



# the **SCREE**

**Mountaineering Club of Alaska**

**March 2007**

**Volume 50 Number 3**

**Women on Ice**

**Ice road to Mt Susitna**

**Mount Blachnitzky**

**Penguin Peak**

**Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher  
William Wordsworth**

**Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, March 21st @ 7:30 PM  
Program: Dave Hart on climbing the  
highest 22 peaks in Alaska and Canada**

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

*"To maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering"*

Join us for our club meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9<sup>th</sup> and G Streets next to the Philips Building (you may use marked parking after hours)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org)

**Cover photo:** Dean Carman photographs Carlene Van Tol as she runs laps on a toprope at the Matanuska Glacier in the summer. Lots of Ice climbing can be found at Mat Glacier all summer long. This month we have a report from Carlene, 'Women on Ice' about the Women's Ice Fest at Echo Bend in February. Also check out the Valdez women's ice festival notice under 'Ice Pixies' in this issue.

**Article Submission:** Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can also attach a word processing document to an email. Due to formatting problems please do not submit material in the body of an email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

March 3, Arctic to Indian

Annual day ski traverse between Arctic Valley and Indian. About 24 miles of back country travel. Possible open water crossing and unbroken trail. AV gear and skins. Fairly experienced folks only. Stu Grenier oinkmenow@hotmail.com 337-5127

March 3: Moose Trail Loop ski

From N. Bivouac Trailhead. Class A. Approximately 4 mile loop through the woods and over small rolling hills. Plan on 1-2 hours. Call or email Margie for info and to sign up. 952-5492 or [alaskamarge@gci.net](mailto:alaskamarge@gci.net) Well behaved dogs welcome.

March 11, South Suicide Peak

Class C. This Peak lies in the southern part of the Anchorage Front Range. We will travel to the Falls Creek trail head and ascend this peak in one day. Contact Sean Bolender [seanbolender@gmail.com](mailto:seanbolender@gmail.com)

March 14: After Work Snow Shoe/Hike

Daylight Savings Time Appreciation trip. Class A. About a 4 mile loop through to the Prospect Heights area from Basher Road. Plan on about

2-2.5 hours. Well behaved dogs welcome. Call or email Margie for info and to sign up. 952-5492 or [alaskamarge@gci.net](mailto:alaskamarge@gci.net)

March 22, Peak 2831 (Mile High Saddle)

Class B. After-work hike starting at 5:30 p.m.

Contact leader at least 24 hours before trip.

Leader: Steve Gruhn,

[steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com)

868-9118 (w)/344-1219 (h)

March 24, Pepper Peak, Salt Peak, Peak 5285, and

Peak 5450 (Goat Creek and Yuditnu Creek)

Class D. Early start. Bring ice axe and

crampons. Contact leader at least 24 hours

before trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn,

[steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com) 868-9118

(w)/344-1219 (h)

March 25, Tikishla Peak

Class C. Yet another of Anchorage's classic mountain climbs. This will be a one day ascent

of Tikishla. Contact Sean Bolender,

[seanbolender@gmail.com](mailto:seanbolender@gmail.com)

March 25 – 31, Bomber Traverse  
Glacier travel, Elevation gain 6,100 feet Contact:  
Greg Bragiel, 569-3008

least 24 hours before trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn,  
steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com 868-9118 (w)  
344-1219 (h)

March 27, Falls Creek  
Class B. After-work hike starting at 5:30  
p.m. Contact leader at least 24 hours before  
trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn,  
steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com 868-9118 (w)  
344-1219 (h)

April 14 & 15, Eklutna Traverse training weekend  
Must attend if you are going on the club ET trip.  
Contact: Greg Bragiel 569-3008

March 29, Mount Eklutna  
Class C. After-work hike starting at 6 p.m.  
Contact leader at least 24 hours before trip.  
Leader: Steve Gruhn,  
steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com 868-9118 (w)  
344-1219 (h)

April 17, Indian Valley  
Class A. After-work hike starting at 5:30 p.m.  
Contact leader at least 24 hours before trip.  
Leader: Steve Gruhn,  
steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com 868-9118 (w)  
344-1219 (h)

April 5, Rainbow Peak  
Class D. After-work hike starting at 5:30 p.m.  
Contact leader at least 24 hours before trip.  
Leader: Steve Gruhn,  
steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com 868-9118 (w)  
344-1219 (h)

April 21 & 22, Lane Hut Ski trip & peaks  
Class C. This will be a Saturday and Sunday  
overnight trip to the Lane Hut and Lane glacier.  
An ascent of the surrounding peaks above the  
Lane glacier is planned for Sunday. Contact  
Sean Bolender,  
seanbolender@gmail.com

April 7, South Suicide Peak, North Suicide Peak,  
and Rainbow Peak Class D. Early start. Bring  
ice axe and crampons. Contact leader at least  
24 hours before trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn,  
steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com 868-9118 (w)  
344-1219 (h)

April 29 – May 5, Eklutna Traverse  
Glacier Travel, elevation gain 6,000, 30+ miles.  
Contact: Greg Bragiel 569-3008

April 12, Peak 3980 (Ship Creek and South Fork of  
the Eagle River) Class B. After-work hike, ski,  
or snowshoe starting at 6 p.m. Contact leader at

July 20 – August 3 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge  
Class B/C. The trip may include elevation gains  
over 2,000 feet on day hikes. Destination will be  
Lake Peters to Canning River with possible  
climb up Mt Chamberlin or set up base camp at  
Red Sheep airstrip along the Chandalar River  
and do 2 one week loop trips in the area.  
Leader: Don Hansen, donjoehansen@msn.com.

## **Afternoon on a hill** **Edna St. Vincent Millay**

I will be the gladdest thing,  
Under the sun!  
I will touch a hundred flowers  
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds  
With quiet eyes,  
Watch the wind bow down the grass,  
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show  
Up from the town,  
I will mark which must be mine,  
And then start down!

# Women on Ice

By Carlene Van tol

Jayme Mack-Dixon leads up Spruce Pitch



Photo by Michelle Gossett

It was late Friday night when Michelle and I arrived at the Eagle River Nature Center parking lot. Our destination was Rapids Camp yurt, where Jayme and a few others had gone in earlier. We were heading in under headlamp, knowing it made more sense to go in the night before than to try to get up early the next day; we are both night owls and would be up late anyhow. Since I was on skis pulling a sled, I told Michelle I'd wait for her at the bottom of the hill as we started down from the nature center. To my surprise, even without skis Michelle was right behind me; turns out she had jumped onto her loaded sled and rode it down the hill, making good time and nearly passing me in the process. We were both thankful she didn't wipe out. We continued uneventfully and when we reached Rapid Camps yurt, we made our camp out in the snow so as not to disturb anyone inside the yurt.

Saturday morning we got up and went inside the yurt to have breakfast, enjoying the warmth of the wood stove, and chatting with Jayme, Margie, Shelley, and Liliya. The rest of the participants showed up that morning; some waited until Saturday morning because of work schedules and wanting to come in with daylight; others simply did not desire two nights out in the snow. Though we hoped to be hiking to the climbs by 10, we were a bit late taking off, which was not surprising. We had a "baker's dozen" on this trip and I have always known the "fiddle factor" to go up based on the number of folks involved. This group included many levels of experience.

After a delayed start, we all hiked to Spruce Pitch to spend the day honing our skills. After setting up four top ropes, we were ready to start working on our skills, whether learning them for the first time or just honing what we had been shown in the past. We covered belaying, good tool swing, solid feet, and being in balance while moving up the ice. While the importance of safety was stressed, we also wanted everyone to have fun and feel comfortable, asking for help in areas they wanted to improve. It was fun to be on a top rope and get to push our limits. We even had a nice little "mixed" climb on the left which required some delicate tool and foot placements; quite surprising when you expect something to blow and it doesn't! It didn't take long for some to call it a day; I think with another day of climbing ahead the thought was to pace for the weekend. With no mishaps, comfortable temperatures, and everyone getting their fill of climbing, day one was a success.

After getting back to Rapids Camp, those who had shown up in the morning set up their tents; others started boiling water to get hot drinks and dinner. We fired up the wood stove in the yurt, and spent a good portion of the evening soaking in the warmth, enjoying the company and stories of others, in addition to sharing some delicious hot beverages. We had spread the ropes to dry, along with hanging a lot of gloves and assorted layers, draped around the walls of the yurt. Not the "Better Homes and Gardens" that some of you would expect from a group of gals. Actually it was quite organized; it just seems a bit chaotic with so many in such a small space. It was fun to get to know each other more and hear what the thoughts had been while out on the ice earlier that day. As energy started to fade, we said our good nights and went back out into the

cold to find our tents and rest our bodies before another physical day.

Day 2 we woke up to clear skies and chilly temperatures. Though it had gotten quite cold the night before, everyone reported staying warm through the night. We enjoyed breakfast inside the yurt, warming our boots near the wood stove and making sure we had hot drinks to sip on. We started earlier, as some of the group wanted to head back in the early afternoon. A few chose to skip the climbing and lingered in camp longer before heading home. Though much colder, the sun was out and the clear sky gave us a beautiful blue backdrop as we gazed at the mountains around us--a great photo-taking day. As we hiked up to Echo Bend, we could see where we had been the day before. It looked small in comparison to the landscape, however, using it for scale we had an appreciation for some of the other spectacular climbs to be had in the area as we gazed at Hollow Icicle and Three Ring Circus...

We spent some time covering anchors and top belays in the morning. Larah did her first follow with Carol leading, and then did her first rappel on the

way back down; it was so cool to see someone who was not fond of being lowered now rappelling on her own and feeling so good about it. We continued with more top roped skill-honing, trying to keep warm as the temperature was much cooler this second day out. Since we had "stolen" a few students from the club's beginning mountaineering course, a few worked on self-arrest on the hill below the climbs. Some participants left early but a few die-hards hung in there until we knew it was time to get things wrapped up and head back. We even managed to get to the parking lot before nightfall, which was new for me, but we had had our fill and felt satisfied with what had been done.

Trip participants were: Larah Alami, Natalia Aulenbacher, Kathy Avellaneda, Shelley Biss, Margie Goodman, Michelle Gossett, Carol Jewell, Jayme Mack-Dixon, Sue Sears, Geran Tarr, Carlene Van Tol, Liliya Vugmeyster, and Kate Yenik. Mary Cahill paid us a visit on Sunday afternoon as she wanted to hike out and see the climbs, but decided to head back home for a skijor later that day. Thanks to all for your participation, humor, and fun factor! I hope we all see each other on the ice again soon!



## Peak of the Month

by Steve Gruhn

Name: **The Dragon's Spine**

Mountain Range: Alaska Range

Area: Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Drainage: Pika Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 62°44'20" North, 151°12'33" West

Elevation: 7490 feet

Prominence (nearest higher parent peak): 1540 feet (Peak 8450 near the East Fork of the Granite Creek Glacier and the Kanikula Glacier)

Distinctness (from nearest adjacent peak): 740 feet from Dragon's Head (7250)

Adjacent Peak(s): Dragon's Head (7250) to the north-northeast and Peak 7060 (near the Pika Glacier) to the north-northwest

USGS Map: Talkeetna (C-3), Alaska

First Recorded Ascent: July 26, 1976, by Brian Okonek and Roger Robinson

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Southeast snow couloir to the northeast ridge

Access Point: Kahiltna Base Camp - about 7400 feet on the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier

After only the second recorded foray by mountaineers into the area now known as Little Switzerland, Brian Okonek made a cursory report on page 157 of the 1977 American Alpine Journal of his climb of The Dragon's Spine with Roger Robinson. He followed up with a slightly more detailed account of their climb on page 512 of the 1978 American Alpine Journal, in which he named the 7490-foot peak "The Dragon's Spine." While the first ascent of this peak was largely a snow climb up the southeast-facing couloir and along the northeast ridge, there is some challenging rock climbing to be had on the southwest face. A picture of a climber on the southwest face appears on page 180 of the 1985 American Alpine Journal.

Although the first ascent party started from the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier, subsequent parties have landed on the Pika Glacier south of The Dragon's Spine.

In June 1984, Reese Martin rated his 30-hour climb of the 65-degree southwest face with Pete Pollard and John Rich as NCCS IV, F10, A1 (page 179 of the 1985 AAJ).

<http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?lat=62.7389&lon=-151.20929&datum=nad27&u=6&layer=DRG50&size=l&s=250>

# Ice Road to Mt Susitna

By Tim Kelley



Here is a map of the Chugach Electric Association Susitna Ice Road. It goes from the end of Ayreshire Road, across the Little Susitna River, out across the Susitna Game Flats to the Big Susitna River and then down the Dynamite Slough where they are fixing transmission towers.

The ice road is open to the public. And driving out 15 miles and parking on Bell Island allows a unique opportunity to access Mt. Susitna easily. The ice road should be open until the middle of March. Studded tires are needed and drivers must keep an eye out for trucks and heavy equipment.

On the website [crust.outlookalaska.com](http://crust.outlookalaska.com) I put a link near the top of the page to a YouTube video I made about traveling the ice road. You will see the note "MCA folks ... this is the Scree video link".

## Close enough? Better Hurry



*Note that there are now signs saying that the ice bridges at Fish Creek and the Little Su will be removed on March 6, but, the road will still get you close. – Ed.*

# First Ascent of Mt. Blachnitzky and Peak 6500' on the Juneau Icefield

by Keith K. Daellenbach



Chuck Daellenbach and Keith Daellenbach on Mt Blachnitzky

This article first appeared in the June 2004 Mazamas Journal. It is reprinted here with permission of the Mazamas. [www.mazamas.org](http://www.mazamas.org)

This expedition had its genesis in a tragedy that occurred in 1988 when I participated in a summer glaciological research program on the Juneau Icefield of southeast Alaska. Klaus Blachnitzky was head surveyor that season and, at 67, had a grandfather-like bearing with enthusiasm and a gift of sharing. He taught me surveying fundamentals and helped me apply engineering mechanics to the study of glacial movement.

Klaus was a strong skier and could leave most young whippersnappers behind when skiing back to camp after a long day of surveying. He told me stories of how, on the Russian front during World War II, he kept warm by stuffing newspaper under his clothing. He escaped his regiment near the war's end and was captured by an African-American G.I., "the first Negro I had ever seen" -- and spent the remaining days of the war as a German-English translator for Allied troops.

In mid-August, while making a straight-forward descent down a cleaver into the Gilkey Trench, tragedy struck. Klaus lost his footing and tumbled over a precipice. Klaus plummeted into a deep moat at the cliff's base and died. Scott McGee and I were nearby when he fell. We extracted his broken body, and he was flown off the icefield by helicopter for a long journey home to Bavaria.

A stunning peak, visible from the cleaver, was named in his honor. Scott, of Anchorage, Alaska, and I dreamed of making a memorial first ascent of Mt. Blachnitzky. I assembled a climbing "dream team" of well-tested friends including Scott; my father, Chuck, of Albany, Oregon; and long-time climbing associate Fred Skemp III of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

After months of plotting gear, food, and routes, the four of us arrived in Juneau on June 28. The next morning, after packing gear in the helicopter hangar and drawing up final flight plans, we were off. We flew over the Herbert, Eagle, and Thiel glaciers, past towering spires, and over the Trench, which looks like a fjord that has been filled with a river of glacial ice striped by medial moraines instead of

water. We stopped briefly, helicopter blades still churning, at the rim of Avalanche Canyon ("Avcan") to stow our skis and ski boots -- they were not needed for our mountaineering objectives.

Back into the helicopter, and we were deposited at about 2,000 feet in the Trench on the bare ice of the Gilkey Glacier. As the sounds of the helicopter dissipated, we found ourselves deep in the Alaskan wilderness. We could hear running water of supraglacial streams and felt the cold, down-glacier katabatic wind. Taking advantage of clearing weather, we quickly cached gear and food and began our ascent of Mt. Blachnitzky.

### The Gilkey Trench



The Gilkey has downwasted a few hundred feet since the maximum advance of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Little Ice Age glaciation, so we first had to climb a steep and loose flank directly off the glacier to the vegetation trimline. Above was a morass of scrub alder, willow, and hemlock krummholz that we laboriously bushwhacked through. At about 3,500 feet, we escaped the thicket and entered a beautiful alpine tundra of heather, wildflowers, and small snowmelt rivulets. Here, in this Shangri-la, we made camp, certain no one had ever visited this tarn before.

It was raining in the morning, but we decided to head up anyway, hoping conditions would improve. We climbed a 600-foot snow gully that steepened to 45 degrees and topped out on a broad bench. The rain stopped, and we continued to climb easy snow tongues into the high southwest cirque on the mountain's upper flank. Here, we roped up and simul-climbed, using pickets to protect a steep, exposed section as we gained the upper south ridge.

On this beautiful stroll, we approached the summit with quiet reverence. The sky was free of clouds,

and the scenery was jaw dropping. The view 4,000 feet into the Trench below was dramatic, with its massive river of ice and heavily crevassed mountain flanks; clearly we had found the easiest way up. Granite nunataks jutted above the high glacial plateau. Scott and I shared pleasant and humorous anecdotes of Klaus and unfurled Bavarian and United States flags.

We also spread the ashes of our friend and fellow icefield compatriot Allen H. Throop of Corvallis, Oregon. Allen was on the Mazamas-supported 2001 Juneau Icefield traverse expedition and died in April after a courageous struggle with ALS. On that high summit, in a remote quadrant of the Alaskan Coast Range, there was something transcendent in reaching out to the eternal by memorializing departed comrades with the esteemed company gathered. We left several surveying mementos from Klaus' widow, Hannelore, a poem I had written for Allen, a Colby College pennant (Allen's alma mater), two small pewter crosses, and a summit register in a metal container underneath a cairn we built.

Fog had been creeping into the valleys below, and by the time we left the summit, the mist had risen to envelop all but the mountain's upper pinnacle. We made our way quietly off the summit and retraced our route to our tarn camp for another night at Shangri-la. The following day, we continued our descent to our cache at the "confluence camp" where the Gilkey intersects Avcan and the Bucher Glacier.

As a student researcher years ago, I spied a stunning peak west-southwest and over 10 miles distant from the Vaughan Lewis Glacier cleaver, also unclimbed. It dominated an island of peaks bordered on three sides by the Antler, Bucher, and Gilkey glaciers with subsidiary peaks stretching west to the Lynn Canal. In preparation for the expedition, I pored over USGS maps examined old slides of this distant peak.

From confluence base camp, we trekked six miles up the Bucher Glacier. When the peak finally came into view up a narrow cirque, I knew our work was cut out for us. Early in the morning, Fred and I lighted out of camp for the north-northeast ridge of Peak 6500'. Dad and Scott opted for a peaceful day in camp watching our progress through a monocular. Upon gaining the toe of the ridge, I spotted an adult mountain goat with kid. We followed the hoof prints of these sure-footed beasts up steep snow slopes and onto the ridge proper.



Our first obstacle was a satellite pinnacle, which we skirted, passing through a heavily crevassed flank. This took us to the upper thousand feet of the summit pinnacle. The "ridge" I had hoped to climb revealed itself to be rather a highly dissected buttress. We altered our plans and instead crossed the summit glacier poised precariously above an icefall. The gradient steepened to 55 degrees, and we belayed five pitches up and across this hanging glacier, finally gaining the security of a rock buttress leading to the southeast ridge.

Fred led a fifth-class rock pitch off the glacier, and I took the next lead requiring two-tooled work up a short ice pitch. More steep snow followed and finally some fourth-class climbing along the southeast ridge to the summit. We let out a shout of joy and relief, which Dad later reported hearing two miles away at camp. The exploratory nature of this wilderness climb and seeing summit views previously experienced by no other person, along with the challenging mixed climbing, made this an extremely gratifying climb. All other peaks in the vicinity were below us, and even the steely skies and cold, hard expanse surrounding us warmed my heart.

#### Keith Daellenbach on Peak 6500



The view 6,000 feet below to the Gilkey Glacier terminus struck me as a northern latitude version of the Inferno from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, with swirling coffee-brown water boiling from beneath the glacier's terminus and gigantic seracs floating in a terminus lake. We left a metal summit container with summit register, United States flag, and small pewter cross under a cairn. We carefully descended from the summit pinnacle with rappels and belayed down-climbing to a victor's welcome at the Bucher moraine camp.

Our 50-mile egress from the icefield required several days of travel. We scouted and made the first-ever traverse from the Trench over precarious ledges and seracs into Avcan. We crawled and hacked our way through thicket-choked Avcan, making camp near the rushing torrent that drained glaciers far up the valley.

The next morning, Fred belayed me as I forded the 70-foot wide river. I unbuckled my pack's waist belt and carefully waded through the cold rushing water, balancing with my ski poles. The others followed, and Fred, slightly shorter than me, reported "tea bagging" it across. We climbed 2,000 feet out of Avcan and Scott, a GPS wizard, located our skis in the fog. Continuing on, we skied across the "high ice" and camped on the southwest ridge of Taku D, a nunatak at the confluence of the Northwest Taku and Matthes glaciers, which we climbed the next morning.

We continued several more days skiing across broad glaciers. At Echo Pass, we paused and deposited the rest of Allen's ashes. This place was particularly memorable from our 2001 traverse, for it was here that Allen had the presentiment, "If I never skied again, this tour would be enough." After 13 days, we made our way to civilization in Alaska's capital, Juneau, and feasted on salmon, halibut, and Alaska King Crab, reveling in our successes and deepened friendships.

We are grateful for the financial support provided by a Mazamas Expedition Grant and for the Juneau liaison of Dr. and Mrs. Maynard M. Miller of the Foundation for Glacier and Environmental Research.

#### Climbs:

Mt. Blachnitzky: 6,552'; N58°47'48" W134°23'38"; First ascent on 30 June 2004 via southwest cirque/south ridge, 45 degrees snow, class 3 rock; Charles B. Daellenbach, Keith K. Daellenbach, Scott McGee, Fred Skemp III

Peak 6500': 6,500'; N58°48'17" W134°35'56", First ascent on 4 July 2004 via *Independence Route*: north-northeast ridge/northeast face/southeast ridge, 55 degree snow, 5.3 rock, W12 ice; Keith K. Daellenbach, Fred Skemp III

Taku D: 5,810'; N58°42'17" W134°17'30"; Ascent on 7 July 2004 via southwest ridge, class 3; Charles B. Daellenbach, Keith K. Daellenbach, Scott McGee, Fred Skemp III

# Penguin Peak – A Refreshing Jaunt

by Steve Gruhn

On Tuesday, August 1, 2006, I led another of my after-work MCA hikes. The destination of this one was Penguin Peak (elev. 4334, Sec. 12, T10N, R1W, S.M.), a nice steep hike that starts in the temperate rain forest and travels over alpine tundra and scree to culminate in great views of Turnagain Arm and Penguin Creek. Three other people showed up at the appointed time – Jennifer DuFord, Neil Murphy, and John Recktenwald.

We started from the Bird Valley trailhead about a mile north of the Seward Highway at the end of Konikson Road. The hike began on pretty level terrain by following former logging roads that are now used by all-terrain vehicles and we talked jovially among one another. But after about three-quarters of a mile we turned uphill on an old logging road to the east. And the conversation turned to huffing and puffing. After a few hundred feet this trail petered out into a thicket of alders that has thus far stopped motorized travel. A hikers trail led beyond. This trail quickly became steeper and the huffing and puffing of the party turned into grumbling. But soon the din of complaints became quieter as I had outpaced my partners.

Emerging from the brush, I sat down on the tundra and waited for the rest of the group. They came along shortly and collapsed beside me, panting heavily. After a short rest, I stood up, ready to go. But I spied some litter in a nearby snowfield and went over to pick it up to carry out. Well, the litter turned out to be three sun-bleached, but unopened, cans of Tecate beer. Having seen no other vehicles at the parking lot, I laughed and brought them over to the group.

The labored breathing instantly turned into a discussion of how to split three beers among four people. I solved this by informing the group that I didn't drink. The grumbling complaints and plans to hamstring the trip leader were rapidly replaced by joyous exclamations and offers to accompany on more trips as long as I placed similar ice-cold refreshments in advance.

Jennifer had the idea for each person to carry the beer to the summit and have a celebratory summit toast. We continued hiking at about the same pace as before, but this time I heard neither complaints nor threats of bodily harm. Finding the beer just might have spared my life and limb.

Jennifer had to turn around before we reached the scree so that she could pick up her daughters at the airport. We took a commemorative photograph and the remaining three of us continued uneventfully to the summit. Instead of the celebratory toast, both John and Neil opted to carry the beer back to the parking lot.

Beer is an interesting thing. It seems to reduce complaints despite adding weight to one's pack. I don't think I'll figure that out, but one thing is certain – it can spare the life and limb of an overzealous trip leader. And that's important to me.

For the record, I make no promises that future after-work MCA trips will encounter stashed refreshments along the route.



## Board Meeting Minutes

7 February, 2007

- I. Call to Order at 6:08
- II. Attendance: Annette Iverson, Sarah Ellen Hutchison, Don Hansen, Andy Rembert, Bridget Paule, Sean Bolender, Steve Gruhn, Kneeland Taylor.

### III. Old Business:

Mountaineering Course—Good instructor turnout for weekday lessons, but Steve needs more committed help for the weekend trips, especially this weekend for the avalanche lesson and for Glacier Travel March 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>. Also, snow travel is coming up Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>.

Trip Leaders—The Long Lake trip didn't go for lack of interest. Hatcher's Pass ski trip on Feb 18-19 doesn't have anyone on the list yet, but we won't drop it until a few days before. The trip up O'Malley Peak is full, capped at 6 with a waitlist of 3, but we need a leader. Sean will take this trip if no one else steps up. We also need a leader for the South Suicide climb on Mar.11<sup>th</sup>. Annette has compiled a potential leader list and will email them. Kneely volunteers to be the backup leader for this trip.

President's Award—Sean would like to recognize Greg Bragiel for his exceptional contributions over the last year in training, huts work and with membership. The award is a \$50 gift certificate to AMH. Greg is awarded for the 2006 year and the Awards Committee will still accept nominations for 2007—nominations due by Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>. There is discussion about the need for more nominations and general recognition and awards for outstanding members.

Incorporation Paperwork—The MCA is current for now on our non-profit corporation status, but renewal is coming up this spring. Travis and Sean are working on this, but all board members and officers should have more information on this process.

#### IV. New Business:

Commercial use of Huts—The huts on the Eklutna Traverse are owned by Chugach State Park but are maintained by the MCA and we can't restrict access. However, according to our lease agreement with the Department of Natural Resources, for those huts that we own (all the rest of the huts), only MCA members are allowed to use them and no commercial activity is permitted. Currently, several commercial groups including the Colorado Mountain School and The Ascending Path use photos or mention of our huts in their promotional materials. They also seem to routinely use the huts for their guiding activities, as do several MCA members. There are several things we can do: write additional letters to the organizations, block access to the huts, and/or post or repair signs at the huts clearly stating their non-commercial and MCA-only restrictions.

The conclusion is that if we write letters to the offending groups/individuals, and make sure the policy is posted at the huts, we should be fairly safe. Sarah Ellen, Andy and Kneely will work together to draft another letter specifying our "no advertising, no photos, no use" policy. They will try to have a draft by the next General Meeting and we'll mention it in the Scree and at the General Meeting.

Meekins Grant—Two years ago a young man applied for this award. Subsequently, he changed his plan and now has a third trip proposal, which he would like to postpone until 2008. The Awards Committee requested direction from the Board on this grant application. It is unanimously recommended not to extend the grant award as this applicant does not meet the requirements of the award.

Huts Grant—After corresponding with the Mountaineer's Foundation, it seems better to submit a grant proposal for a huts project with a longer timeline than Greg's privy project, which is already in the works. Possibly a similar project for Bomber or Scandinavian Hut? We need Greg's input to construct a solid project for the grant proposal. Applications deadlines are every several months throughout the year so we have plenty of opportunities.

Board of Game Regulations—Kneeland Taylor has drafted a letter commenting on several of the proposed regulation changes that are coming before the Board of Game this spring. He would like to see the MCA Board submit an official comment of these regulations. Two years ago, the Board submitted a similar letter commenting on regulation changes. This year there are three main sets of proposals which Mr. Taylor believes may affect club members in Chugach State Park: the authorization of wolverine trapping (currently outlawed); opening a black bear hunt in Eagle River Valley that would run through June and extend further downstream with an increased bag limit; and a new brown bear hunt on upper hillside. Risks include hiker safety, safe access and negative impact to the resources of the Park. We will review Kneely's letter and offer comments focusing on the potential direct impacts to

the Club's regular activities. Comments are due by Friday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>.

Board Member Handbook updates—please make notes of any updates that should be made and we will revisit the issue in June.

March Board Meeting—Scheduled for Mar. 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00, Snow Goose Restaurant.

Submitted 2/23/07  
Bridget Paule, Secretary

## General membership Meeting Minutes

21 February, 2007

- I. Call to Order at 7:35
- II. We welcome three new members and visitors
- III. Committee Reports:
  - Hiking & Climbing—please see the Scree and website for upcoming trips.
  - Huts—Greg is putting together the schedule for summer hut maintenance trips, please contact him for more information on how to help. Also, if you will be traveling to one of the huts, check in with Greg to see if there is anything you can take, bring back or check on.
  - Training—Steve reports that the mountain school is progressing well with a recent trip up the O'Malley gulley and toward False O'Malley for snow travel practice. The glacier travel weekend will be the final event. Thanks to all the instructors who volunteer their time!
- IV. New Business:
  - Awards and Recognition—Sean Bolender presented the President's Award to Greg Bragiel for his outstanding service to the MCA in the past year. Also recognized were Tim Kelly for his contributions to the Scree, and Stu Grenier for his work on the Calendar Committee (Stu will be accepting horizontal photos beginning in March).
  - Board of Game Public Comments—The MCA Board has submitted a letter commenting on several proposed changes to Fish and Game regulations. Please contact Bridget Paule, Secretary, for a copy of the letter or see the minutes from the Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting for more information.

V. Announcements:

Stu Grenier—He would like to ski up Mt. Susitna in Feb-Mar, which would take about five days. If you're interested in such a trip, contact him.

Greg Bragiel—If any newly trained MCA members would like to give something back, he is looking for people to instruct older Boy Scouts in basic mountaineering skills this summer. If interested, contact Greg and he will put you in touch with Boy Scout groups.

Sean Bolender—Has an AT setup for sale, skis, bindings and skins, contact for more info. Also, a fellow from New York City wants to climb Denali this summer, is looking for partners and has sent us his resume. Contact Sean for information.

VI. Presentation: Tim Kelley broke a 14 year absence from MCA meetings to present slides from his trips climbing on Knight Island in Prince William Sound. Stu Grenier and Bridget Paule played a short show afterwards on a paddle-climb trip to Knight Island in May 2006. *Songs: Mother Ocean, Jimmy Buffett; Over the Rainbow/It's a Wonderful World, Israel Kamakawiwo'ole; Slung-lo, Erin McKeown; Come Away with Me, Nora Jones; Country Roads, Toots and the Maytals; Man of Constant Sorrow, O Brother soundtrack.*

March: Dave Hart on climbing the 22 highest peaks in Alaska and Canada

April: Dolly LeFever on climbing the Seven Summits

Submitted 2/23/07  
Bridget Paule, Secretary

## ICE Pixies

March 8-11

The Alaska Ice Pixie Festival in Valdez: A gathering of women skiers and ice climbers, free if you camp and don't buy anything (yoga, sweatshirts, tattoos!) Info: [www.alaskaicepixies.com](http://www.alaskaicepixies.com)

## Adze

Partners?

Mt. Susitna Ski Accent. Early March about 4 days, Use the new "ice road"

Day skis on weekdays or weekends with climbs or trail clearing near Anchorage. Often Arctic to Indian variations.

Stu [oinkmenow@hotmail.com](mailto:oinkmenow@hotmail.com) or 337-5127

## MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips. **NON-TECHNICAL:** Following are a few standards used to classify nontechnical trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

**CLASS A:** Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

**CLASS B:** Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

**CLASS C:** Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

**CLASS D:** Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

**CLASS E:** Hazardous climbing conditions or stream-crossing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

**TECHNICAL:** Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.

**GLACIER TRAVEL:** Trips requiring roped travel over glaciers. Knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. Basic understanding of ice and snow anchors also required.

**FIFTH CLASS:** Trips which involve fifth class climbing. A Basic Mountaineering course or equivalent is required. Knowledge of belay and rappel techniques and placing anchors is required. Climbing difficulty varies widely with each trip.

**TRIP PARTICIPANTS** have the obligation to acquaint themselves with the nature of the trip and to verify that it is within their capability and experience. Anyone wishing to participate in any trip above CLASS A must have completed one or more trips of the next lower classification, or the equivalent.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

## General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment is available from the trip leader.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. The trip leader can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-prepared (e.g. inappropriate clothing/gear).
4. The leader's suggestions are to be followed. Do not go off alone, return or rush ahead without his (her) permission, and don't ford a stream before the leader assesses the situation. Remember, this is a club trip and the leader must know where all participants are. Anyone separating from the group without the leader's approval is no longer considered a participant the MCA Sanctioned trip.
5. The trip leader has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), dependent upon current conditions. However, he/she must appoint a qualified co-leader to lead the second group using the guidelines specified in the current Trip Leader Responsibilities.
6. Trip participants who, in the leader's opinion, put themselves or other members of the group in danger by disregarding the leader's suggestions, shall be subject to sanction by the club. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand at general meeting, exclusion from future trips, termination of annual membership, or lifetime exclusion from the club.
7. You must sign up on a trip roster (club meetings) or contact the leader, and you must have signed the club waiver to be on a club trip.
8. If you find you cannot participate after signing up on the roster, please let the leader know, both for transportation and gear-planning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.
9. Total number of people on club trips:  
Minimum: 4 (for safety reasons)  
Maximum: Leader option, depends upon the trail and campsite conditions, but generally limited to 12 in trail-less areas or State/ National Parks
10. Firearms are not encouraged, and please let the leader know if you want to carry one - it will be leader's option. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

## 2006 FINAL BUDGET

		Current for 2006	Approved for 2006	Percent of Budget
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Membership Dues	<i>received during calendar year</i>	\$6,543.26	\$7,200.00	91%
Scree subscriptions		\$220.00	\$300.00	73%
Training	<i>ice climbing, crevasse rescue, other</i>	\$5,528.00	\$6,000.00	92%
Photo Calendar		\$2,270.00	\$4,000.00	57%
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$1,175.00	\$2,700.00	44%
Donations		\$235.00	\$0.00	-
Other--Interest on Accounts		\$392.44	\$100.00	392%
Grant - REI/AAC Road Sign Project				-
Bulk Purchase - AMH Avalanche Gear				-
Bulk Purchase - Chugach State Park Maps				-
Bulk Purchase - Alaskana Book Sales				-
Bulk Purchase - Mountain House				-
Other - TRAAK				-
Grant				-
Other -				-
Other -				-
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$16,363.70</b>	<b>\$20,300.00</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>				
Training	<i>campsite and access fees, instructors</i>	\$4,738.20	\$4,800.00	99%
Scree	<i>postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$1,940.65	\$2,000.00	97%
General Meeting	<i>rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$1,473.20	\$2,400.00	61%
Administrative	<i>supplies, forms, PO box, bank fees, rewards, phone</i>	\$584.73	\$500.00	117%
Hut Construction & Maint.	<i>materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees*</i>	\$3,622.47	\$3,000.00	121%
Club Equipment	<i>climbing gear, misc equipment</i>	\$349.98	\$1,800.00	19%
Library	<i>new books, periodicals, Scree binding</i>	\$0.00	\$800.00	-
Other:	<i>miscellaneous expenses</i>	\$0.00		-
Photo Calendar		\$2,403.00	\$3,000.00	80%
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$2,307.50	\$2,500.00	92%
Donations - MCA donations to others				-
Grant - REI/AAC Road Sign Project				-
Bulk Purchase - AMH Avalanche Gear				-
Bulk Purchase - Chugach State Park Maps				-
Bulk Purchase - Alaskana Book Sales				-
Bulk Purchase - Mountain House				-
Other- Meekins				-
Grant		\$225.00	\$520.00	43%
Other - TRAAK				-
Grant				-
Other - Awards		\$249.50	\$300.00	83%
Other - Summit Registers			\$50.00	-
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>		<b>\$17,894.23</b>	<b>\$21,670.00</b>	<b>83%</b>

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**DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE**

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**(\$1,530.53)**

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**CASH BALANCE - All Accounts**

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Beginning Balance - January 1, 2006

\$25,545.07

Increase (decrease) during 2006

**(\$1,530.53)****Current Balance for****2006****\$23,971.54**

Checking - Credit Union 1

**\$4,898.67**

Money Market - Credit Union 1 (1.2%-1.4%)

**\$17,973.58**

Pay Pal

**\$19.39**

18-month CD - in trust for hut lease - Northrim Bank (4%)

**\$1,029.90**

Petty Cash

**\$50.00**

TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS - for 2006

**\$23,971.54**

Ending Balance - December 31, 2006 (See Feb. 07 Scree for 2006 final)

**Final**

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# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Sean Bolender 333-0213  
Vice-President Annette Iverson 222-0581  
Secretary Bridget Paule 337-8163  
Treasurer Travis Taylor 382-4823

Board member Steve Gruhn 344-1219  
Board member Don Hansen 243-7184  
Board member Randy Howell 346-4608  
Board member Andy Rembert 688-3230  
Board member Sara Ellen Hutchison 382-7097

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

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 will not forward the newsletter.

The '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 submitted on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) or mailed to Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage Alaska 99510. Articles should be received by February 21st to be in the March Issue.

Paid Ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be 'camera ready' and pre-paid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by our monthly meeting to pick it up or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant 243-1438  
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell – 346-4608, Jayme Dixon – 382-0212  
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008  
Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127  
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 346-2589  
Web: [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) (change your address here)  
Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoo.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoo.com)

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