



FEBRUARY 1993

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.
Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Volume 36 Issue 02

FEBRUARY MEETING

Wednesday
February 17, 7:30
Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: Tom Choate has offered to show slides of his most recent climbing excursion to *Ecuador & Columbia..*

TRIP REPORTS

Portage Pass Trip Grows (Outgrows)

by Willy Hersman

Once again there were more people than I could easily count on the MCA Super Bowl Sunday trip to Whittier. Even though it was a blizzard at the pass and there was a -50 F chill factor in Whittier, it didn't deter anyone. There were approximately 120

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- March 20 ARCTIC - INDIAN
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 17 GRAND CANYON
A maximum group of 8 will assemble in Phoenix for a two-week trip to and in the Grand Canyon. A 10-day hike into the Royal Arch area west of the Bass Trail. The group was full, with a waiting list, before I got our backcountry permit, but there could be cancellations.
Leader: Bill Wakeland 563-6246

participants, 110 signed up. Some folks started as late as 1:30 pm, still making it in time to catch a bit of the game and get the 5:00 train out. The trip has a life of its own.

It is my recommendation that the club not sponsor the trip next year, or the next few years. The MCA is not really set up for such large groups. You can't really keep track of anyone and even on such a short trip, things could get out of hand. Why carry the responsibility? The tradition will probably not die if it is unorganized. As long as there is a Super Bowl, somebody will think of skiing to Whittier.

MINUTES

JANUARY MEETING

January 20, 1993. Joel Babb called the meeting to order, and had new members introduce themselves.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market - \$4336.72
Checking Acct - 1800.99
Petty Cash - 50.00
Total \$6187.71

COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Hiking and Climbing.

Super Bowl Sunday, January 31, Portage - Whittier. Bring skins, shovels, beacon, warm clothes. Three miles, 900 ft. elevation gain, 1-3 hours. train leaves Whittier 5:00 and 7:00 pm.

Training.

Dave Pahlke talked about the snow shelter class, probably at Hatcher Pass. Need warm clothes, ground cloth or bivi bag. Camp will be too far to go the car.

Huts.

Upper Snowhawk Cabin now has a two-burner stove and lantern. Emergency fuel is under the cabin. The lower Snowhawk has a wood-burning stove. They both belong to Fort Richardson, but with reservations members may use them. Contact the MP desk or Rank Patrol.

OLD BUSINESS

Photo Album.

Includes pictures of hut building activities and club outings. Additions are welcome.

Vandalism.

Continues to be a problem, not only at trailheads, but members recounted problems at Humana Hospital (skis taken), and Elmendorf Hospital (tires taken). Park watch is growing with support from the municipality and the state, but it's tough to catch thieves or to reclaim safe, vandal-free parking areas.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dave Logan is still interested in companions for a 10-day backpacking trip to the Selwyn Mountains, NWT, Canada in late July to August. Three proposed routes were shown, 30-40 miles each. This would be a moderate trip, with some scramble-type climbing possible. Contact Dave at 243-4887.

Thanks to Mark Selland for his slides of Manaslu.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Moore

ICE 9

1977-1993

I suppose a memoriam like this is unusual for the Scree. After all, this is a mountain club newsletter, not Road and Track, Cycle World, or RVs Unlimited. Ice 9 would have never made it in those anyway. I could hardly keep it tuned up long enough to make it over Hatcher Pass, let alone go bouncing over boulders, mud bogging through the backcountry, or whatever they do in those commercials for tough-guy trucks. Ice 9 gave a few memories though.

It came up the Alcan on its trip to Alaska, in the cold of December. The fuel line froze more than once in the Yukon, I remember. I had to stuff cardboard in front of the radiator to keep it going. It received the usual crack in the windshield that you got on the road before they paved it. I never fixed it. It wasn't in Anchorage more than about 6 months before somebody busted windows and stole everything. Trailhead vandals are nothing new.

People wondered about the name sometimes. There was never a Ice 8 or 7 or anything, I got the name from Kurt Vonnegut's Sirens of Titan. Something about a chemical which turned all water to ice seemed to fit Alaska. The truck was well known because it went on climbing trips a lot. When Paul Farmer and I did a traverse of Denali in '81, we started on the Petersville Road, not where we wanted to, but where Ice 9 got stuck in the mud. We left Todd Miner with it and started hiking, hoping he'd make it back. After that I avoided mud, but not the mountains.

The Blazer would surprise me sometimes, like when Mike Miller and I took it up to Bird Peak. I think we gained most of our elevation driving. We just kept scraping through the alders. The old car took me and friends to countless peak bagging trips, hikes, icefield traverses, ski trips and ice climbs. It went to Kluane Lake four times for expeditions, once in winter. Last summer I accidentally broke the ignition key in half while in the St. Elias Range, worried for three weeks how I'd start it. James Larabee was aghast as I jammed the good half into the chamber and away we went, never needing to carry the key again.

People were always telling me they'd seen it at a trailhead or leave me messages under the wiper. It never liked Hatcher Pass, though, I lost two transmissions, several u-joints and a drive shaft on that road. Neil O'Donnell and I were quite shocked once to notice that the battery had bounced into the fan on a bump near the Motherlode. All the instruments went haywire. John Baker will remember how the engine screamed all way home from Hatcher one summer day.

It was only fitting, then, that Ice 9 met its fate on the way to check out a first ascent. Eklutna Lake Road was just a bit too icy for the old truck the other day, couldn't hold that corner well enough. I'll miss it I suppose, but Max and I were glad to walk away from that tree just the same.

Willy Hersman

