

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

EDITOR
Gwyneth Wilson
1215 - 8th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska
FE 4-7633
Vol. 4, No. 5

SCREE

SECRETARY
Marjorie Prescott
Box 119, Anchorage
Office: SK 3-2211
Home: SK 3-3119
March 1962

MEETING, TUESDAY, MARCH 27

The next Mountaineering Club of Alaska meeting, to be held at Willow Park Recreation Hall on Monday, March 27th at 8 p.m., the Honorary Members recently elected - Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Jim Branch - will be introduced to the Club membership and presented certificates. There will be a report from the Committee designated to look into the MCA's support to the American Mt. Everest Expedition 1963.

The program will be slides of the Pribilof Islands taken by Joe Pichler while visiting with the Prospector's Club in July of 1961. Jim Messick, late of Alaska and currently of Texas, was present also on this trip.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE:

- In March or April: The Alaska Alpine Club's week trip to the Black Rapids Area. Interested persons should contact Jon Gardoy - FA 2-1659.
- In May: Hartmut Pluntke has invited MCA members to go with him when he takes the Prospector's Club on a trip to the Russian Lakes area.

COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH CONSERVATION:

At the Mountaineering Club meeting in February the program was a most informative two reels of movie and a series of slides showing the work done by the Wasilla Youth Camp in clearing the Chilkoot Trail which they managed to do nearly to the pass. It was estimated that there is now about 12-14 miles of trail passable by humans if not by horses. Because of the interest of the MCA in projects of this type and especially because there is a plan to put a trail into Lake George, the President appointed a Committee to work with the Youth Counsellors to render whatever assistance the Club can. This Committee consists of "Vin" Hoeman, Chairman; Gene Horning; Joe Pichler and Dave DeVoe.

MCA'S WHO IN THE MOUNTAINEERS:

At the suggestion of Ed Fisher who thought it would be a good idea to acquaint newer members of the Club with the various personalities, SCREE is starting a new section devoted to thumbnail sketches of the MCA roster. It seems fitting to start with the Charter and Senior member of the MCA who has undoubtedly coaxed more people onto MCA outings and "brought them back alive" --Joe Pichler.

Joe was born in Bavaria near Munich and at age 2 made a fortunate move to central Germany where he met Frieda whom he later married. At the age of 14, having finished public school, he started to learn his trade, carpentry. He remained in Leipzig in an apprenticeship until drafted into the Army during World War I. In 1926, Joe and Frieda came to the United States and settled on Long Island. Most MCA'ers are well acquainted with Joe and Frieda's son, Norman, but there is also a daughter and seven grandchildren- 6 boys and 1 girl. In 1944, Joe came to Alaska and liked it so well that he moved his family north. They have been living in Anchorage since 1947. Joe is an active supporter of outdoor activities: a member of the Prospector's Club, the Matanuska Sportsman's Club, a charter member of the Alaska Rescue Group and an indispensable member of the MCA.

CMC's ALASKAN OUTING:

by William E. Davis

One of the features of the Colorado Mountain Club's Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations will be a visit to McKinley Park. The CMC is planning to spend two weeks from July 15 to 28th there. There will be a climbing camp in the Range east of McKinley for those looking for snow and ice work and there will be a series of camps along the Highway within the Park for the hikers and campers. The camps will be self-sufficient; everybody attending will have to bring his own food, gear, and housing. This will be a change from some CMC camps with fancy cooks and community gear. Any member of the MCA who would like to join this trip is welcome to do so. Bill Davis is handling the arrangements locally; phone him at FE 3-4002 for details. Some of the CMC folks will be travelling through Anchorage on their way to and from the Park and it is hoped that MCA can have some hospitality for them at that time.

OUR WINTER SURVIVAL CAMPOUT

by Sue Gray, Troop 4B

Fifteen Girl Scouts and three counselors from the Susitna Council of Anchorage, Alaska went on a Winter Survival Campout and snowshoe hike on February 17 and 18, 1962. As our area for camping we chose the Indian Creek area. We hiked along the old mail trail between Indian and Anchorage.

Our gear consisted of a back pack with a sleeping bag, air mattress, a mountain tent, food and water, cooking and eating equipment, and extra socks. Some of the girls added a little extra weight by bringing pajamas! Most of the packs weighed forty to fifty pounds.

We left Anchorage around 10:30 a.m. Saturday morning and arrived at Indian Creek and noon on Saturday. From Indian we hiked back on the old mail trail about one mile before we had lunch. After lunch we hiked about another half mile to the place where we camped.

After arriving at the campsite we packed down the snow with our snowshoes, around the area on which our tents would be pitched. When the camp was set up, we began gathering wood for the fire.

While gathering wood a few girls went down to Indian Creek, which was frozen over with ice, and made a hole in the ice. The hole was used by the Scouts for washing themselves and rinsing the cooking equipment after meals.

After the fire was started the girls and counselors began preparing for dinner. The meals consisted of mostly dried or dehydrated foods and tea. For dinner that night we had dehydrated soup, dried meat, instant rice, and tea. For desert we had a choice of cookies, candy or dried fruit.

After dinner everyone was ready to hit the sack, although it was only around 6:00 and the temperature had dropped to well below freezing. We went to bed early but didn't go to sleep until around 9:00 or 9:30.

The next morning most of the girls were up at 7:30 but a few came staggering out of their tents around 8:30. For breakfast we had instant oatmeal with dried fruit and tea.

After breakfast we broke camp and repacked our packs. We left our packs at the camping area, and put on our snowshoes and began exploring farther along the trail. After hiking one half mile we were all ready to return to the camp.

We left the camping area around 11:30 a.m. Sunday morning and began the return journey homeward. When we had arrived at the yesterday's lunch stop, we decided to stop for lunch.

A few of the Scouts who had become tired, tied their snowshoes together, put a long rope on the front of them and placed their pack on them and pulled it the rest of the way to the beginning of the trail.

After we had all arrived back at the cars we decided that someday we would like to hike the distance of twenty miles from Indian to Anchorage.

ED. NOTE: This Scout trip was sponsored by the MCA and all three of the adults who attended are MCA members.

A SKI CLIMB ON THE KENAI

March 3 and 4

by Helga Bading

As we tracked into the broad valley due east from the highway to Johnson's Pass, skis on our feet and packs on our backs, John Dillman and I learned a simple lesson:- even a mountaineer cannot keep up with the Infantry! "Vin" Hooman, our 'Third Man', was way ahead. He was so used to carrying rifle, radio, even a gas mask and other paraphanelia about the countryside that he considered a plain overnight pack a picnic. To some extent it really was: velvet blue skies and magnificent scenery added to our tendency to take it easy and soak up the warm sunshine.

At one-thirty, some five miles and 4 hours from the car, "Vin" picked a lovely campspot on a knoll inside a cirque of impressive peaks and ridges. We were about 3000 ft. high. Up went the two tents and after refreshments we stepped back onto the skis and pointed them uphill toward one of the mountain peaks.

After a while John decided to retreat back toward camp and the teapot. I kept struggling up a steep crusted slope -- still way behind "Vin" as was to be the habit for the whole weekend. I reached the saddle about four o'clock and stared down what appeared an almost vertical 2000 ft. drop into Placer River Valley where the railroad winds its way to Seward. Beyond I saw the Sponcer Glacier and beyond that parts of Prince William Sound. Thousands of Peaks shone in the soft late-afternoon light. "Vin" had parked his skis on the saddle and I could just spot him below the summit, so decided I'd better wait for him, balanced on icy rocks. It was after five when we both started to ski back. The snow wasn't too good, slushy and interspersed with soft spots plenty of 'bathtubs' marked our track. Just at sunset we reached what was "home" -- two small orange colored tents in a white, lonesome valley.

And what a gorgeous night it was! It seemed as though even the littlest of stars had turned on its light, specially for us. With ease we survived the hazards common to such adventure:- the forgotten T.P., lost air mattress plugs and a mislaid spoon. (finger-eaten grapenuts, yummy!)

At six next morning the OPTIMUS roared off, quite optimistic of a splendid day ahead. Duly shivering in the morning breeze we packed lunchfoods and spare socks and traded skis for ice axes and rope. The crust easily supported our climb to the foot of our target which was the highest mountain overlooking our valley. One hour's climb brought us a thousand feet above camp to a small glacier, a real miniature for Alaska.

From the glacier we took the south west ridge upward. It alternated between frozen snow, iced-over rock and even patches of blue ice. This climb was just steep and exposed enough to be real "fun", as seen through a climber's eye. But when we reached the snow capped summit just three hours from camp, we decided that going back we better find a less 'hairy' and exposed route. First, though, we had a spot sheltered from the icy wind so we could peacefully refuel and take the view. Literally hundreds of square miles of mountainous geography lay at our feet. In particular we studied Mt. Carpathian's west ridge, nice and steep and worthy of an ascent.

There wasn't much time to linger. Our descent down the south east ridge was pleasant enough until a gigantic serac, almost vertical on either side, stopped the downward trend. The only other choice, a steep snowslope that had avalanched previously, hardly looked inviting, but there was no alternative. Every step had to be carefully chopped or kicked with only one at a time on the slope, but when we reached what we hoped was going to be a wonderful glissade, all we found was blue ice! So we traversed over to some rocks, 'Alaska type' rocks, where we gingerly balanced downward to the snow basin below.

At two o'clock we reached camp - just in time, too, as we felt quite dried out from sun and wind. Refreshed by hot, sweet tea we packed camp. Quite nonchalantly I told my partners, "Just go ahead, after all I CAN ski." But again I wasn't figured with the Infantry. "Vin" wore Koreans and Army skis (let's admit it, Army BOARDS), yet it wasn't long before he disappeared from view. Both John and I learned the wet way that one just doesn't SKI with a Kelty pack on. One snowplow! More than once I stood right smack on my head, pulled forward by the weight of the pack, and had to remove the pack and even the jacket to get out from under. It's rather humiliating to a "Skier".

Under the lengthening shadows it was a beautiful trip back. Only an hour and 15 minutes later we were at the car where the incredulous stares of several Sunday-Afternoon-Skiers greeted us.

A pleasant drive back into the evening sky, interrupted by a well-deserved willshake, concluded a very wonderful and refreshing weekend trip.