. After a gentle climb, we stopped for lunch at the small Webfoot cabin, under imposing pinnacles and ridges. From the top of the steep section above Fern Mine, we could see our other two members come into view. They joined us just after we arrived at the tiny Lane Hut.

Above here the valley splits, both parts steeply rising toward jagged summits. After about an hour I started up the steep slopes toward Lane Prospect Glacier with Ken, Jim, and Dianne. The breakable crust was bad news, especially coming down, but the pink horizon from 5000 feet was worth it.

After a pleasant evening (with 7 inside it was cozy!) and an almost too warm night, I arose at 8:30 to overcast skies. Two hours later I started up the steep trail of the night before, with Ken, Tara and Jon for company. We couldn't find any signs of the Lane Prospect itself in the upper valley, but more powdery snow on the old crust made both beauty and avalanche danger enter our minds.

The light snowstorm never got heavier or windier, so we eventually reached the pass at the head of old glacial snowfields. Since it was getting late, I moved off without delay up the short ridge heading to the nearby summit. Ken joined me to help kick steps in the hard crust under old slabs guarding the summit ridges. Soon the final boulder was reached and after a few interesting moves we were on the airy perch of Didilkama (6100'). Nothing higher could be seen within the quarter mile of visibility, but no sign of human presence was unearthed in the snow-filled cracks of the summit.

Jon and Tara had skied down earlier, and Ken had to wait for me to extract myself from the breakable crust many times on the way down. A fast trip out in gathering darkness was punctuated by both of us skiing off the edge of the road, ending upside down in the ditch. Thanks to the extendable poles Dave had loaned me, Ken's tiny glow never completely disappeared among the snowflakes.

PORCUPINE RIVER TRIP JULY 1992

If exploring some of the most beautiful and remote country in Alaska and the Yukon Territory by river appeals to you, perhaps you should consider joining the club's Porcupine River trip this summer. We will be chartering a plane from Fairbanks to Old Crow, Y.T., where we will begin a 300-mile descent of the river to Fort Yukon.

This is a remote, flat-water river which flows through areas of beautiful rock canyons, gentle hills and forested lowlands. The area is rich in history and wildlife, including caribou, bear, otter, wolf, fish and a variety of birds. Weather at this time of year is generally warm and sunny with occasional showers. The trip will be at a moderate pace and is expected to last from 10 to 14 days starting on July 4th. Participants may permanently break from the group and proceed on their own at either a faster or slower pace.

Cost of the charter flight from Fairbanks to Old Crow is estimated to be \$350.00 per person, including transportation of gear. The flight from Fort Yukon to Fairbanks is a scheduled flight and should cost around \$100.00, including excess baggage. This trip is appropriate for novice paddlers who are experienced in the Alaska wilderness; collapsible boats must be used.

Call Marty Bassett, 694-3917.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING

Vice-President Joel Babb, called the meeting to order and introduced new members at 7:35 pm.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$4184.27
Checking Acct	-	279.82
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$4516.19

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing.

Don Hansen described current trips with additional comments by leaders who were present.

Honorary Membership.

Tim Neale explained the idea behind the honorary membership prior to the evening's presentation. So far, 16 people have been honored since the inception of the club, but for a period of 15 years up to 1990 there were no awards.

Everyone's familiar with 55 Ways, written by Helen Nienhauser with Nancy Simmerman and Hans Van der Laan. The original 30 Hikes (1967) was written by club members, but was inconsistent in terms of trip ratings. In 55 Ways the hikes were rewritten and more were added to become what it is today, in its third printing and 40,000 copies sold.

Helen Nienhauser discovered the MCA in 1959 through Rod Wilson. She began work on the book in 1970, before there was a Chugach State Park. The park had few visitors. People wanted to explore there, but they didn't know where to go. As with any guidebook there is a dilemma to overcome. Publicizing favorite places helps visitors enjoy the area, but then the wilderness character is diminished. Helen's philosophy was that people could be educated to enjoy it without destroying it.

Much applause followed Tim's presentation of the award to Helen.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marc Viens, a new member, offered magnesium fire starters for \$3.00, with \$1.00 going to the club.

Feb 92

Tim Neale is looking for volunteers to help with the World Master's Race, February 29 to March 6th. Many jobs are available. Call 274-4952.

After a dry break, Bill Wakeland presented a slide program on his trip last April in Grand Canyon National Park. Five hardy hikers went down less-used trails to take many photos of the scenery and spring plants. They spent 10 days in the low, hot country, returning to the south rim. Very photogenic!

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Choate
Acting Sec'y

President's Notes:

We are looking for cases of trailhead break-ins, where the culprits have been caught, in order to monitor the effects of the recently-passed Victim's Rights Act. We are tired of being 'easy pickins' for these modern-day horse thieves.

The modern legal system has done little to take the profit out of this type of enterprise. The system does not have the resources to patrol the trailheads, or to install surveillance cameras. In the rare cases where the outlaws have been captured, the consequences have been slight. The bandits have not been made to pay back what they rightfully owe to their victims. The law has served only to protect them from those who would fight back. At worst, those under eighteen must fear only 'counseling,' and the others, 'probation.'

Personally, I think that old-fashioned "tar-and-feathering" would be much more effective. Recall the scene from Huckleberry Finn where the two frauds are run out of town on a rail, never to be seen again.

Realistically, in view of the current infestation of lawyers and other professionals who zero in on anybody handling this situation themselves, what can we do? Let's put the legal system under a microscope while demanding laws that make trailhead break-ins truly unprofitable for the outlaws. Then maybe they'll look elsewhere for 'easy-pickins.'