

the **SCREE**

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

February 2008

Volume 51 Number 2

**Truly it may be said that the outside of a mountain
is good for the inside of a man.**

~George Wherry

**Jackpot Bay
Blackburn Journal #2
Mount Freuchen POM**

**Monthly Meeting
Wed, February 20 @ 7:30
Program: Deb Ajango
Your first aid kit &
Frostbite prevention and treatment**

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

"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"

Join us for our club meetings the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9th and G Streets next to the Philips Building (you may use marked parking after hours)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at www.mcak.org

Cover photo: Cory Smith on 'Roll Of The Ice' in Jackpot Bay. Photo Tim Kelley

Article Submission: Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can also attach a word processing document to an email. Due to formatting problems please do not submit material in the body of an email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

Contents

Jackpot Bay

Blackburn Journal, #2 in a series

Mount Freuchen – Peak of the Month

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

February 9, Prudhoe Bay Rd to Peters Creek
Class C, 15 miles, 1,500 ft elevation gain,
Metal edge cross country skis and skins,
crampons, ice axe, avalanche gear, Contact
Tom Dolan at 223-1308 or
paradox@acsalaska.net

February 23-29, Resurrection Pass ski touring
Class C, Tele in American, Alfonsa and
Abernathy drainages. Elevation gain 2000'+,
distance 36 miles+ Enter and exit from Hope.
Sign up at the January 16 MCA meeting.

February 23, ski Bird Creek to Arctic Valley
Class C, 25 miles, 2,500 ft elevation gain,
Metal edge cross country skis and skins,
avalanche gear, Contact Tom Dolan at
223-1308 or paradox@acsalaska.net

March 1, Indian to Arctic / Arctic to Indian day ski
20 mile traverse, A classic backcountry ski in the
Chugach State Park. Ability and endurance are a
must, conditions may be tough. Touring gear

with metal edges, avy and survival gear and a
good attitude are required. Plan to stage cars at
both ends for carpooling. Weather dependant.
Stu Grenier, oinkmenow@hotmail.com

March 7-9 Bird to Arctic ski tour
Class D, elevation gain 2300'+, distance 26+
miles Sign up at the February 20 MCA meeting.

March 24-30, Bomber Traverse
Lane, snowbird, Bomber, Mint Huts. Class
Glacier, elevation gain 6,100'+, 23+ miles. Sign
up at the February 20 MCA meeting.

April 5-6, Eklutna Traverse training weekend
MANDATORY training weekend for Eklutna
traverse participants.

April 27-May 4, Eklutna Traverse
Pichler's, Hans' and Rosie's huts, Class Glacier,
Elevation gain 6000'+, distance 30+ miles. Sign
up at March 19 MCA meeting.

Annette's Corner

Thanks to Blaine Smith for his entertaining and informative
avalanche awareness presentation at the January meeting.

To learn more about the Alaska Avalanche School give them
a call at 907-564-8300.

Bears and Climbers Share a Jackpot

by Tim Kelley



Peak 3040, 'High Roller Mountain'

An apparition?! With just-awakened eyes clouded by dry contact lenses, I could not bring into focus the pure white, fuzzy, out-of-place object on the beach. I groped for my bottle of lens-wetting solution, squirted my eyes and blinkingly looked back out the boat window. Eventually the ghost on the beach took the shape of an animal. It was a mountain goat on the beach – a nanny with a recently born kid by her side.



Seeing mountain goats at sea level in Prince William Sound was a first for Cory Smith and me. As we readied for the day's climb, we watched momma and her kid walk around the southern end of Jackpot Bay and then head up a gully toward Jackpot Peak. We noticed that this nanny seemed very apprehensive while at the shoreline. The little kid seemed to have no care in the world. But mom was constantly looking around, listening and keeping the kid near her. Soon we would find out why she was acting this way.

About two minutes into our hike, we realized that if one is wanting for excitement – just go to a Prince William Sound pink salmon spawning stream in August. Signs of a wild party were abundant: beaten-down grass, partially-eaten fish scattered in the woods, bear trails everywhere splattered with runny black poop.

Like walking through the swinging doors of a cowboy bar, we parted bank-side grasses and stepped into the stream we had to cross. The stream was choked with spawning pink salmon. Humpies. Their backs sticking above the ripples, panicking schools whipped the stream to froth.

Getting back to the cowboy bar metaphor - we soon felt like two gay guys that just stepped into a cowboy bar. Not that I have had the experience of being gay or of being hassled by redneck homophobics, but my imagination conjured up this image as six pairs of black bear eyes burned holes in us. We were unwanted outsiders at this glutton fest.

Hollering like rodeo riders we bluffed our way through the bruins and started hiking up a bear highway into the forest. Soon we woke up another bear that was sleeping off a belly stuffed with fish. More hollering and the bear slowly lumbered into a patch of devil's club to let us by. Seven bears . . . and we'd only been hiking for 10 minutes.

Once past the bear zone we set a northwest bushwhacking course. We hoped that linking together hemlock and spruce stands with ubiquitous Prince William Sound bog terraces would get us to the alpine zone. We lucked out at the crux of the approach. Finding a narrow brushy rib that formed the side of a deep gully, we were able to scramble out of the brush and up into this area's cherished carpet of alpine tundra.

Under a warm morning sun in cloudless skies we hustled along the ridge towards our first destination of this 11th day of August 2007 - Peak 3040 (60.3596233° North, 148.3065477° West). Like many of the peaks in this part of Prince William Sound, you could tell that this peak and its neighboring sub-peak were once likely lava intrusion cores of undersea volcanoes.

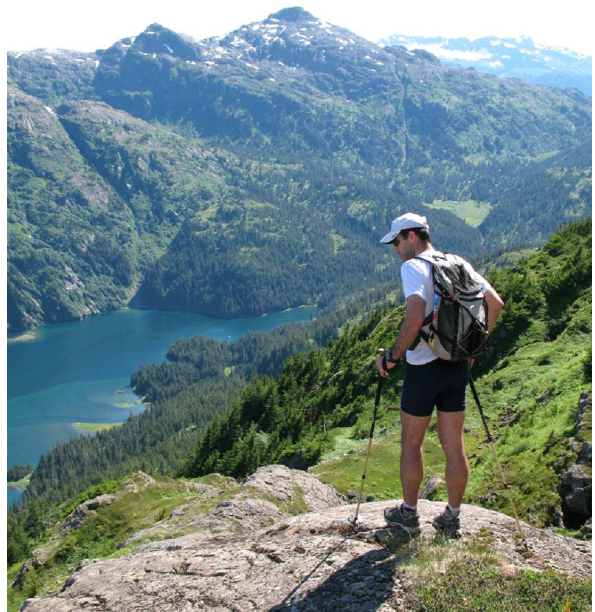
From a distance we assumed that it would be an easy scramble to the summit. But as we got closer our assessment changed. The final pitch to the summit had quite a bit of exposure, so we decided to pull out the climbing rope. Cory belayed me as I used slings around horns for pro. Near the top I set up a belay station and protected Cory's trip up the pitch. We hung out on top for a bit, taking in the views of splendor. No sign of previous visits were found, so we built a small cairn before rappelling down the way we came.

Backtracking our route on the approach ridge a ways, we choose a snowfield to descend to the west and began the chase after our next targets: Peak 2654 (60.3551350° North, 148.3266922° West) and Peak 3350 (60.3627338° North, 148.3452593° West).

Both of these peaks were non-technical scrambles. On Peak 3350 we only encountered a few sections of snow traversing. So this peak is in reality much different than the glacier-covered summit depicted on the USGS map.

What Peak 3350 did have was a remarkable view from the summit. Looking to the east, enchanted islands of western Price William Sound beckoned. To the south the iceberg-filled Nassau Fiord was impressive. But the jaw-dropper views were to the west and north. Here the massive Princeton Glacier spread out below us, with many sub-glaciers from the Sargent Icefield merging with it. And the always striking granite peaks of Deep Water Bay to the north were making their signature statements.

Retracing our route, and re-climbing Peak 2654, we headed back to Jackpot Bay. We got a good baking from the sun, especially on the long snowfield ascent back to the approach ridge. Descending the convoluted tundra benches and gullies to hit our lucky access point from the brush zone was tricky. Finally I pulled out the GPS to "cheat" and save us some navigation time. Lots of swinging off "anchors" of shrubs and alders got us into the forest and we worked a long bushwhack back to bear country.



Back in the bear zone we made sure to make LOTS of noise. Apparently the noise making might have worked as we didn't see any bears until we got to the cliffs above the salmon stream. The pungent smell of rotting pink salmon carcasses wafted up to us. From this vantage point we could see the party was still on. We watched and videoed a couple of black bears catching humpies in the shallow stream. There were so many fish available to the bears that they only would choose the freshest ones to eat.


As we approached the stream we shouted loudly to warn the blackies of our presence. But a black bear intent on fishing, with its head a few inches from rushing water, won't hear you until you are a few feet away. About the only thing that gets their attention is throwing sticks in the water next to them.

Clearing the stream we yelled our way through the forest until we hit the beach. To get to our raft and kayak, we had to climb over a few ledges that protruded across the beach into the water. Stepping around one ledge I looked up to see a female black bear with a mouth full of grass looking at me. This was bear number 10 for the day. By instinct I yelled at her and threw a stick in front of her. She gave me a hurt look that said, "What the heck! I'm just eating grass! Leave me alone, you asshole humans!" Then she spun around and scampered away. I stood there for a second and contemplated the message she had just sent me. I felt some embarrassment and said to myself, "You are so right mama bear. Humans are assholes."

No signs of previous ascents were found on these three peaks. In the Jackpot (gambling) theme of this area, we refer to Peak 3040 as High Roller Mountain, Peak 2654 as Double Down Peak (as we down-climbed peaks twice to climb this peak twice) and Peak 3350 as Roll of the Ice Peak, a play on "Roll of the Dice."

Blackburn Journal

by Wayne Todd



Editor's note: This is the second of a series of five articles that constitute a journal kept by Wayne Todd of an ascent of Mt. Blackburn by Billy Finley, Ben May, Carrie Wang and Wayne Todd from May 5th, 2005, through May 18th, 2005. The series is a direct transcription from the journal and no editing or corrections have been made to the original.

Recon Day 12 - 8:30PM 11.1-12.93K'

5/10/05 Ben wasn't feeling super spunky so Billy, Carrie & I headed up around noon. Weather had been breezy w/localized clouds so we dressed appropriately. ½ hr later we were stripping down under a calm sun.

Route was simple, working around & over large somewhat-filled crevasses until a circumferential overhanging crevasse ~12.6K'. Slopes were from 25-45° from near ice to rotten snow to powder.

At the circum I first tried up & left a short 60°+ sugar snow, then an overhang w/a picket & tool that blew out, then went R, reversed, & tried another overhang that w/ a picket, axe & hand carved foot placement managed to heave myself up. Carrie, then Billy got up using a step sling off the picket, & me pulling intently. All that took at least an hour. Fun but tiring.

Sun-baked views of Atna, Rime, lower Blackburn, Wrangell, Sanford, Jarvis expansive glacier-both broken & smooth.

At our high point of rounded slope a large house-size crevasse w/walk in might be a good camp/bivy site.

After food, fluid & more view absorption we headed off w/Billy leading. We descended more right to avoid the circum. Encountered it again so I went skiers r to a ramp w/1 ? crevasse crossing. A short traverse and back we were to our ascent route. & now knowing a better ascent.

After a few upper crevasse crossings we went to full rope length placing 1 picket on lesser angle slopes & 2 pickets on steeper. Billy & I swapped leads based upon running out of pickets. We were functioning as an efficient team w/voice commands and made reasonable time descending. Carrie & I & Billy used an axe & whippet during the day. Mostly pickets but 2 screws were used, the 3' pickets were a pain to carry (especially cleaning & down-climbing).

We had FRS radio contact w/Ben so he had hot water waiting for us.

Weather went squirrely for a bit late evening w/whiteout, snow, grapple, bit of wind (which had me concerned about ascent & descent route) but it broke a few hours later w/late light over cloudy Wrangell et al. Squirrely weather was preceded by precip clouds @ ~15K' and a prevalent light beam.

A flock of song birds sped west by us before the precip et al. Barometer made a high bump during that time too.

A very pleasurable mountaineering day of routefinding, overcoming obstacles, dealing w/altitude, sun, warmth, wall mural views & teamwork.

In bed 10:30ish.

SE evening winds ~15mph. Have definitely filled our tracks from yesterday. Mostly sunny all day



Rest Day

5/11/05 Up 9:30 ish, de-frosted the tent & clothing. Ate, drank, prepped for tomorrow. Blue-bird day. Discussed weather forecast (thanks again Cory), agenda & summit bid & plans for tomorrow.

We need to be descending Friday.

Billy rigged a sitter shitter w/3'horizontal pickets anchored by 2' vertical pickets.

Read Cat on the Scent most of the day. Quite farsighted up here, especially left eye.

Rest Day Two

5/12/05 Warm evening. Had strong enough winds all night that the tents flapped around. The going to bed early didn't work for anyone. I didn't sleep at all until the alarm sounded @3A. A quick group consensus from folks lack-of-sleep to questionable weather pushed the up-time to 5A. I got about an hour to 1 ½ sleep. We slowly arose & discussed, first deciding to ascend, then B&B thinking descend so we began packing to descend. After a double weather report by cell phone, recording & meteorologist, decided to hang out for the day and try ascending tomorrow. Mostly sunny day & warm until 5pm when it began snowing lightly.

Barometer has been odd last few days.~~u^ 5P
19.90

Much sleeping & reading during the day.
N 61°46.192 W143°27.519 elev ~11100



Peak of the Month: Mount Freuchen

by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Chugach Mountains

Borough: Unorganized Borough

Drainage: East Branch of the Columbia Glacier and Tazlina Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 61°22' 38" North, 146°36' 06 " West

Elevation: 6965 feet

Prominence: 815 feet from either Dorothita (7410) or Stegosaurus (7430)

Adjacent Peaks: Dorothita and Diplodocus Mountain (6820)

Distinctness: 815 feet from Dorothita

USGS Map: Valdez (B-7)

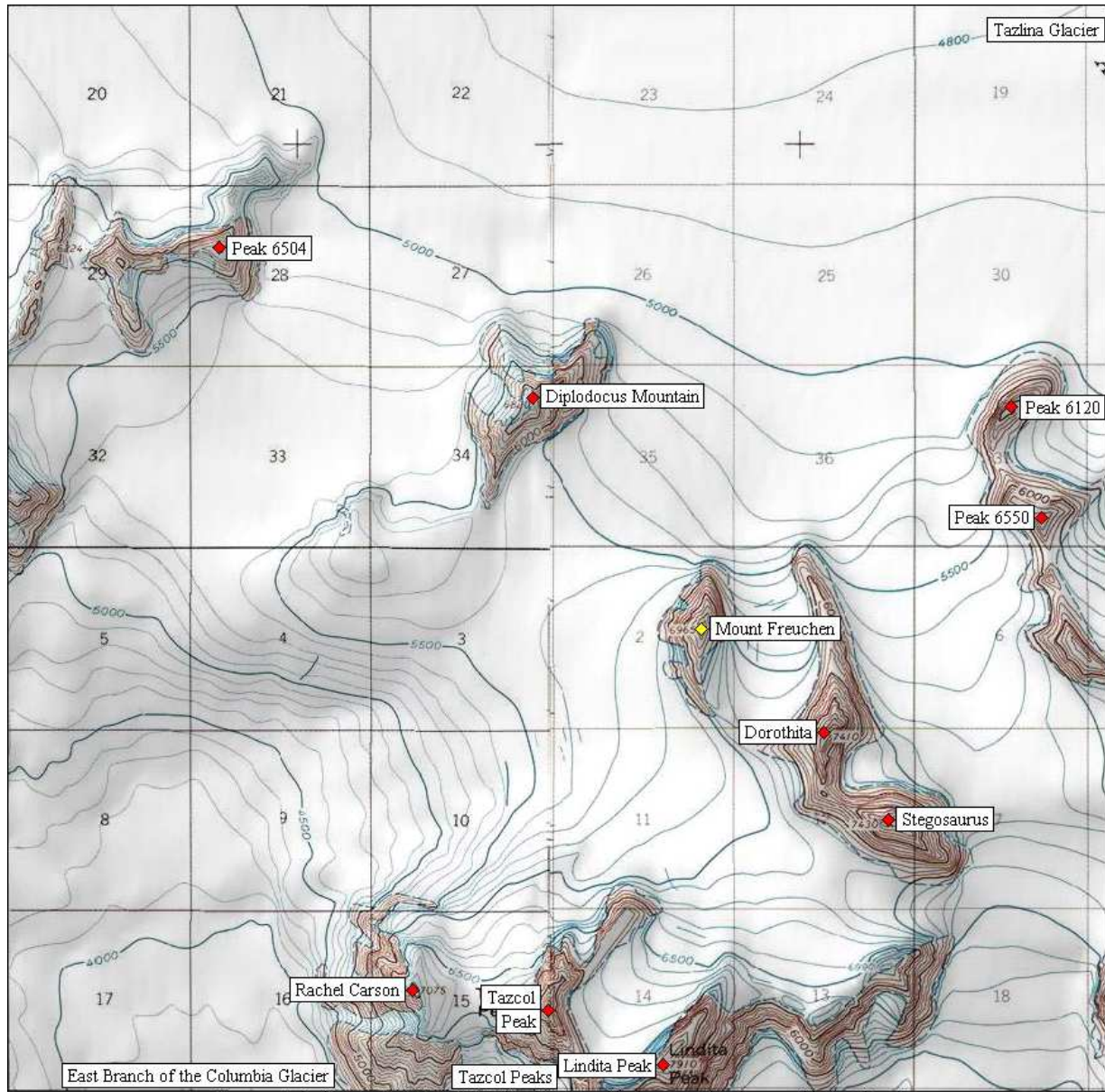
First Recorded Ascent: June 26, 1971, by Russell Batt, Gary James, Charles Marchand, and Lawrence Nielsen

Route of First Recorded Ascent: From a camp west of Diplodocus Mountain

Access Point: Upper Tazlina Glacier

Mount Freuchen was named by Lawrence Nielsen, most likely in honor of Lorenz Peter Elfred Freuchen (1886–1957), a Danish explorer of Greenland. From 1950 to 1977, Nielsen, a glaciologist, led several scientific expeditions to study glaciers in Alaska and, in the process, named many mountains, often with similar themes in a given area. These trips usually had a mountaineering component and his 1971 foray to the Tazlina Glacier was no exception. In late June and early July the 1971 party also climbed and named both Rachel

Carson (7075) southwest of Mount Freuchen and Scilina Peak (7240) to the northwest. West of Mount Freuchen, the team also summited Tazlina Tower (8325), which Nielsen had named in 1955. A brief report of the 1971 expedition appeared on page 108 of the 1972 *American Alpine Journal*. Accounts of Nielsen's subsequent climbs of Mount Freuchen appeared in the 1975 and 1978 *AAJs*.



Mount Freuchen

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Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

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 treasurer. The Post Office will not forward the newsletter.

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be submitted on the web at www.mcak.org or e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles should be received by the monthly club meeting (third Wednesday of the month) to be 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 'camera ready' and pre-paid.

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

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