



MARCH 2004 A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska Vol 47 Issue 3

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

FEBRUARY MEETING

Wednesday

March 17th , 7:30 pm

First United Methodist Church

9th & G Streets

Next to the Phillips Building

(you may use marked parking after hours...)

Downtown Anchorage

SLIDE SHOW: To Be Announced... (Wanna do a slide show?)

HIKING AND CLIMBING

March 13 **Echo Bend Ice Climbing**

Come ski/snowshoe back three miles behind the Eagle River Nature Center to climb the ice at Echo Bend. There is plenty of ice to be climbed for all levels of abilities, grades II-IV available. Spend the day doing laps on the ice and then celebrate a good day of climbing, back at the trip leaders house with some good drink and food. BYOB and bring some food to share. We will meet at 9AM at the trip leader's house. Sign-up with a partner is preferred. Call Trip Leader: Richard Baranow at 694-1500.

March 14 **Ice Climbing in the Eklutna Glacier Area**

This trip is geared for the ice climber who wants to see some of the biggest and fattest ice in the greater Anchorage area. We will get an early start and use snowmachines to access these challenging icicles. Most of these climbs are multi-pitch and vary in

difficulty, grades II-IV. You must have previous ice climbing experience, be able to lead competently or be able to climb as a second comfortably. This is a long full-day of climbing and riding, so bring a headlamp, food, water and lots of energy. Sign-up with a partner and a snow machine. Contact Richard Baranow for more information at 694-1500.

March 17 **Eklutna Lake Ski**

Ski twenty six miles round trip to the Serenity Falls hut and back, often across the frozen lake. Skate skiers and skijorers will have to wait for the rest of us slow folks.. When conditions are right, this is a very flat and pleasant ski trip. About 8hrs of skiing.

Class B

Leader: Stu Grenier 337.5127

HIKING AND CLIMBING

March 23 **The Wedge Ski Traverse**

Tuesday come ski from Glen Alps, climb the Wedge, ski Ship Pass, drop into and finish at Indian. Skis, skins, and avy gear required.

Class B

Leader: Stu Greneir, 337.5127

March 23 **Turnagain Arm Trail**

Tuesday Evening Hikes 5:30 p.m. Potter to McHugh Contact Steve Gruhn via e-mail steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com or at home 344-1219 by the day before the event in order to coordinate meeting locations and carpools. Class A

March 25 **Lower Eagle River Trail**

Thursday Evening Hike/Ski 5:30 p.m. Contact leader Steve Gruhn via e-mail steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com or call home 344-1219 before the event in order to coordinate meeting locations and carpools. Class A

March 27 **Lower Eagle River Trail**

Ski or hike? 15 miles round trip, 500 feet of elevation gain. Contact leader Steve Gruhn via e-mail steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com or call him at home 344-1219 in order to learn more. Class B

March 30 **Bear Point**

Tuesday Evening Hike/Ski 5:30 p.m. Class B
Contact Steve Gruhn at numbers above

April 01 **Thunder Bird Falls**

Thursday Evening Hike/Ski? 6 p.m. Class A
Contact Steve Gruhn for more info

April 02 - 04 **Mint Hut Glacier and Peaks**

Ski into the Mint Hut Friday afternoon if there is still snow. We'll climb and explore the nearby Mint peaks and glacier. Glacier experience necessary. Bring alpine climbing gear.

Bring alpine climbing gear.

This trip is full right now. Call and your name is on reserve. Class C

Leader: Matt Nedom 278.3648

April 08 **Bird Ridge Point**

Thursday Evening Hike 5:30 p.m. Class C
Contact Steve Gruhn for more info.

April 14 - 20 **Annual MCA Eklutna Glacier Ski Traverse**

Good skiing ability, glacier travel experience, and avalanche training needed. Must be able to ski on a rope team while carrying 50+ pounds on your back. Stay overnight in the MCA huts. Class D
Leader, again this year, Stu Grenier 337.5127

TRIP REPORTS

Organ Peak

by Ross Noffsinger

July 12 and 13, 2003

I have had my eye on this peak for many years. Whether viewed from Eagle Peak, The Front Range or Bird Ridge, Organ is an impressive sight. Consequently when Wayne Todd proposed climbing it, I jumped at the chance.

The standard route up the east ridge can be reached from either the Organ Glacier or the North Fork of Ship Creek. Both routes merge on the east ridge at roughly 6500 feet. In order to avoid traveling on the heavily crevassed Organ Glacier and/or crossing Eagle River, we chose to approach the route via the North Fork of Ship Creek. This would also give me a chance to explore the remote upper North Fork drainage.

Bill Stivers recorded the Ship Creek route in detail in the October '75 Scree. Due to weather, it took Bill three attempts to complete the route. He would enter the Ship Creek Drainage from either Glen Alps or Arctic Valley, and spend several days on the project. Being believers in light and fast (and not having the luxury of time), Wayne and I chose to approach the route via Crow Pass. If everything went well, the climb would take only a day and a half.

From Bill's description, it is apparent that the climb is not technical. However it appeared that route finding might be difficult, especially in low visibility. Consequently we packed harnesses, webbing and a rope just in case we climbed ourselves into a situation. I also brought my ice axe, while Wayne took a ski pole with a self-arrest grip. Our remaining gear included stream crossing shoes, 30 degree down bags, bivy sacks and two days of high-tech food.

We left the Crow Pass Trailhead at 8:40am under blue skies. Prior to dropping to the valley floor, we left the trail and started to side-hill. Just before reaching Clear Creek, we encountered a black bear who was none too concerned about our presence. We left him to his business and continued on across Clear Creek, proceeding to side-hill until reaching Paradise Creek Valley. We followed the valley up to Paradise Pass where we were greeted with our first view of the imposing south face of Organ.

We descended the west side of the pass without incident. The previous year, Wayne had encountered steep ice covered with loose rock making for a rather treacherous descent. Thankfully, this portion of the descent was still covered with snow.

We proceeded across the loose rubble of Moraine Pass, which is void of life and has the appearance of a moonscape. The moraine, which continues for over a mile, terminates near the descent to the turquoise colored Grizzly Bear Lake and the lush green Ship Creek drainage. The contrast is remarkable.

While traversing around the lake, we saw a beaver going about its business. Mental note to self "don't drink water downstream of lake". After a short break near the waterfall on the west side of the lake, we continued down the valley through lush green meadows filled with a kaleidoscope of wild flowers. Upon reaching the drainage south of Organ, we turned north and headed up valley toward the base of the peak.

Rising 3500 feet off the valley floor, the south face of Organ is an impressive and intimidating sight. It appears as a near vertical wall of crumbling rock, scored by chimneys. From this perspective, the mountain appeared un-climbable. But having read Bill's article, we knew it had a weakness.

Organ Peak, cont.

By the time we reached the lake near the base of the south face, it was 5:15pm. Feeling drained from the exceptionally warm weather, we dumped our bivy gear, took a break, and at 6pm continued on toward the summit.

The route past this point is described accurately in Bill's trip report, so I will not repeat it other than to say it consists mostly of steep scree slopes and gullies with intermittent sections of scrambling. In several places we chose to scramble up rock outcroppings to avoid the drudgery of steep scree, which has a strong tendency to flow downhill. Once we gained the east ridge at 6500 feet (6400 feet in Bill's report), our route deviated from Bill's. We chose to scramble up the rock along the ridge verses working the scree covered bench on the south side. In general, the route is steep, but exposure is minimal.

We reached the summit at 8:40pm, exactly 12 hours after leaving the trailhead. The route had covered roughly 13 miles with 8200 feet of elevation gain. There was a cairn on the summit but no register. Wayne used a Tang jar, which he had brought for this purpose, to start a new register.

A persistent clump of fair weather clouds clung to the top few hundred feet of the mountain, blocking the view. When the clouds periodically opened, we could see similar clouds blocking the summits of neighboring peaks. We knew these clouds typically dispersed near nightfall, so we patiently waited for the view to improve. By 10:15pm most of clouds had dissipated, and the surrounding peaks and valleys were bathed in the spectacular hews of late-day light. Since it was getting late, we reluctantly began the 3500 foot descent to our bivy site near the lake below. Small scree and a few remaining snow gullies made for a fast descent, allowing us to reach the lake by 11:40pm.

As we bedded down on the soft moist vegetation, I was finally able to appreciate the sleeping bag, bivy sack and full-length foam pad that had been my burden throughout the day. Wayne, who is more hard-core, opted out of bringing a pad.

The next day dawned sunny and warm. Having accomplished our goal, we got off to a leisurely 9am start. Retracing our path, we hiked back to Crow Pass under a sweltering July sun, reaching the trailhead at 7pm.

Magic Land

By Stu Grenier

The annual MCA Ski Trip over the Ship Creek Valley Trail went from Indian to Arctic Valley this year on Sunday 2/29. The recon for this trip was Tuesday 2/24 and the overnight trail clearing party was 2/17-18. All three trips went well because the Snow God was very good to us this year.

Indian to Indian

Fourteen people showed up Sunday morning to do the Indian to Arctic Valley Ski Traverse. They were: Bill Warnock, Chester Gilmore, Kneely Taylor, Annett Iverson, John McCormick, Yulia Percherski, Alysa Pytle, David Post, Rick Hagen, Sage Cohen, Kevin Ewing, Chugach State Park Ranger Matt Wedeking, Co-leader Tom Dolan, and myself. I think this was the biggest MCA group since Dick Griffith lead 25 people over this trail some years back.

The magical beauty of this place hit us like a tidal wave as we glided through what ex-Chugach State Park Superintendent Ale Miner called "the Jewel of the Chugach". Distracted only by the need to apply pam cooking spray to prevent snow balling under our skis or to fix a broken pole, it was a pure endorphine rush with sweet mountain air and divine vistas. The trip took eleven and a half hours for the slowest folks.

Recon

The recon for this trip was the Tuesday before and included Mabelle Haynes, Jon Evenson, Tom Dolan, and myself. Donna Klecka played catch up after starting an hour late. We met her because a return skier told us about seeing her at the Indian Trail head, so we waited and gave Donna a ride.

I jokingly called this trip Indian to Indian because we went from Arctic Valley and Mabelle is Tlingit. Most of us found conditions too fast to ski, so we walked the steep down hills; Jon and Tom skied all the way to the Seward Highway from the top of Indian Creek Pass. We set a lot of trail and confirmed that there was at least one ice bridge near the crossing area.

Trail Clearing

John McCormick and I enjoyed a day of trail clearing and an overnight campout. My dog Rascal hauled in the four foot lumberman saw, and we took out many trees blocking the trail and enjoyed hotdogs and merlot slushies around the fire. Sleeping under the stars with a hooting owl made things perfect.

It was very nice to have winter back in the valley after a two year hiatus.



TRIP REPORTS

Mile High Peak (el. 5331, Sec. 7, T14N, R1E, S.M.)

Western Chugach Mountains

By Steve Gruhn

After a fun spring and summer of leading hikes, I settled back in the fall of 2002 and began to wait for the onset of winter and the cross-country skiing season. Unfortunately, it never really came.

So, in early November, in an effort to stave off cabin fever, I contacted as many of the people who had been on my trips as I could think of and asked if they would like to try some late season, minimal daylight hiking in the Meadow Creek drainage. Only two people were interested – Ross Noffsinger and Leslie Robbins.

On November 9, 2002, we started at the Mile High Saddle trailhead and hiked up the steep trail to Mile High Saddle at about 2,300 feet (Sec. 9, T14N, R1W, S.M.). Now that we were warmed up we descended gradually into the Meadow Creek drainage to the north and east of Mile High Saddle.

After jumping the creek, Ross found a good path through the low willows on the north side of the stream. We followed this upstream a couple miles, stirring up several bull moose and a large flock of willow ptarmigan. Near the head of the valley, we climbed up the west ridge of Mile High Peak straight to the summit. The footing was at times a little difficult because there were only a couple inches of wind-packed snow on the leeward south slope and ice on the north side of the ridge. Ross and his dog led the way to the summit and we ate lunch on top, admiring the views of the Peters Creek drainage.

We chose to descend by glissading one-at-a-time down a snow-filled gully to the southwest of the summit. The wind-packed snow made for a very fast glissade and Leslie lost control and lost her pack, which came hurtling toward me down below. Luckily, I was able to catch it and she was able to resume glissading down to Ross and me.

From the base of the gully, we hiked up to the east ridge of Mount Magnificent (el. 4272, Sec. 11, T14N, R1W, S.M.) and soon found ourselves on top, signing the register. Leslie and I opted to contour around Tucker Peak (el. 3658, Sec. 10, T14N, R1W, S.M.) on the return to Mile High Saddle, but Ross wanted to climb it. Tucker Peak is not a true peak, but more of a bump on the west ridge of Mount Magnificent. I had first climbed it in 1992 and was content to wait for Ross at Mile High Saddle.

While I waited for Ross at the saddle, Leslie decided to climb Peak 2831 (Sec. 9, T14N, R1W, S.M.) west of Mile High Saddle. I sat waiting on the side of the trail as the sun set and along came Jim Szender, his daughter, and their dog. We chatted for a bit and Ross showed up. I was starting to get chilly, so after a bit more chatting, Ross and I headed down the trail slowly. Leslie caught up with us at the trailhead.

It was wonderful to free ourselves of the cabin fever at the outset of what was to become a non-winter.

TRIP PLANNING

Evening Hikes for 2004

by Deb Luper

It's no secret that I enjoy our MCA evening hikes and ... that it's time to start planning ones for 2004 (yippee, yippee!). I am hoping that many trip leaders step forward and add to the schedule.

To encourage more variety in trips and leaders, I'd like to share some of my experiences from the past couple of years. Traditionally, we start out in mid-April with short, easy evening hikes and save the longer ones for summer.

Trip Planning. I schedule trips about two months in advance in order to get the trip approved by the Hiking/Climbing Committee, published in the Scree, and on the web. Here's my own opinion on how that looks for a typical trip in May:

- Mid - March – Submit May trip plans to MCA Hiking/Climbing Chair (sometimes 1 week to find someone at home and get a response)
- By March 31 – Submit May trip plans to Scree editor for the current month (i.e., April Scree in this case). Note that since the Scree typically comes out about the 10th of the month, trips for the first part of month are past before the Scree issues – so plan ahead and give MCA members the chance to do the same by aiming to get the trip in two issues of the Scree.
- April (third Wednesday) – Bring trip sign-up sheet to the MCA meeting and make trip announcement

To cut down on work for myself (like calling folks with trip information) and encourage last minute participation, I like to publish the trip meeting time and place in the Scree as well as necessary equipment and anticipated hazards. However, this means that if someone shows up at the trailhead unprepared and I judge they would be unsafe to themselves or the group, I turn them back – not that I've had any problems.

As a trip leader, sometimes it is hard to commit to a specific date in the future and indeed sometimes I couldn't make my own scheduled trip. But I've always found that someone was willing to step forward and lead the trip in my absence – as I am certainly willing to fill-in for other trip leaders when necessary.

Trip Updates. Things change — trail conditions, avalanche hazard. If they do, I contact the folks on the sign-up sheet and typically email the MCA list server. Unfortunately, folks that didn't sign up or who call me the day of the trip may not get the information. Oh well – it's the best we can do.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board minutes
02-10-2004

Committee/Guest Business:

- 1) Huts – a new hut brainstorming committee will be formed. Contact Huts chairperson Hans Neidig or President Jayme Mack to participate in this early March session.
- 2) Training – New equipment has arrived for the upcoming mountaineering school. Ropes, helmets, alpine axes, crampons. Available for class only.
- 3) Equipment – All club equipment loan requires a deposit to prevent chronic theft. All gear stored at Steve Parry's house. Check out procedure currently in draft. Ropes and FRS radios available for training only. Board voted to approve deposit for all loaned gear, at replacement value of equipment.

Old Business:

- 1) Director's and Officer's liability being reviewed by Hans. Discussed need to develop leader training curriculum, safety protocols on sanctioned trips, pre-trip safety reviews for all MCA trips, incident protocols in case of incident on MCA trips, and the general lack of demonstrable safety protocols within the club. Hans Neidig will issue a report by March meeting on his findings and potential solutions. Board discussed contacting Deb Ajango for advise on ways to minimize liability of officers. This might include paying Deb for a professional analysis and recommendation of our current system, or lack thereof. To be discussed further in March.
- 2) MCA liability release found to be out of compliance with by-laws. Release states signature only required to participate in club trips, by-laws state ALL members must sign release. Board voted to have a club attorney review the release.
- 3) EPIRB/PLB – club waiting for latest model to be release in April before purchasing through a discounted source.

New Business:

- 1) LCD projector purchase proposed by Bill Romberg for club slideshows. Shawn will research cost and options for next meeting
- 2) Gear donated by Alaska pararescue Jumpers (PJ's). MCA will have available at the March meeting for club members to obtain with an appropriate donation to the new hut construction fund. Details to follow.

Next board meeting:

Tuesday March 16 at Harry's restaurant.

Evening Hikes, cont.

Helping New Trip Leaders. I would especially encourage folks that may not yet be an official MCA trip leader, or lack first aid, or don't know where to go, or have an idea, but are not sure how to make it into a trip. When faced with these limitations, my personal (favorite) response is to recruit a co-leader.

The following "official" trip leaders indicated they are happy to co-lead trips or offer advice: Amy Murphy (338-3979 or hayduchesslives@yahoo.com), Steve Gruhn (344-1219 or Steven.Gruhn@hartcrowser.com), Chuck Kennedy (243-6105), or me, Deb Luper (345-3543; dahabo@yahoo.com). Feel free to contact any of us.

See you in the Chugach!

Be prepared, stick together, help each other.

ADZE

For Sale

Koflach Vario-soft plastic double boots US 7.5. These were a mail order mistake, used once only to find out the size was wrong. NEW conditon. \$100.00

Pat 677-2700 or dancer53@gci.net

Partners Wanted

Will be in Alaska for the period of May 15- August 20, 2004 for some Alpine Climbing, rafting, and backpacking. Looking for partner(s) to share the experience with. If you think you might be interested, my e-mail address is jecall2001@yahoo.com. I am very open to suggestions as to fun trips.

Jack Call, jecall2001@yahoo.com 1450 Goodrich, Lander, Wy 82520

For Sale

Ice Axe: KONG Raid, 75cm. - \$35 **Metolius Crash Pad:** New, never crashed - \$75 **Backpacks:** Dana Designs Big Sky - \$40 Great condition. Hardly used. Clean. Optional side pockets included. 2700+ cubic inches. **Wild Things Andanista** - \$150 Never, ever used!! **Boots:** La Sportiva Makalu - \$50 - Well cared for. Lots of life left in these. Good for scree slopes. Size 40. (Women's 7) **Trango Plus** – Hardly used. Great alpine boot. Crampon compatible. 2 Pair. Sizes 39.5 & 45.5 (Women's 7 & Men's 10.5/11) **Sleeping Bag:** Feathered Friends Peregrine. -25°F. 37 oz 700 fill + 4oz over fill. Gore-Tex. Girth: 64/60/39 \$300 All prices are 'OBO'!!

Kevin 276-6299 or kturk@alaska.net

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Officers

President	Jayme Mack	694-1500
Vice-President	Carl Battreall	258-0075
Secretary	Dave Hart	868-2673
Treasurer	Joe Klumberton	751-7001

Board Directors

Richard Baranow	694-1500
Matt Nedom	278-3648
Hans Neidig	357-2026
Randy Howell	346-4608
Sean Bolender	333-0213

Annual membership dues: Single \$10.00
 Family \$15.00 (one Scree per family)

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 treasurer. The post office does not forward the newsletter.

SCREE is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles and notes submitted for publication and other communication related to the newsletter should be mailed to Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage, AK 99510, or e-mailed to mtndamsel@alaska.net. Articles should be received by April 12th to be included in the April issue. Sorry, no exceptions.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be "camera ready" and pre-paid. Your cooperation will be appreciated... Amsl Apflauer, Editor.

Missing your MCA membership card? If so, stop by one of our monthly meetings to pick it up or send us a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

MAILING LIST/DATABASE ENTRY: don smith

HIKING/CLIMBING CHAIR: richard baranow, 694-1500, matt nedom, 278-3648,

HUTS: hans neidig, 357-2026 or hansn@mtaonline.net

EQUIPMENT CHAIR: carl battreall, 258-0075 or carlbattreall@yahoo.com

CALENDAR CHAIR: stu grenier, 337-5127 or oinkmenow@hotmail.com

WEB: www.mcak.org (go here to change your address)

MAILING LIST SERVICE: mcak@yahoogroups.com

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

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