



Vol. 9, No. 5
March, 1967
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
P.O. Box 2037
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

EVENTS TO COME

MARCH MEETING: Willow Park Community Center, 9th and Fairbanks, March 20, 8 p.m.
Ruth Schmidt, consulting geologist and Community College lecturer, will talk--
and show--about "The Rocks You Walk On and the Rocks You Grab On To."

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: Tuesday, April 4, 8 p.m. 3104 W. 30th.

HIKES AND CLIMBS: See Hiking and Climbing Schedule.

NORDIC SKI CLUB TRIPS coming up include the following:

Girdwood to Eagle River. March 18-19. Overnight trip. Call leader Marv Hathorn 277-5000 about preliminary session and other details.

Eagle River Valley Tour. March 19. Meet 8:30 a.m. Safeway lot, 9th & Gambell.

Diamond H Ranch Trail. March 25. Meet 10 a.m. Mile 3, O'Malley Road.

Ski Day at Johnson Pass. March 26. Meet 7:30 a.m. Safeway lot, 9th & Gambell.

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON

MOOSWA PEAK 5020 (?) -- First Ascent

Nick Parker

With a temperature of -20° F, it became obvious that this was to be a cold climbing day. Bob Spurr, Bill Hauser, and I had come down to Johnson Pass to try to climb this highest unclimbed mountain in the immediate area. The 5020-foot peak is located at the beginning of a creek about two miles off the Seward Highway. We used skis to the base of the north ridge. The extreme temperature spurred (no pun intended) us onward and upward. The north ridge was in idyllic condition, hard-pack snow with a little frozen scree. The wind came up as we walked higher. There were no technical difficulties, and we gained the summit about 2 p.m. A small cairn was built and a register left. The name "Mooswa" is a French derivation of "moose." We decided on the name because this animal was in evidence on the climb and because of the peak's location near the passes to Seward.

As the days grow longer, it becomes obvious that the Johnson Pass area is a great place for the weekend climber. There are many peaks worthy of a day or two of hiking because of their central location and easy accessibility.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, scheduled for March 9, was cancelled at the last minute in favor of attending a "critique" of the Winter McKinley Rescue operation. It was desirable to hold the critique while events were still fresh and also to gain from the commentary of the still-present members of the Mountain Rescue Council from the Seattle area. Hopefully, a report on the rescue will be available for the next issue of SCREES. A substitute Executive Committee meeting was held March 13 to approve the summer climbing and hiking schedule.

[Faint, mostly illegible text from the reverse side of the page, appearing as bleed-through.]

KICKSTEP MOUNTAIN

February 19

Bob Spurr

On February 19th. Bill Heuser and I made a one-dry ascent of Kickstep Mountain, 4660'. Kickstep lies near the head of Tincen Creek and is prominent to the southeast from the Johnson Pass recreational area. Starting into skis at 7 a.m., we began the four mile tour, contouring above Tincen's deeply indented meanders until we gained the broad valley floor. As the sun rose higher in cloudless skies, I recalled with vengeful emotion a New Year's weekend attempt which expired with bad weather. Our march led to a bowl below the small glacial basin which licks the mountain's northwestern slope.

After attaching skins, we ascended the bowl and gained a corniced deposit of moraine where we cached our skis. The moraine line led to a snout heavily laden with snow, exposed only by a solitary blotch of blue ice. After roping up, we traversed the basin rim to a point below the northwest ridge which was to be our route. A short climb put us on top of a broad spine on which we moved continuously on good snow for several rope lengths before it narrowed to a step of rock which Bill led. Two more leads up a corniced, undulating spine brought us to the base of a protruding flake of rock, partially masked with snow. The only certain route went over its top which Bill carefully led, cleaning snow-filled holds as he went. One more lead put us at the base of the summit cone. While leading these last few rope lengths, I reflected that the mountain was named, no doubt, for this portion of the route.

The summit was sharply pointed and so badly corniced that we took separate turns standing on top. It was now 3 p.m. After descending the cone, we decided to move directly down the southwest face to a point where we could traverse back to the ridge below the rock pitches. After six leads of cautious leap-frogging across sun-drenched snow, we regained the northwest ridge. We retraced the route to our skis and trekked out, concluding our climb at 6:30 p.m. under bright moonlight.

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O'MALLEY PEAK

January 14

Helen Wolfe

We left as dawn was breaking at 8 a.m. from the van der Laans' after a half hour or so in their garage putting on and adjusting skins, with mutterings from Gerry about a missing marker toe-piece and Dick about missing skins. The group consisted of Gary Hansen, Leader, Hans van der Laan, Helen Wolfe, Peter Vlasveldt, Malcolm Myers, and Dick Koehn. We made good time up road, along and across powerline, and part way up valley leading to the back of O'Malley, when we ran out of snow (due to windswept conditions) and had to abandon skis. We continued on foot. A bit later Dick decided it had been too long since he had been out and that it was time to quit. The rest of us forged ahead or straggled on, respectively. The summit was reached between 3:30 and 4 p.m. and we left a new register. The descent was in approaching darkness and we skied out in absolute darkness. We returned to the van der Laans' at 8 p.m. for a thoroughly welcome dinner.

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PASTORAL, 4765'(?), FIRST WINTER ASCENT

January 21-22

Nick Parker

The beauty of an Alaskan peak in winter is unsurpassed by any other terrain, be it upland or lowland. Some of us are able to enjoy this beauty while others remain cabin-bound in Anchorage. Bob Spurr, Gerry Garland, and I were able to take advantage of this high mountain world on January 21 and 22.

Clear blue skies greeted us as we emerged from our car into the snowy world of Johnson Pass. The Taylor Creek valley, our route for the day, rose abruptly from the road to a col about 2 1/2 miles away. Bob, Gerry, and I quickly departed from the road, wishing to take advantage of the superlative weather. The wind had done most of our work for us, and we quickly gained altitude on the crusted snow. Two hours of work brought us to a point below the col, necessitating the abandonment of our packs, an unfortunate loss indeed.

We left our camp at approximately 11 a.m. and proceeded to the col on skis. Our peak loomed above us, remoteness only bringing it nearer. We descended about 200 feet and followed a medial ridge and small glacier to the base of our route on the north ridge. Easy snow and rock led us to the summit, where we found sun, wind, and cairns, all in liberal amounts.

We deposited a register, unofficially naming the mountain "Pastoral," referring to the excellent conditions we had. We returned to the camp and had a superb dinner, compliments of Bob Spurr.

We spent a comfortable night, whether you are supposed to or not in winter, and Sunday we lounged around until about 10 a.m. The ski run out was exhilarating; blue skies and tremendous snow added to the pleasure. Arrived at the road about 1 p.m., where we were greeted by a most disheartening scene: the car we had left for only 30 hours was sitting forlornly on the snow, minus tires, wheels, windows, and most everything else necessary for travel in an auto. One of our party hitchhiked back into Anchorage and returned later to retrieve us.

The peak we climbed and the weather we climbed it in were nice in retrospect, but it's too bad the trip was marred by some ugly tourists.

MISCELLANIE

Issues of the American Alpine Club Journals still needed for MCA presentation to the AMU library are noted as follows: 1929, 1930, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1940, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966.

Mountain silhouette on page 1 of February Scree is familiar "Malley Peak" on the Anchorage skyline.

Hans Van der Lean and Gary Hansen cross-country skied from Arctic Valley to Bill Long's homestead near the South Fork of Eagle River. Callie Van der Lean attempted to drive up the South Fork lower road to meet them. Recent thaw made the road impassable after two miles. Callie and Fiolotta walked in to meet Hans and Gary, and they all three visited the Longs and Elizabeth Carroll before walking back through four dark miles to the car. (Sunday, March 5)

NOTES ON MCA DIRECTOR #1: Gary Hansen, born and educated in England...architect... became interested in climbing through "Outward Bound" program...since leaving England, has lived, traveled, and climbed in numerous spots but has stayed longest in Alaska, where he has lived since 1963...climbs in the Chugach and Talkeetna... is presently chairman of the Alaska Rescue Group, and has recently been very busy with that job!

The April Fireside will be held at Hans & Callie van der Lean's house on April 7, Friday, 8 p.m.

Thirty Hikes in the Western Chugach, published jointly by the MCA and the Seattle Mountaineers, should be out between June 15 and July 1st.

The Executive Committee met at Gwyneth Wilson's on March 13th. Discussion centered on the summer climbing and hiking schedule, rock and glacier schools, and the merits of various tents being considered for purchase.

In the late afternoon of 11 March, Grace and Vin Hoeman took Seattle visitors Glenn Kelsey, Jerry Neugard, Dick Pargeter, and Al Randall for their first climb in the Chugach, Flattop Mountain, 3525'.

AN ARG BENEFIT POLBA DANCE will be held April 14th at the Westward Hotel. Music by Danny Zantek, donation only \$2.00. Proceeds will help the ARG to pay some recent bills and beef up the bank account, hopefully. There may even be exotic door prizes.

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Scree is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Scree staff: Marie Lundstrom, Marge Meagoe, Callie Van der Lean, Carol DeVos. Articles on trips and other material to appear in Scree should be sent to Marie Lundstrom, Box 4-964, Anchorage 99503, or call 277-0846 (home) or 272-0554 (work).

PINNACLE MOUNTAIN, 4541'

February 11 - 12

Vin Hoeman

During his reconnaissance of the Matanuska Coalfields in 1905, Dr. G.C. Martin of the USGS recorded the name Pinnacle Mountain as the local name of a sharp-topped peak across the Matanuska River. In the ensuing 62 years Pinnacle has shared with Lazy and Kings Mountains the distinction of being one of the few named features in the Northwestern Chugach.

In the summer the Matanuska River is a formidable barrier, and winter mountaineering is only now receiving the interest it deserves in Alaska, so no attempts on this mountain had been recorded when Grace and I decided to take advantage of the river ice to climb it. We crossed the river and pitched our tent in a moose bed neath the cottonwoods the night of 11 February, and in the morning wound our way through thick alder and devil's club (tolerable at this season) on snowshoes to the SW ridge of Pinnacle. Five fearless goats and a flock of snow buntings we found enjoying the south slope-sunshine above timberline. The towers on top were a rottenish rhyolitic rock, but a route was found up mixed rock and snow of a southwesterly gully to the summit of the nearest tower, which seemed to be highest. A cairn was built on the small space available and a record left. Despite its diminutive elevation, we feel sure this was a first ascent.

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CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Gwynneth Wilson

A special Committee on Conservation, appointed to consider what, if any, part the MCA should play in this effort, met on March 13th. Present were Callie van der Laan, Helen Wolfe, Paul Crows, Sr., Bill Davis, Leo Hannan, Gary Hansen, Vin Hoeman, and Gwynneth Wilson, Chairman, a representative cross-section of club membership.

A letter from the Federation of Western Outdoors Clubs urging MCA to apply for membership was the prime order of business. It was the consensus that MCA should not at this time join the FWOC.

However, the committee expressed unanimity in feeling that MCA should undertake a firm role in conservation. Therefore, this Committee recommends to the club membership that a Mountain Conservation Committee be appointed and that its purpose be the conservation of mountains and their environs. Further that this Committee should promote actively:

- (1) preservation of mountains in their natural state;
- (2) education of the public to the economic and other values of preservation.

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