



Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Box 2037, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
March 1970 - Vol. 13, No. 3

MARCH MEETING: . . . Monday, March 9, 1970 at 7:30 P.M. . . . Ben Crawford Memorial Park (rear entrance) 3rd and Eagle . . . Grace Hoeman will have a program on Mt. Kimball.

CLIMBING AND HIKING SCHEDULE

March 7 or 8 (Saturday or Sunday, depending on weather) Annual MCA climb of Byron Peak.
Leader: Gayle Nienhueser - 277-9330 (eves).

March 14-15 (Saturday and Sunday) Hike up GRANITE CREEK from Sutton, just west of Palmer.
No leader. Leave from Sears parking lot at 7:30 A.M. on the 14th. Call Randy Renner for information - 279-1192 eves; 277-6686, Ext. 242 days.

March 22 (Sunday) Hike up to 20-MILE GLACIER from Girdwood. No leader. Leave from Sears parking lot at 8:00 A.M. on Sunday the 22nd. Information and sign-up sheet at March meeting.

March 28-29 (Sunday and Saturday) SUICIDE I (5005') and SUICIDE II (5065') behind Anchorage.
Leader: Grace Hoeman . . . Chuck Pease.

April 3-5 (Friday - Sunday) Traverse on skis or snow shoes from GIRDWOOD TO EKLUTNA.
Leader: Grace Hoeman. Recommended for strong skiers. Purpose is to check on the conditions of the MCA cabins.

April 11-12 (Saturday and Sunday) Peak on KENAI PENINSULA. Leader is tentatively Dub Bludworth (How about it, Dub?). Dub lives in Moose Pass, so sign up at the March meeting.

FUTURE PLANS

Future Climbing Schools

April 25 & 26: Beginning climbing.

June 13 & 14: Intermediate and advanced rock climbing at Independence Mine.

August 15 & 16: Glacier School, Eklutna Glacier, all levels.

October 10 - 11: Intermediate and advanced glacier and winter mountaineering at Crow Pass.

A theoretical session will precede all schools.

Future Meetings

May 11th - Picnic at Goose Lake

July 13th - Picnic at Rainbow Falls

Future Climbs

May 29-31	Lost Lake area
June 20	Flattop Sleep-In
July 3-5	Montana Peak Area
July 3-6	Chilkoot Trail (dates subject to change)
August 8-9	Crow Pass weekend
August 29-30	Annual try at Pioneer Peak (but not through the alders and devil's club this year - Leader: possibly Fred Cady)

RANDY RENNER'S REMARKS

The club is purchasing additional equipment for members to check out. To be purchased: 3/8" rope, a tent, ice axes, and crampons. The policy for checking out equipment will be as follows:

- 1) Club membership mandatory.
- 2) Can be kept 3 days only, although loan is renewable if prior approval is obtained from the Board.
- 3) No charge for any club equipment.

February membership meeting: Very little business. Barry Kircher presented a program on the MCA's ascent of Mt. Rainier over the Christmas holidays. Carol Miller of Holubar showed the latest in parkas, sleeping bags, etc.

February Board meeting: At Grace Hoeman's home on February 18. Nominations for honorary memberships will be accepted at the March meeting. Discussions of: refurbishing cabins, climb liabilities and releases, and what equipment to purchase for loan to members, as well as policies for equipment loan. Also drank lots of tea and ate pretzels. Read SUMMIT, MOUNTAIN, and some more of Grace's books and maps. Thanks Grace!

The Alaska Rescue Group presents. . .

* FOOD FOR THOUGHT *

"The soundest way to become an all-round mountaineer is to begin with hill walking and scrambling and later on to branch out into rock climbing and snow and ice climbing. When you have a good knowledge of these, the way is open to alpine mountaineering and perhaps to greater ranges and altitudes. The pleasures of mountaineering are, however, personal to the individual and the extent to which you specialize must depend upon yourself, your tastes, and ambitions. Ordinary hill walking can be tremendous fun in its own right and many would not wish to do more. For some, on the other hand, nothing less than mastery of all forms of mountaineering in distant ranges as well as home is sufficient. While obviously the more experienced and proficient you become in various aspects of mountaineering the more satisfaction you will derive, there is no reason why you should not stop short of roped climbing if you so wish and still obtain great pleasure and interest from mountains: the important thing is to go to them and to get to know and enjoy them in their very wide variety of conditions."

--- Alaa Blackshaw MOUNTAINEERING

THE NIENHUESERS IN NEPAL: PART II

Helen Nienhueser

We arrived in Namache Bazaar (12,000') early enough on that Saturday morning to see the weekly bazaar and purchase fresh fruit and greens carried up on human backs from the lowlands far away. Fourteen tangerines (small and green) for one rupee . . . ten cents! But that was because our sherpa bought them; we would have had to pay more.

The Dudh Kosi was the end of the green, from Namache on, things were dry and brown, though we sometimes forgot as we passed through stretches of rhododendron or pine trees. At Khumjung, just a couple of hours beyond Namache, we stayed in Kami's home for two nights.

We learned to stay low to the floor to avoid the smoke from the chimneyless fireplace and to skin and eat boiled potatoes dipped in chili flavored salt - the basic diet. Finding a bathroom was, as in all of the towns, a problem - one that made us thankful for the early onset of darkness!

We went on to Tengboche (where Jake Breitenbach's remains had recently been buried) and then Pangboche, alternately admiring the spectacular Ama Dablam and the richness of the Tibetan Buddhist temples in the towns. At Pangboche, five days after landing at Lukla, we were at 13000 feet. This was the end of the year round villages. From Pangboche we continued up the Imja River to the summer yak-harding village of Pheriche. Here for lunch we were almost at 14,000 feet. I found I really liked this high altitude stuff because it gave me an excuse to go at my normal snail's pace, and what's more, everyone else was too!

By nightfall we had climbed up a side valley to Dughla at 15,000 feet. Now the mountains were becoming really spectacular - sharp white peaks that came and went all afternoon in the clouds. At Dughla we found two small summer huts, built of piled up stones with earthen floors. We shared one of these with Kami and the porters. At these elevations it was really cold at night and the down parkas were very welcome. We consistently found that we preferred to share these shelters with our sherpa friends rather than pitch the tent - partly because we didn't want to be separated from the fire. But Ginny and Libby often preferred to pitch the tent, so we all concluded that we cannot advise others on whether or not to take a tent!

The seventh day found us lunching at 16,000 feet at Lobuche, the last hut and well beyond the last brush. But our porters (and Gayle) had carried brush for firewood, so we enjoyed a fire, stashed some brush, and carried the rest on. Now we were in the valley of the Khumbu Glacier and soon to be picking our way through obvious moraine. From this point on Nuptse (25,850') began to tower over us in majestic white splendour, an indelible part of this experience. At our pace it was sometimes hard to realize that we were pushing 17,000 feet, since we weren't really climbing - until I ran ahead of Gayle to pose on a distant ridge for a telephoto shot - then I found myself breathing so hard that it was five minutes before I could hear what he was yelling at me!

At Gorak Shep we found a pretty little lake, only partially ice covered, with lovely mountain reflections floating in it. Here there were many rock shelters three feet high, built by the many expeditions - who had also left behind an appreciable amount of trash and human dung. (Really, Nepal is in desperate need of outhouses! If only U.S. AID would confine itself to such worthwhile projects . . .) We chose the shelter with the highest walls, again deciding to forego the tent in favor of brilliant stars and the towering white shape of Nuptse.

The next morning was THE day, our climb of Kala Pattar (the Black Heap), 18,192 feet. Only as we climbed its rocky slopes did we first begin to get a glimpse of Everest, for it was hidden by the lower Nuptse. And finally as we neared the top and the boulders became larger and looser, I began to believe the altitude as I realized I was dizzy . . . and how was I going to get down? But that's always a problem for later, so I kept going to the top and the magnificent view of Everest and South Col - and of the Khumbu Glacier icefall. (But heresy though this may be, Nuptse was still closer and more spectacular.) Gayle gazed longingly toward Everest, but I was quite satisfied with my 18,000 foot summit (it sounds so impressive till you see the pictures!). The valley was lovely, the mountains magnificent, but the wind was cold and piercing. So we reluctantly headed down. I discovered after we arrived at Gorak Shep that I wasn't interested in eating anything we had available, though steak sounded pretty good. This condition persisted for two days and we were not sure whether it was altitude or a bug. However, my appetite miraculously returned below 13,000 feet, so I suspect altitude.

We reached Lukla in three days; we had traveled only about 25 miles each way, but there were so many ups and downs that we understand now why travel in Nepal is measured in days rather than miles or kilometers. Our plane arrived on schedule the next morning, but for awhile it looked as though we were to have a rehash of World War II with members of a Japanese expedition who had been waiting for a week for a ride out. The plane they should have taken was sitting disabled on the strip. So you see, we were lucky....

(To be concluded in a future issue)

CITLATEPETL, Mexico 18,546' (Orizaba)

June 24 - 28, 1969

Bill Babcock

Located by itself dominating the horizon NE of Puebla stands Orizaba, the highest volcano in Mexico. Departing Puebla via the autopista we took the exit to Ciudad Serdan which lies at the southern base of the mountain. The volcano can be climbed from this side but it is an expedition of some proportions. The most accessible route lies further north via Tlachichuca. A better route to this town is via the road to Jalapa, and not through Ciudad Serdan. In this pueblo a Sr. Reyes, who has climbed the mountain numerous times can be found at his store "Antigua Flor". Sr. Reyes for 250 pesos or \$22 will Jeep a party to the base camp some 20 kilometers away. This fee also includes the return trip, and expert advice from Sr. Reyes, who has equipment if needed. His store has provisions that can equip any size expedition with food. He also keeps pictures of all the climbers and records their attempts. With studded snow tires our VW bus low-geared itself to 9,500 feet before the road became so steep the engine refused to function. The remaining 12 kilometers were covered by renting two burros for the children to ride and to carry five days provisions. The base camp hut is at about 13,500 feet and took six hours from the pueblo Miguel Hidalgo where we engaged the burros. An enchanting walk through pine forests, Andean flowers, sheep and various agricultural pursuits ended at the high hut. Being late in the climbing season meant that the weather had been deteriorating fast and three climbers returning late that night told how they had spent some three hours sitting in a crevasse waiting for the weather to improve before descending the mountain. Continued poor weather discouraged any climb of the mountain for the next day and sickness the day after that. On the fourth day the weather looked better than it had for the past week. Departing 13,500 feet at 5:00 A.M. one ascends a steep volcanic ash slope of loose rock and sand. A well-defined trail leads to the glacier at 14,200 feet. From the north one ascends the glacier to a point called cruz roja or red cross. The glacier is not heavily crevassed, but one is forced to cross two large crevasses as best as one can. This is no easy task at that altitude and a mistake could be fatal. Fortunately the tracks of the last party could be followed and one had only to crampon himself up the steep glacier slowly but surely. Arriving at cruz roja at 3:00 P.M. I saw that the true summit was on the opposite side of the enormous crater. Fortunately the day was beautiful with vistas out into the Gulf of Mexico where steamers could be seen on their way to exotic ports around the world. An hour and half later I arrived on the true summit, photographed the enormous cross of steel and cable, rested and began the descent. Altitude had taken its toll on me that day as I somehow overlooked a fresh tube of glacier cream in my pack and spent some ten hours without adequate protection. My face turned a deep-hued purple and stayed that way for about a week. Prior and the children were waiting at the hut with hot soup and visiting with three members of the Harvard Mountaineering Club. Rafael, our trusted guide with the burros, arrived bright and early the next morning and we returned to the car in 4 hours. For the use of the burros and his services he requested a fee of 40 pesos or \$3.75.

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News from the Committee on Geographic Names

Grace Hoeman

The Alaska State Board on Geographic Names approved the following: Bench Peak, Paradise Peak (this was one of Vin's favorites), Thunderbird Peak and Lark Mountain. The names were forwarded to the Federal Board for their approval. Ptarmigan Mt. was disapproved (duplication of names - - the nearest Ptarmigan Mt. or Pk. is hundreds of miles away!!). Bounty Peak and Bounty Creek were also disapproved ("insignificant!!!"). The Federal Board disapproved Tranquillity Pass and Spyglass Hill on recommendation of the National Park Service which felt that these names had no particular significance (!!) and that proliferation of names of this nature tends to distract from the wilderness atmosphere of the park (!!!). This latter reasoning will offer interesting challenges and powerful arguments to the Committee.

MCA Profile: Treasurer Dick Snyder

Born and raised in Madison, Wis. . . has a B.S. from University of Wis. . . works for the U.S. Geological Survey in their Water Quality Lab. . . married wife Liska 5 years ago in Boulder, Colo. . . has a 6-month old son, David. . . came to Alaska in July 1967, attracted by open spaces and low population. . . previous climbing experience at Devil's Lake, Wis. . . Southern Selkinks, B.C. . . Wind Rivers and Tetons, Wyo. . . Rocky Mtns, Colo. . . Yosemite. . . hobbies are photography. . . hiking. . . white-water canoeing. . . beachcombing. . . X-C skiing. . . folk dancing.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO "SCREE" CONTRIBUTORS!!

I will be traveling outside from mid-March to mid-May. Marty Corcoran has generously offered to take over SCREE's editorship during my trip. Please send all material for the April and May issues directly to her. Her address is P. O. Box 295, Eagle River, Alaska 99577. Thanks a lot!

Liska Snyder

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MT. RAINIER (14,408')

Long ago Sluiskin, famous Indian guide, said, "Your plan to climb Takhoma is all foolishness. . . you will have to climb over steep rocks overhanging deep gorges where a misstep would hurl you far down. . . you must creep over steep snowbanks and cross deep crevasses. . . if you should escape these perils and reach the great snowy dome, then a bitterly cold and furious tempest will sweep you off into space like a withered leaf. . ." Margaret Young, Barry Kircher, and Grace Hoeman climbed Tahoma (also called Takhoma or, unfortunately, Mt. Rainier) on December 30, 1969, via the Ingraham and Emmons Glaciers, after they failed on the treacherous "Gib" Ledge route. Sluiskin was right . . . it was foolishness.

Dave and Sally Johnston plan to return to Alaska in April or May. They left New Zealand on February 10, and their travels will take them to Panama, Mexico, Florida, and New Jersey before they head north.

In reference to Rod Wilson's article on "PTARMIGAN MOUNTAIN" in the November 1969 SCREE, Bill Hauser offers the following information: "Scott Foster and I climbed the north couloir of Hope 4950' on February 13, 1966. This is the first winter ascent. We also climbed 5105', same valley, March 6, 1966 for the first winter ascent."

Did you know that the MCA has equipment which can be borrowed by members? Crampons, ice axes, ropes (perlon and goldline) and tents are available. Contact John or Joanne Merrick, 272-5243, if you are interested in borrowing this equipment.

SCREE is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska which is affiliated with the Anchorage Department of Parks and Recreation. Editor: Liska Snyder. Typist: Marty Corcoran. Staff: Carol DeVoe, Joanne Merrick, Chuck Pease. Please send material for the April SCREE to Marty Corcoran, P. O. Box 295, Eagle River, Alaska 99577, by March 27.