

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

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MEETING, MONDAY, APRIL 3

The MCA will meet on Monday, April 3rd at the Willow Park Recreation Hall. Because voting on the change of meeting day has been close (19 for Tuesday; 13 for Monday), it seems advisable to wait and count all ballots.

The program for April 3rd will be centered on the proposed Club outing over the Chilkoot Pass. Robert Knox, Managing Editor of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, has made two trips over the Chilkoot Pass. In reply to a request for information regarding his trips, Mr. Knox sent the following brief news story: "Ten youths from the state's conservation camp and school at Wasilla will clear a tourist hiking path along the Chilkoot trail near Skagway this summer".

CLIMBING SCHEDULE:

Ganett-Gilbert: April 14 thru 18. Paul Cross, leading. This trip will be limited to six because of transportation problems and the size of the tent. The group will be flown in to Lake George and start climbing from there. Those going are: Bob Bailey, Don Fell, Erik Barnes, Helga Sading and Dr. Red Wilson.

The Mountain Behind Portage Lake: April 15-16. Johnny Johnston, leading. (DI-160) Since there is no road, this will be a two day trip.

GOOD LUCK to Bob Goodwin, Jon Carday, Bob Bailey, Steve Foss, Chuck Metzger and Norm Pichler for their try at Iliamna on March 31st and following needed days.

ON ROPING: the following is taken from the book, Mountaineering, The Freedom of the Hills, and was selected by Johnny Johnston:

"When to Rope

When difficulty is combined with exposure roping is mandatory for everyone; when the climbing is easy, experienced and able climbers may travel for short distances unroped despite the exposure. However, judgment must always lean in the direction of caution; roping is not a mark of inexperience or incompetence - rather the exact reverse. Moreover, the party should always rope in advance of need instead of waiting until everyone is clinging precariously to the mountain. Furthermore, a request for the rope by any one member is binding, without argument, on the entire team."

ARG BENEFIT:

On Friday, April 21st at 8 p.m. in the A.J. Wondler Jr. High School multi-purpose room, the Alaska Rescue Group will show John D. Graham's film, Highest Africa. Graham has climbed the 16 highest peaks in Africa including Kilimanjaro in Tanganyika, Mt. Kenya in Kenya and the Ruwenzori Peaks, also known as the Mountains of the Moon, in Uganda. He was and will be accompanied by the Zermatt guide, Felix Julen, and the photographer, Dolf Reist, who was a member of the Swiss Everest Expedition of '56 and who reached the summit. The ARG especially would like the help of the MCA in selling tickets at \$1.00 per person to friends and acquaintances. It goes without saying that MCA members will find the movie worth attending.

John Graham, Felix Julen, and Dolf Reist with Dick Stenmark from McKinley Park will attempt McKinley over the West Buttress in late April - early May.

ELGER ASCENT:

On March 12th 4 climbers from Germany and Austria (Toni Hiebeler, Andreas Mannhardt, Anton Schneider and Walter Almerger) completed the first winter ascent of the north face of the Elger (13,033 ft). It took 7 days in 5 degree above temperatures. Sports Illustrated for March 27, 1961 has a story of this climb by the leader, Toni Hiebeler. It is entitled "That's Why We Are Her." and is to be found on page 35.

LAKE GEORGE TRAIL:

Building a hiking trail to Alaska's unique 'self-dumping' Lake George is a project that the Youth Conservation Camp near Wasilla will begin next summer according to plans of the Youth Conservation Camp near Wasilla.

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outlined by Charles M. Pfeiffer, director of the Division of Youth and Adult Authority. Plans for the trail-building project call for shelters along the way and a look-out station at the lake where visitors may watch the yearly phenomenon. The trail is to start from the Palmer highway about 20 miles from Wasilla and will follow a ridge to Lake George which is approximately 35 miles southeast of Palmer. From Lake George the trail will circle back along the river, making it about a 35 or 40-mile round trip through scenic country."

From: Alaska's Health and Welfare, April 1961

SUICIDE ATTEMPT : *O. Ptarmigan* March 4 and 5, 1961 by Helga Bading
4950 ± 50

Chugach rock is very crumbly indeed and if it's coated with solid ice ... well! While you chip every hold with your ice axe, you wish you had crampons, too, so that you won't commence the downhill journey still facing uphill.

Delicately balanced a lofty 500 ft. above the valley floor were six climbers. But they weren't a unit. A definite rift had occurred between those who thought they were climbing Suicide and those who believed they were committing it. Unmoved by the uproar behind him Paul continued to chop his way up the icy crags until there seemed to be an unusually long halt. We stood in the cold snow, which was anchored loosely on its icy base, and could see only Howard, last on Paul's rope. Suddenly his worried face broke into a broad smile. "He's stuck, we're turning back", he said. And so it was.

An hour later, just as daylight faded, we plowed toward "home", two tents pitched at the head of Campbell Creek, just below Powerline Pass. It was 10 degrees and clear. Over hot soup and tea six climbers were once more united in their opinions. It had been a great day after all.

We had left a car part way up Clark's homestead road about 8:30 a.m. and snowshoed up along the powerline. Campbell Creek Valley was white and lonesome except for a few ptarmigan and us. 8 miles and 5 hours later we made camp and after tea struck out for the ridge directly above us to the south in hopes of reaching what we thought was Suicide No. 2. We didn't and it wasn't. But, strictly speaking for myself, the climb was a lot of fun.

Light snow fell in the morning and a mild 20 degrees permitted packing camp without frostbitten fingers. We dropped the packs on a knoll and then climbed the "head wall" to the pass proper. Again opinions were divided as to what was the best way to negotiate anything steeper than 10 degrees, but then, all roads lead to Rome. Rome in this case was an abandoned pickup truck stuck on top of the pass. Here we left the snowshoes and another 1 1/2 hours up a crusted snowslope took us to the top of something without a name on the right hand side of the pass (looking toward Indian). Under broken clouds we enjoyed a nice view over the mountains around Indian and further East. Suicide No. 1, the highest in the area, hid its head under clouds while Suicide No. 2 appeared slightly lower than we were ... good!

Climbers should descend a mountain the same method they climbed up ... on their two feet. Only the very daring trade safety for fun. We dared. The descent was fast and fun and painful (where you hit a rock). Back at the pass, some even tried using snowshoes as a toboggan (I always knew that they are good for something).

After hot tea we began the long trek home. It was calm and sunny and the Alaska Range, magnificent as ever, lay in full view. Somewhere in the middle of it, Paul had to spoil it all by wrenching his back. He said it was the pack (army type!) so he traded for a decent civilian packboard and kept trudging on, not allowing anyone to stop. But at least we got back to the car quite efficiently with plenty of daylight to spare. A most enjoyable weekend was had by Paul Crews, Howard Schuck, Joe Pichler, Rod Wilson, John Dillman and Helga Bading.

Note:

This does not sound like Ptarmigan Mt. at all but a 4,500' peak overlooking Powerline Pass from the southwest. The first day's attempt may have been on Ptarmigan. - P. Porco