

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

February 2016

Volume 59 Number 2



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Cumulus Mountain (5815) Attempt

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Monthly meeting: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 16.  
Kirsten Kremer will present on this past year's climbing adventures in South America. Bolivia, Peru and Patagonia will be the venues of alpine and ice climbing.

*"I see my path, but I don't know where it leads. Not knowing where I'm going is what inspires me to travel it."*

- Rosalia De Castro

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

[www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org)

**"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 meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16, at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, Alaska.

<http://www.alaskageology.org/graphics/meetingmap.gif>

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit

<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=members.form>.

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## Cover Photo

MCA members at the 3800-foot level of "Loch Ness Ridge" near Ram Valley while attempting Cumulus Mountain (5815). Participants in the photo are (foreground to background) Katelyn Stearns, Jared Purcell, Brian Aho, Gene Stoye, Patrick Nagel, Nicola De Stefani, Joel Immaraj, and Tony Lutes.

Photo by Richard Baranow

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**Article Submission:** Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 24th of each month to appear in the next issue of *the Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

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**Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, February 16, at 6:30 p.m.** Kirsten Kremer will present on this past year's climbing adventures in South America. Bolivia, Peru and Patagonia will be the venues of alpine and ice climbing.

## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

**February 20-28, 2016:** Seward to Hope backcountry ski tour (90 miles). Sign up at the February 16 MCA meeting. Trip leader Greg Bragiel.

**February 27-28, 2016:** Ice Climbing weekend at Eklutna Glacier. The MCA has booked the Serenity Falls Hut for the nights of Friday, February 26th, and Saturday, February 27th. All are welcome to come out and join the fun. Come to climb, fat bike, hike, ski tour, or just enjoy spending time at the hut. Bunks are first come, first served. Bring a tent and sleep outside if you like. You will need to arrange your own transportation (ski, hike, or bike) and bring your own gear. The hut is 12 miles from the trailhead. Orientation to the area will be provided. If you don't have a climbing partner, come anyway and we'll do our best to get you partnered up to climb. Send any questions to Cory Hinds at [chinds100@gmail.com](mailto:chinds100@gmail.com).

**April 3-10, 2016:** Eklutna Traverse ski mountaineering (31 miles) OR Bomber Traverse five huts ski tour (35 miles). Glacier Travel. We will go wherever the snow is. Trip leader Greg Bragiel. Participants must attend trip training March 26-27, 2016.

## Hut Closures

Mint Hut – The Mint Hut will be closed for maintenance June 3-5, 2016.

Bomber Hut – The Bomber Hut will be closed for maintenance June 6-8, 2016.

Online? Click me!



**Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.**



## ***Climbing Notes***

The MCA President continued the tradition of sleeping on the summit of Flattop Mountain on the winter solstice. Cory Hinds was rewarded with a spectacular "inverted cone" aurora to the east, easily visible despite the bright lights of the Anchorage bowl below.

Dan Evans emailed to report that while traversing Baranof Island from Silver Bay to Port Alexander in June, Eric Speck and he climbed Peak 1960 in the Betty Lake and Port Lucy drainages, Peak 2550 in the Little Branch Bay and Port Lucy drainages, Peak 3105 in the Davidof Lake and Great Arm drainages, and Mount Yanovski (3492).

Sam Zmolek emailed to report that on June 13 he climbed Lofty Mountain (2281) on Unalaska Island. On September 12 Cory Lescher, John Ryan, and he climbed Peak 2711 in the Humpback Bay and Portage Bay drainages on Unalaska Island; they called it Crumbly Mountain.

Ian McRae emailed to report that in May and June Leonard Lastine, David Panepinto, and he climbed Peak 2925 in the Pass Creek drainage of the Kigluaik Mountains; they called it Pass Creek Pyramid.

Ben Still emailed to report that on December 19 Jon Cannon and he climbed Peak 430 (meters) in the Peterson Creek and Slate Creek drainages of the Coast Mountains in Juneau; they called it Peterson Peak. Later that same day they climbed Peak 1345 (410 meters) in the Slate Creek and Eagle River. Ben also reported that on January 3 Mary Aparezuk, Mike Miller, Jill Still, and he climbed Peak 1545 in the Peterson Creek and Shrine Creek drainages of the Coast Mountains from the north side of the Tee Creek bridge; they dubbed it Tee Peak. They didn't notice any evidence of prior ascents, although the summits were covered in snow. On December 27, via the Spaulding Trail, Jill Still and he also skied up Treasury Hill (2008), which his mother Frances Still and a group of skiers had climbed in the 1990s.

Paul May emailed to report that on April 3 he climbed Peak 1110 in the Gravina River and Port Fidalgo drainages of the Chugach Mountains from the head of Port Fidalgo. On April 22 he climbed Billygoat Mountain (2231) in the Chugach Mountains from Fish Bay. On May 3 he climbed Peak 1600 in the Montague Strait drainage on Montague Island from an anchorage near Kidney Isle; his GPS receiver indicated that the summit elevation was 1640 feet. On August 14 he climbed Peak 1112 in the Boot Cove and South Bay drainages of Perry Island.

Hig Higman emailed to report that on September 13 Lituya Higman, Erin McKittrick, Katmai McKittrick, and he climbed Pakushin (3486) on Unalaska Island from Dutch Harbor.

We look forward to reading detailed reports of each of these climbs in future issues of *the Scree*.

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Thank you to Jay Ubben, Riley Ewen, and Dylan Van Rozeboom. On January 16, 2016, they hauled an outhouse urine-separating device and two vents for increased air ventilation to the Mint Hut. Photos by Jay Ubben

- Greg Bragiel



*The Mint Hut*

*Jay Ubben, Riley Ewen, and Dylan Van Rozeboom*

## Snow Tower, First Recorded Ascent

Text and photos by William Wacker

Snow Tower tops out at an elevation of 6572 feet and is unique in that it is a named peak on Alaska USGS maps and has significant promontory among a state stacked with summits rising out of low-lying elevations. The mountain's prominence ranks 61st among all USA peaks and 34th in the state of Alaska. More significantly, for Mike Miller and me, was that it appeared to be another interesting, unexplored mountain in the vast wilderness of Southeast Alaska.

On the afternoon of June 7th, Mike and I flew 40 miles east of Juneau with floatplane pilot Gary Thompson of Admiralty Air to Crescent Lake (174 feet). With a late-day start, we began a steep, forested climb through cliffs and tangled forests. As with many climbs in this region, the bush-whacking sections can make or break a climb. Bad terrain management can result in hours of wasted energy and emotional frustration. After negotiating a few no-fall zones, we successfully exited timberline and pitched a high camp around 2000 feet elevation. Armies of mosquitoes attacked as we set up camp and went to bed. The most unsettling part of the endeavor for me was that I still had not seen the mountain's summit, as cloud cover obscured the peak on the flight in, and we were too low on the mountain's shoulder at high camp to see anything but a rocky horizon swallowed in ice.

At 4:30 a.m., we left camp and climbed to a point where we could see the north face for the first time. Warm temperatures had melted out the face, rendering large bergschrunds and exfoliating rock buttresses. We decided to gamble and traverse around the base of the tower to the east aspect. To our relief we found a steep 1,500-foot snow slope that connected to the East Ridge. After four pitches of challenging, loose ridge climbing through two deep notches, we topped out on the summit around 4 p.m. on June 8th.

On the descent we spent another night at our high camp and descended the forest section the following day. As with many climbs, the descent proved to be more involved than the ascent. As we neared the lake, we wandered off our approach route and got sucked into a more direct descent into the lake. Although direct and only requiring one rappel, we found ourselves cliffed out at the lake's edge. Several sizable rock bluffs



*Northeast aspect of Snow Tower*



*Mike Miller points to Snow Tower's summit.*



*Mike Miller on the ascent.*





*Mike Miller descends the slushy snow.*



*Mike Miller crosses a crevasse.*

blocked our final quarter-mile exit to our resupply at the corner of the lake. To avoid climbing above and around the massive cliffs we opted to leave our gear, swim the edge of the lake and return with our packrafts on our planned paddle out of the lake and to the Whiting River.

Following a cold and strenuous swim to base camp Mike and I arrived, barefooted and soaked, to a camp devoid of our exit supplies. The intoxication of our successful climb on Snow Tower soon gave way to the realization that our possessions had been ravaged and dragged into a nearby swamp by another animal that was living by its own means of survival. Exhausted and demoralized, we waded through the shallow water of floating sticks and pine needles to find a flotsam of perforated items suspended on the water's surface. Two nights on the mountain and 28 hours of climbing culminated in a pragmatic inventory of our items floating about a stagnant swamp. Both of us were aware, as we looked over our shoulders, that the animal might still be nearby. A chewed can of pepper spray was found floating in the debris. Soon after, our eyes began to burn.

One saving grace was that one packraft was found intact and we still had our satellite phone, which I brought on the climb. The bear cans filled with extra food also survived a massive chewing. Our plans to float to the ocean were out of the question as Mike's packraft was ripped beyond field repair. I retrieved our climbing gear along the lake's edge and we sat-phoned Gary for a pickup.

As we waited an afternoon storm moved in. The lake became agitated and darkened into a deep, black green. The wind began to build and whitecaps sent waves of spray into the forest edge.

Along the edge of the lake, we rested as the water droplets blasted the thin walls of the tent. Through the small opening near the shelter's entrance, it was possible to see the intermittent flashes of lightning arcing above a dense forest and traversing the hanging fields of snow and blue ice until finally a delayed boom echoed from the distant rock towers of the Stikine.

Sometimes it feels as if anything might happen. Lightning might strike you, that bear might come back, your pilot might not make it in to get you. When you finally relax during a brief moment of pause and vulnerability, the magnitude of what you have done finally sets in. You see that you could have fallen during the climb. Avalanche, rockfall, and any number of disasters could have landed on you. Yet still you are here.

Sometimes adventure shows us what a gift it is to be alive.

To view Mike Miller's interesting video of Snow Tower's first ascent, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvUqKoGxGms>.



*Mike Miller near the notch between the false summit and the true summit.*



*Mike Miller nears the summit.*



## Cumulus Mountain (5815) Attempt – January 22, 2016

Text by Richard Baranow



*Left to right, standing: Gene Stoye, Andy Rampp, Nicola De Stefani, Shaun Sexton, Bernadette Martel, Chris Tomsen, Jared Parcell, Tony Lutes, and Joel Immaraj. Left to right, kneeling: Patrick Nagel, Brian Aho, Richard Baranow, and Katelyn Stearns.*

*Photo by Hunter Brooks*

On the cool 23-degree winter morning of Friday, January 22, 14 hardy MCA members met at the home of Richard Baranow near the end of Eagle River Road and made final preparations for their planned day adventure of ascending Cumulus Mountain. After hiking up 2,700 feet from the valley floor to the second notch along "Loch Ness Ridge," with the aid of micro-spike

crampons and snowshoes, the group gathered in the late morning sun to reassess the plan. Three members decided to split off and briefly tour the Ram Valley area before heading back down. The remaining 11 snowshoed up to the 3900-foot level of the northwest ridge of Cumulus Mountain under deteriorating weather. Here, at the first significant rock step along the ridge-



*The Cumulus Mountain massif with the summit the dark outcrop at left. The group's highpoint was to the shoulder of the plateau on the right skyline.*

*Photo by Richard Baranow*



*Looking down "Loch Ness Ridge" with Mount Significant in the center skyline. Hikers (right to left): Bernadette Martel, Katelyn Stearns, Jared Purcell, Andy Rampp, Patrick Nagel, Brian Aho, and Gene Stoye.*

*Photo by Richard Baranow*





*Jared Purcell topping out on the "First Step" along "Loch Ness Ridge" while other party members wait below.*

*Photo by Richard Baranow*

line, two members decided to turn back, not feeling comfortable with the approaching difficulties. The remaining nine roped up for the short, exposed scramble and then continued unroped up to the 5000-foot level along the rocky, gendarmed ridge. Here, with the weather looking a bit formidable, and the daylight fading, the group decided to forego a continued attempt on the summit; still two miles and 815 feet vertical ahead. Instead, the group donned headlamps and descended down into the Little Korohusk drainage to the end of Cumulus Drive. From here in the valley floor, it was a short 1.5-mile hike to Richard's cabin where pizza, snacks, and hydration materials were awaiting. Fluid-and-carbohydrate-replacement therapy was successful. Thanks to Bernadette Martel, Tony Lutes, Brian Aho and new member Nicola De Stefani for co-leading and assisting the trip. A special kudos to Tony for helping Joel Immaraj down from his high point at the first rock step ... a boundary-pushing effort for them both. Thanks also to Chris Tomsen for the tasty snacks and Joel Immaraj for the three Papa John's pizzas awaiting the remaining nine climbers after their return at 10:30 p.m. It was actually still a little warm ... thanks, Joel! Participants included: Richard Baranow (leader), Bernadette Martel (Co-Leader), Tony Lutes (Assistant Leader), Brian Aho (Assistant Leader), Nicola De Stefani (Assistant Leader), Jared Purcell, Andy Rampp, Gene Stoye, Shaun Sexton, Katelyn Stearns, Patrick Nagel, Joel Immaraj, Chris Tomsen, and Hunter Brooks.

*The team pauses for a group photo before heading out. Hikers include (left to right, standing): Hunter Brooks, Patrick Nagel, Chris Tomsen, Gene Stoye, Katelyn Stearns, Bernadette Martel, Nicola De Stefani, Shaun Sexton, and Joel Immaraj; (left to right, kneeling) Brian Aho, Jared Purcell, and Andy Rampp.*

*Photo by Richard Baranow*



*Trip participants negotiate the gendarmed northwest ridge of Cumulus Mountain.*

*Photo by Richard Baranow*



*Brian Aho leads the pack while approaching the "Second Step" along "Loch Ness Ridge."*

*Photo by Richard Baranow*





## Late Spring Skiing on the Triumvirate Glacier

Text by Timm Nawrocki

We had a humble budget for our flight to the Tordrillo Mountains. I said to our pilot, “I can give you an old boot and a donkey. How far will that get us into the Tordrillos?” The answer: The Triumvirate Glacier. So my brother (Jeff Nawrocki), childhood friend (Tim Barber), and I landed a sweet skiing spot for eight days. (Here is where I really have to thank Sportsman’s Air Service, which is very experienced at dropping skiers all over the Tordrillos and seem to have the lay of the mountains mapped out in their minds! They made our trip happen. ‘Nuff said.) The Tordrillos are just another of Anchorage’s backyard mountains: the ones that are on the other side of the fence, but still just a hop, skitch, and a punch away. In early May 2015, our pilot parked Jeff, Tim, and me beneath a steep and prominent north face, and we set up our luxury dome.



*Jeff Nawrocki at the landing site on the upper Triumvirate Glacier below the north face that we spent five days skiing.*

*Photo by Timm Nawrocki*

accessible terrain, and worrying that we were going to run out of Snickers. We completely lucked out with the snowpack. Plenty of heavy sloughage skiing down 50 to 55 degrees, but never any warning signs of snowpack instability. We had the green light. The only thing preventing us from skiing steeper than 55 degrees was trying to boot a way up through the powder. Well actually, I get nervous skiing steeper than 55 degrees! What



*My dog approves of our Arctic Oven.*

*Photo by Timm Nawrocki*

We toured up the glacier that night, checking snow stability and assessing the coverage of crevasses. A pit revealed nothing but one consistent snow layer down to 6 feet. What most remember as a bad year for snow was fat and stable in the Tordrillos. Of course, it helped that our base camp was at 5200 feet. Only south-, east-, and west-facing slopes had been sloughing in the May sun. Beautiful powder still clung onto the north faces.

The next days were a blur of skiing a steep chute or face each morning, lounging in the midday sun, afternoon laps on more



*Jeff Nawrocki descends back to the head of the glacier the evening of our first day.*

*Photo by Timm Nawrocki*



measures at 55 degrees feels to me like it should be 70 degrees when going down it. Ascension plates would have been pretty handy, though, because the super-steep terrain was there and the snow was ripe for it.

Beautiful clear skies graced our first three days. Good visibility allowed us to get comfortable with the terrain. Another two days of cloud cover and flat light followed: skiable but more challenging. We knew where the hazards were by that time. A bergschrund wrapped the base of most of our routes, but even in flat light we could generally make out where it was.

Then the weather changed. We spent the next two days in a complete whiteout. I got up about every hour of the day to see if we could ski, but the low clouds and snow held steady. We stayed in the tent listening to audiobooks. Fortunately, two days in a mega-tent with audiobooks and loads of food is not really much in the way of a hardship. On our last day, the skies cleared again, but the lower glacier was still socked in. We didn't want to be out skiing when the weather broke and the plane arrived. So we spent our last day lounging in one of the most beautiful places I've ever been.



*Timm Nawrocki takes a rest while breaking the boot path.*  
*Photo by Jeff Nawrocki*



*Glacier ghosts: the effect of an artfully fogged up lens. Pictured are Jeff Nawrocki (left) and Tim Barber.*  
*Photo by Timm Nawrocki*



*Tim Barber surfs off the ridge on one of our mellow afternoon runs.*  
*Photo by Timm Nawrocki*

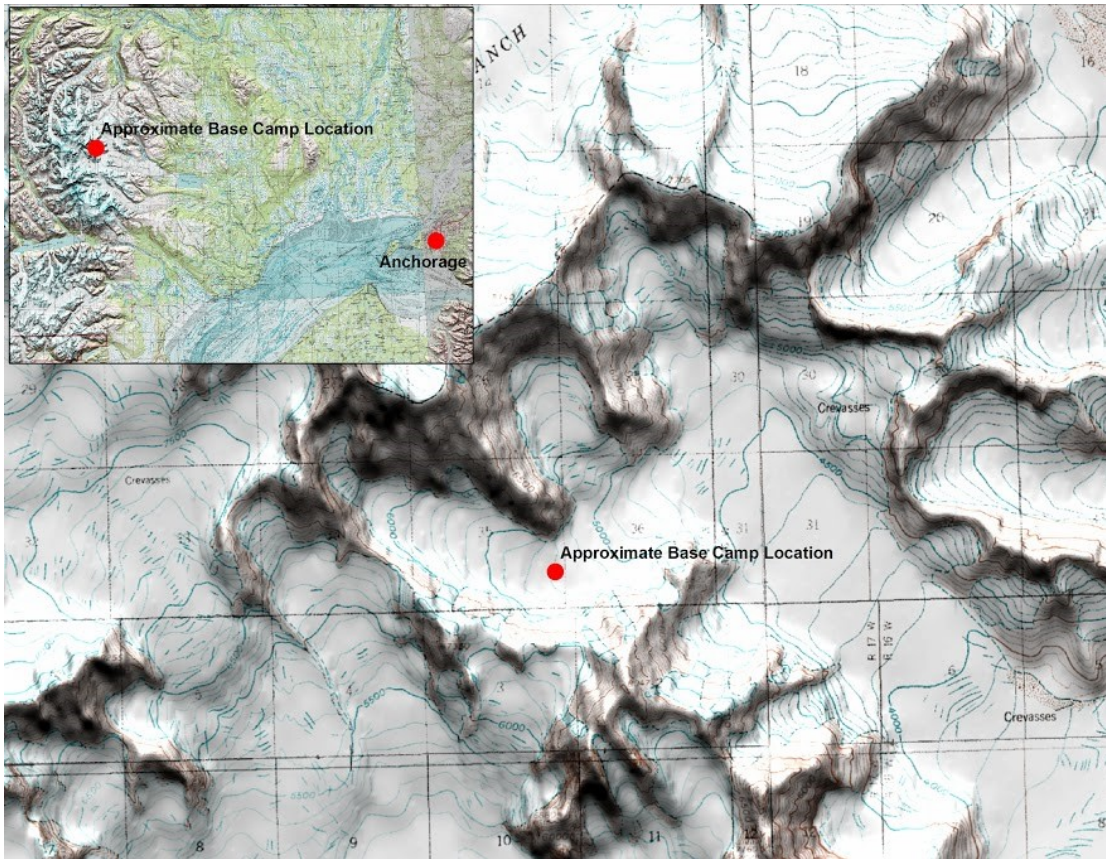


*Timm Nawrocki jumps the bergschrund in flat light.*  
*Photo by Tim Barber*

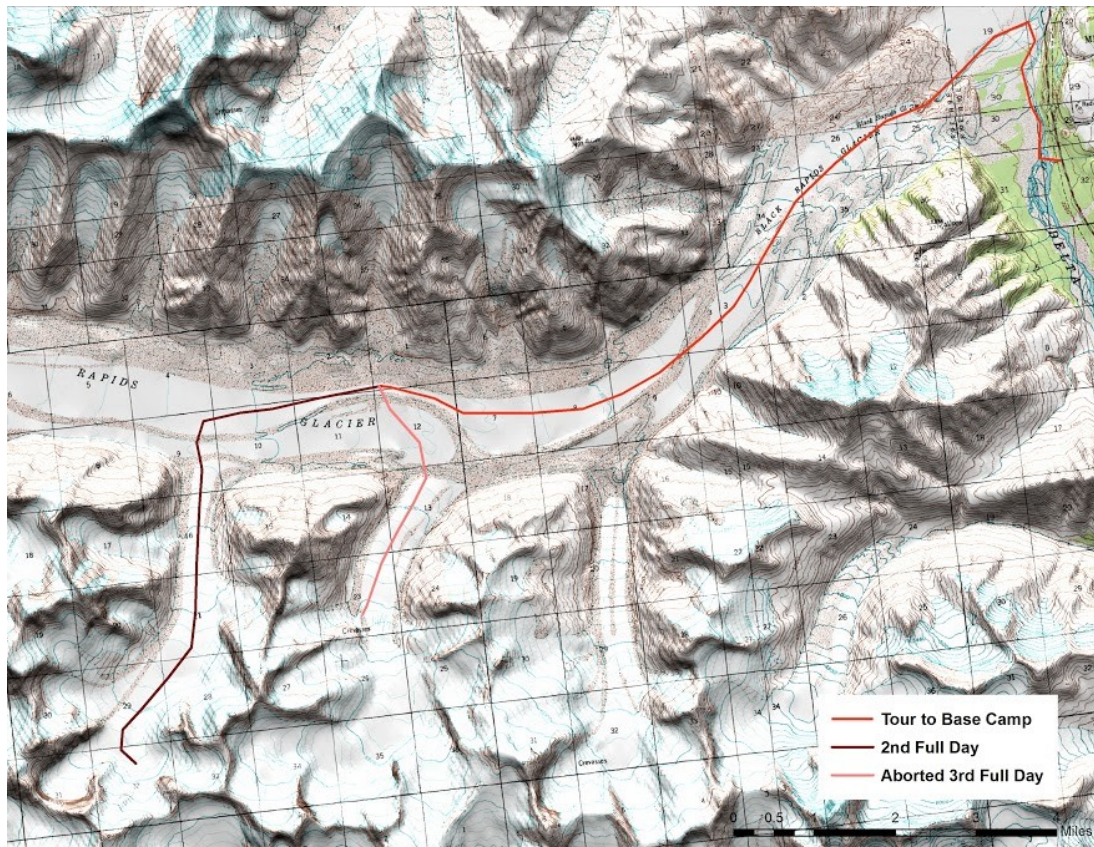


*These guys are good! Sportsman's Air Service got us onto the glacier and back off without a hitch. I really appreciated the effort they put in to make our trip work.*  
*Photo by Timm Nawrocki*





*Triumvirate Glacier*



*Black Rapids Glacier*



## Putzing around on the Black Rapids Glacier

Text and photos by Timm Nawrocki



*View looking down from the landslide section of the Black Rapids Glacier.*

The Black Rapids Glacier is easily accessible from the Richardson Highway, but it's a little more mysterious than either the Canwell or Castner Glaciers. It is visible from the road, but only barely. It turns a corner and winds out of sight. I grabbed my friend Kaj Lynøe, who is in Alaska for a year from Sweden, on short notice for a trip to tour around on the Black Rapids Glacier over New Year's. With no particular goals in mind, we left for six days of exploration, although the long drive times really cut the trip to four full days.

We arrived at sunset and proceeded to approach the glacier in the dark. Through a route-finding blunder we spent several hours bushwhacking through early-successional poplar, willow, and alder. No trip would be complete without some of that. Then we found our way onto the main outflow stream. In winter, the Black Rapids area is highly wind-scoured. The wind revealed an interesting se-



*Kaj Lynøe skis through rain puddles on the lower Black Rapids Glacier.*



*Kaj Lynøe sets camp near the second branch of the Black Rapids Glacier.*

ries of smooth, frozen lakes on the toe of the glacier. We set camp on one of these. In the middle of the night I heard the pineapple express roll in: rain!

The forecast had called for cooling temperatures, and I was hopeful that the precipitation would turn to snow by mid-morning. At 10 a.m., though, we finally broke camp and spent a wet day skiing over a scramble of rock and ice. My skins got soaked since I hadn't waxed them in a long while. So once we hit snowline, they decided I would take as much snow with me as possible. Evaporating out my skins over my camp stove that night, I managed to melt them and invent the amazing, new, two-way grip skin!

Our second full day started out cloudy and dark, but those clouds soon rolled out to reveal the beautiful peaks that surround the upper sections of the glacier. My favorite part of skiing around solstice is the long twilight of

midday that makes for colorful mountaintops. Kaj and I skied to the upper section of the third branch of the glacier where we soaked in views of the peaks while my dog Loki finished off a pound of salami. My dog wore his glacier travel harness and dog-specific avalanche beacon, which transmits on a different frequency from standard beacons (thanks, Pieps!).



*Timm Nawrocki takes in the views on the upper section of the third branch of the Black Rapids Glacier. My dog is modeling his gear.*

*Photo by Kaj Lynöe*

I thought the same pattern of beautiful weather was in store for us on the third day. And I was right! The end. Actually, no. Clouds lingered overhead in the morning. Then, with the arrival of light, the clouds started to clear away, until a half hour later strong winds began to whip them back. Kaj and I were touring up another branch of the glacier, but the low visibility and flying snow forced us to turn around before we made it very far. Fortunately, I keep a good stock of audiobooks for extra time in the tent.



*I'm starting to lose sight of Kaj Lynöe ... maybe we should head back.*

The last full day we traveled back down the glacier to timberline. More winding through rock and ice on the lower glacier. What would have been a straightforward day was made very interesting when we stumbled upon the most beautiful ice cave I've been in. The walls and ceiling were carved in smooth



*Loki ready to explore the ice caverns.*



*Looking back toward the entrance.*

scoops. Just enough light shown through thin ice walls to illuminate sections of the interior in deep blue.

We made it down to the trees just as the sun set. Kaj whipped up some Swedish pancakes with bacon over the campfire, and lingonberry jam topped it off. I'm glad he lugged that frying pan around the whole time. Not a bad way to finish off a trip.

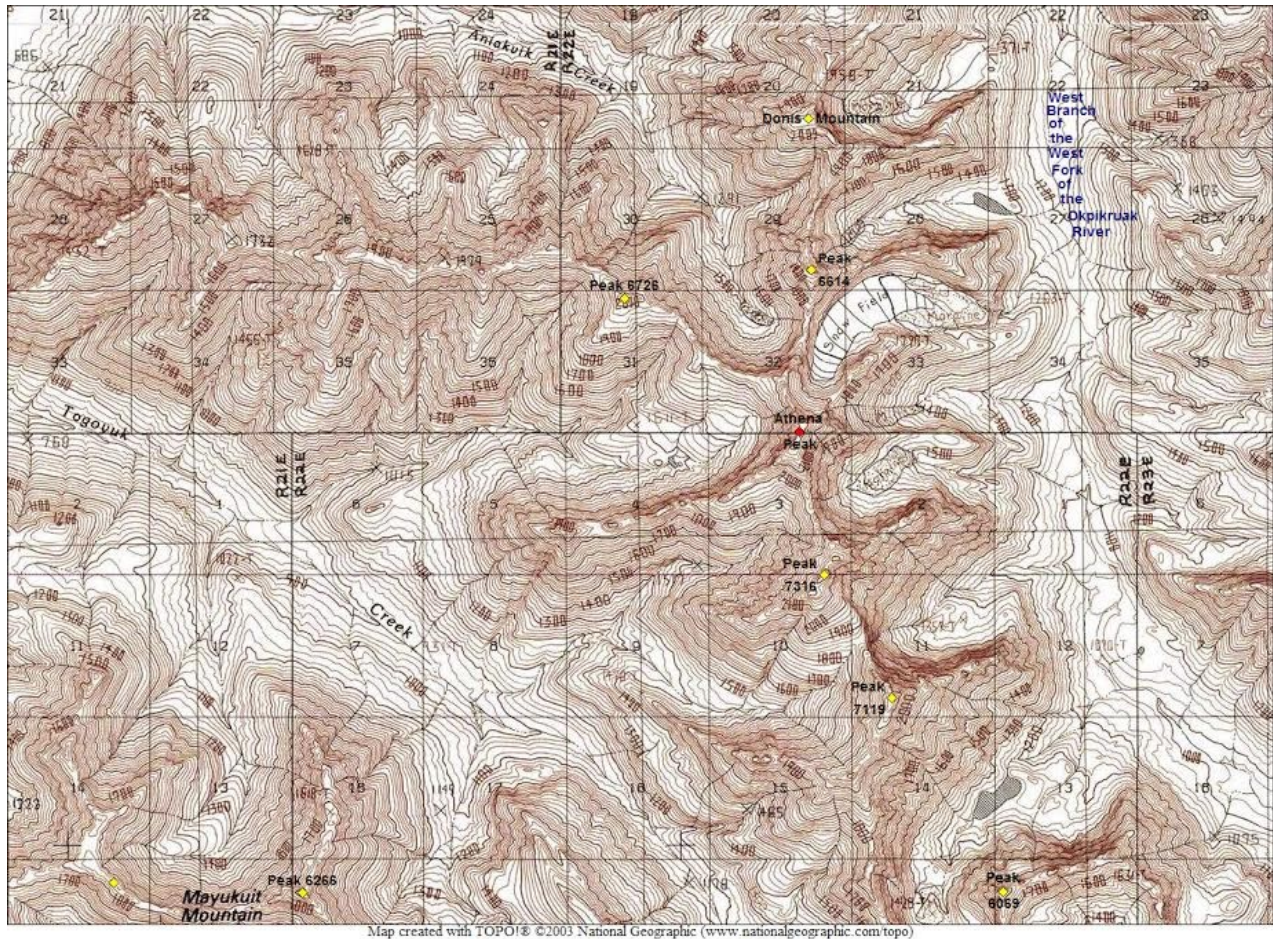


*It needs more butter...*



# Peak of the Month: Athena Peak

Text by Steve Gruhn



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

**Mountain Range:** Brooks Range; Endicott Mountains

**Borough:** North Slope Borough

**Drainages:** Suluak Creek, Togoyuk Creek, and West Branch of the West Fork of the Okpikruak River

**Latitude/Longitude:** 68° 12' 29" North, 153° 48' 13" West

**Elevation:** 2230 ± 10 meters (7316 feet ± 33 feet)

**Prominence:** Either 3,173 feet from Kugukpak Peak (7382) or 703 feet from Peak 7316 in the Suluak Creek and Togoyuk Creek drainages, depending upon whether Athena Peak is higher than Peak 7316

**Adjacent Peaks:** Peak 7316, Peak 6726 in the Aniakvik Creek and Togoyuk Creek drainages, and Peak 6614 in the Aniakvik Creek and West Branch of the West Fork of the Okpikruak River drainages

**Distinctness:** 703 feet from Peak 7316

**USGS Maps:** Killik River (A-2)

**First Recorded Ascent:** This peak might be unclimbed.

**Access Point:** 1700-foot level of the Killik River's right bank

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Athena Peak is the northern of a pair of twin summits, with the southern twin being Peak 7316 in the Suluak Creek and Togoyuk Creek drainages. Located near the northern edge of Gates of the Arctic National Park, Athena Peak, if it's higher than Peak 7316, is the 44th most prominent peak in the Brooks Range and 15th most prominent peak in the Endicott Mountains.

Having such a large prominence, it captured the attention of the folks at Bivouac.com, who named the peak after the ocean liner *Athena*, which was built in Sweden in 1948 and originally named the *Stockholm*. After the *Stockholm* collided with the *Andrea Doria* on July 25, 1956, the *Stockholm* underwent extensive repairs and was sold to East Germany and renamed the *Völkerfreundschaft* in 1960. In 1985 after the ship was sold



to a Panamanian company, the name was shortened to the *Volker*. Later the ship was used as a barracks ship in Oslo and renamed the *Fridtjof Nansen*. In 1989 the ship was sold to Italian interests, rebuilt from the waterline up, and renamed the *Italia I*. In 1995 the vessel was renamed the *Italia Prima*. Still later, the ship was renamed the *Valtur Prima*. In 2002 the vessel was acquired by the Festival Cruise Line and renamed the *Caribe*. In 2005 the ocean liner was registered in Portugal, flagged out of Cyprus operating for Classic International Cruises, and renamed the *Athena*. On December 3, 2008, the *Athena* was attacked by pirates in the Gulf of Aden, but the U.S. Navy intervened and prevented the ship from being boarded or damaged. With the retirement of the *Doulos Phos* in 2010, the *Athena* became the world's oldest active oceangoing passenger ship. In 2013 the *Athena* was purchased by a Portuguese company and renamed the *Azores*. In 2015 the ship was renamed the *Astoria*.

On May 30, 2010, a Brooks Range Aviation pilot flew Erik Peterson and Doug Piehl in a Helio Courier from Bettles to a gravel bar at an elevation of about 1700 feet on the Killik River, about a mile and a half downstream of Nigaktoviakvik Creek. Upon landing, Peterson and Piehl headed south, upriver, for a couple miles toward Aniakvik Creek, where they established a base camp at about 4700 feet near its headwaters the next day. On June 1, after a dusting of snow, the team set out in the fog to attempt the northwest ridge of Athena Peak. After encountering mostly 3rd-class climbing up to about 6500 feet, they reached a cornice in a col about 20 feet long. A 35- to 40-foot high wall

stood immediately beyond the cornice. Although the team could see that the slope laid back above the wall, the fog prevented them from seeing what lay above. The poor visibility and the rain- and snow-slickened rock prompted their decision to retreat, leaving the summit unvisited.

Peterson and Piehl climbed Donis Mountain (6857) and Kugukpak Peak (7382) on June 3 before Peterson's sprained ankle put an end to the climbing for the remainder of that trip. Nearly three weeks after they landed, they were flown back to Bettles. Peterson described the rock in the area of Athena Peak and Peak 7316 as mostly crumbly sedimentary rock with pockets of stable rock that was good for climbing. He suggested that Athena Peak could offer some exciting climbing opportunities.

To my knowledge, the summit of Athena Peak has not yet been touched by humans. You could be the first to do so.

The information for this article came from Peakbagger.com's list of Brooks Range peaks with 3000 feet of prominence (<http://peakbagger.com/list.aspx?lid=41304>); from Bivouac.com (<http://bivouac.com/MtnPg.asp?MtnId=36117> and <http://bivouac.com/MtnPg.asp?MtnId=36115>); from Peterson's article titled "First Ascents in the Brooks Range," which appeared in the September 2010 *Scree*; from Peterson's report titled "Peak 2,240m, first ascent and exploration," which appeared on pages 106 and 107 of the 2011 *America Alpine Journal*; from Wikipedia's page on the MV *Azores*; and from my correspondence with Piehl.



Northeast aspects of Athena Peak (right) and Peak 7316.

Photo by Erik Peterson



## MCA Board Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Attendees: Jennifer Duford, Cory Hinds, Max Neale, Nathan Hebda, Stephen Austria, Aaron Gallagher.

### 1. **VP-Programs (Galen Flint)**

- a. January: Max presents on Cassin Ridge on Denali.

### 2. **Treasurer's report**

- a. The proposed budget was in *the Scree* for December and was also in the January *Scree*. Members will vote for the budget at the January general meeting.

### 3. **Secretary's report**

- a. We discussed the member survey and are going to begin to address its results and suggestions with these:
  - i. Huts are one of the most important things for members and several people suggested having a fundraiser for them. Thus, we'll have a big fundraiser for huts event in the fall! Aaron, Max, Jennifer, and Galen will organize it.
  - ii. People felt the club could be more welcoming to new members. Thus, we will send each new member an email that orients them to the club, possibly survey each new member to learn about what they're interested in, Board members will greet new members at meetings, and we'll have quarterly events geared toward new members. Max will write the welcome email. Ed Smith will help to organize the trips.
  - iii. Cory and Galen will put together a one hour-ish presentation on the MCA huts. It will include their locations, winter and summer accesses, photos, stories, nearby peaks, climbing routes, ski runs, etc. We'll also make a document that summarizes the information and is sent to all new members.

### 4. **Huts (Cory):**

- a. Department of Natural Resources leases for Bomber and Mint Huts were updated for another 10 years.
- b. Lease for our old Bock's Den (Matanuska Glacier) was officially closed (after tearing it down in 2009).
- c. Need to submit new lease application/development plan for the Dnigi Hut replacement
- d. New Hut: next step is getting materials list (awaiting support from Stan Olsen/Dave Staeheli), then pricing for materials and helicopter.

- e. Maintenance items need to get to Mint Hut – Greg Bragiel will announce this at the general meeting. Greg has some help lined up for maintenance this summer (installing vents, etc.)
- f. New stove and lantern globe delivered to Bomber Hut via snowmachine volunteer (thank you to Derek)

### 5. **Training (Jayme Mack, Josh Clark):** Update on Winter Basic Mountaineering Courses: she plans to line up a selection of courses with combination of volunteer and paid instruction.

- a. Level 1 Avalanche course, March 5-7 at Hatcher Pass.
- b. Crevasse Rescue – date to be determined. Schedule and sign-up.
- c. Snow climbing with Dave Staeheli, April 9 at Flattop Mountain. Nathan will arrange a sign-up form and announce it at the next meeting.

### 6. **Hiking and Climbing**

- a. Ed Smith is generating a list of trips. Board members will be asked to make calls to members.
- b. Richard Baranow will lead a winter ascent of Cumulus Mountain on January 22.
- c. Meetup group – 32 people interested in snowshoe crossing of the Eklutna Traverse. Shaun Sexton will discuss further with Cory.

### 7. **Mentoring**

- a. Board members will also ask for mentors when they call members to request leadership on trips. Max will ask Rachad Rayess if he can be at the next meeting to give an update on the program and to have him send protocols/overview to new board.

### 8. **Library (Cory)** No Activity

### 9. **Equipment (Josh)** No Activity

### 10. **Parks Advisory (Cory)** No Activity

### 11. **Old Business:** We will not make *the Scree* revenue neutral — not make any changes to the price of the printed version. Aaron will look into how much money the MCA loses by offering the printed version.

### 12. **Next meeting:** January 19, 6:30 p.m., BP Energy Center

### 13. **Next Board meeting:** Monday, February 8, 6 p.m., REI classroom

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Cory Hinds	229-6809	Board member (term expires in 2016)	Jamye Mack	382-0212
Vice-President	Galen Flint	650-207-0810	Board member (term expires in 2016)	Carlene Van Tol	748-5270
Secretary	Max Neale	207-712-1355	Board member (term expires in 2017)	Nathan Hebda	310-3255
Treasurer	Aaron Gallagher	250-9555	Board member (term expires in 2017)	Stephen Austria	402-540-7037
			Board member (term expires in 2016)	Jennifer DuFord	227-6995

Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$25

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 Membership Committee at [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org).

*The Scree* is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 24th of the month to appear 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 in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to [vicepresident@mtnclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org).

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

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Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 or [huts@mtnclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtnclubak.org)

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