

# the **SCREE**

**Mountaineering Club of Alaska**

**March 2010**

**Volume 53 Number 3**



**Both advantage and danger  
are inherent in maneuver.  
~ Sun Tzu**

**Monthly Meeting  
Wed. March 17 @ 6:30 PM  
Program: Carl Skustad, Director of the Chugach Forest  
Avalanche Information Center**

**Winter Escape - Arizona  
POM - Peak 6370, Brooks Range  
Training to Trips Program**

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

[www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org)

*"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 BP Energy Center, 900 E. Benson Blvd., Anchorage, AK

[www.akpeac.org/conference/BPEC\\_map\\_06-04-03.pdf](http://www.akpeac.org/conference/BPEC_map_06-04-03.pdf)

**Cover Photo:** Craig Hastings rappelling off of Tri-Level Spire in Arizona, Dave Lynch photo.

**Article Submission:** Text/video/photography submissions for the Scree can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). Do not submit material in the body of the email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog or website, send us the link. Cover photo selection is based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors.

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## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

March 21 - 28 SKI MOUNTAINEERING - Bomber Traverse Plus Ski Tour/Mountaineering- Archangel Valley to Moose Creek Valley Via Bomber traverse. Distance- 30+ miles Class- Glacier Elevation Gain- ~7000' Hazards- Crevasses, Avalanche, Rockfall. Sign up at February MCA meeting.  
Greg Bragiel – 569-3008

April 24 - May 02 MOUNTAINEERING - Scandinavian Peaks  
Scandinavian Peaks Class- Glacier and Some 4th or 5th class. Elevation Gain- Plenty Hazards- Crevasses, Avalanche, Rockfall, Weather. Air transport fees apply. Sign-up at March MCA meeting.  
Greg Bragiel – 569-3008

July 16 – July 30 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge  
Class B/C. The trip may include elevation gains over 2,000 feet on day hikes. The destination will be drop off And pickup at an airstrip on the Sheenjek River on the south side of the Brooks Range in ANWR . Set up food cache at the airstrip from there do 2 one week trips along the Sheenjek and tributaries.(climbers are welcome if you include a reliable partner) Leader: Don Hansen, [donjoehansen@msn.com](mailto:donjoehansen@msn.com).

## Corrections

In the article “Chugach Loop,” that appeared in the February Scree, the photo labeled as “Transendence Peak” is actually “Moonlight Mountain.” The photo of climbers descending Vertigo Peak was taken by Josh Mulkey.

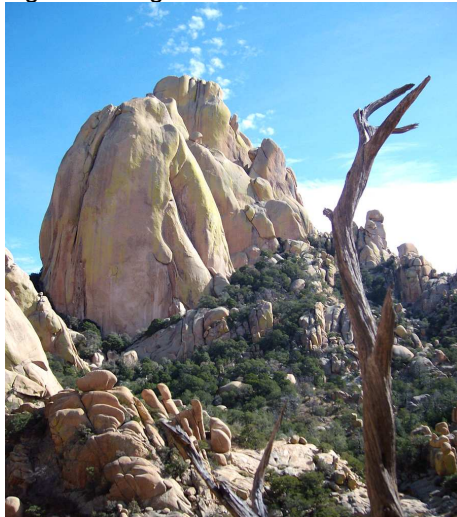
**Note: a new policy, effective immediately, will be to update past Screens (available online) to reflect noted corrections**

# Winter Escape

## by Dave Lynch

Craig Hastings and Dave Lynch, 01/11/10 through 01/21/10

We are hauling ass down this gravel road a couple of miles outside of Tombstone, Arizona, heading toward the Trad Rock area. Up ahead the west side of Cochise Stronghold looms up out of the desert floor. Up above, dark swirling ominous clouds threaten a downpour of rain (or snow if it gets any colder). Farther north and west you can see the rain is already falling. I am sitting in the passenger seat looking at Craig. He is concentrating on the road, glancing up at the sky, then, up ahead, at the giant rock walls begging to be climbed again. I'm thinking, "Damn, when's he going to let it go? It's just not going to happen today." Inside, I'm happy about it – I can rest my legs a little, give the skin on my fingertips, fingers, hands, forearms a chance to heal up. I check out the many scabs I wear on my arms and hands like climbing medals. We're on day eight of our ten-day rock climbing trip to Southeast Arizona and the climbing and nightly partying are taking their toll.



Eight miles later, we pull up to the parking area and the rain still hasn't broken free from the clouds. It's pretty dark though. Craig still wants to give it a shot. We pack up our gear and head up trail, drop our packs, don the shoes, harness, helmets, gear. "You sure about this?" I ask. Craig answers back, "Dude, you don't want to climb today do you?" I mumble something about the weather as I'm flaking out the rope. Craig said he wanted to try his first lead on this sport route we're setting up underneath. Now he's up about 15 feet and clipped twice when the raindrops start and the wind picks up. He looks down at me, "Whatta you think?" "I'd bail," I say, "you don't want to be halfway up that route when the rock gets wet." Craig agrees. He downclimbs. We're packing up, the rain stops, the wind dies. Out to the south we see a solid line of sunlight across the valley moving our way pushing the dark clouds out.

We decide to give it a couple minutes and see what happens. Ten minutes later it's a sunny day. No wind. Warming up. Craig leads his first sport route ever with style. I lead the next climb and take about a 20-foot fall near the top at the crux. Bang my right ankle a bit, but not too bad, and I'm able to finish the route and bring up Craig. Craig follows and then traverses out to

another anchor so we can get some good "posing at the belay anchor" photos. It's turning into a stellar day. We rap down and decide to take a lunch break. We head back to the car and eat some lunch

After lunch, I grab the binoculars and pick out a line on one of the many buttresses in the area. Craig takes a look and he's up for it, so we pack up the trad gear and start the hike in. We scramble up a ramp at the base of our climb,



careful to avoid the cactus and all the other thorny vegetation itching to add some scabs to our collection. We suit up and I head up. I ascend a deep fist sized crack about 20 feet and put in a nut. Take a break on a small ledge. Shake out the arms. Swallow the fear

I traverse out right to a wider crack, wedge myself into that with a nice knee bar, put in some more pro and head up to another ledge. I want to continue up, but a boulder the size of a coffee table standing on end balances precariously on the edge about 50 feet right above Craig. I grab it with both hands and give it a little test jiggle. "WHOA," it moves real easy. Craig sees it move from where he stands, "Easy!" he shouts. "Yeah, I'm going to build an anchor and bring you up!" I find some vertical cracks, place a couple SLCDs and one nut and we're in business. Craig climbs up. We switch ends and I head up again. We both considered tumbling the loose boulder, but we had left our packs right there in the impact zone and didn't want to crush everything inside them. You

know, that and the whole leave-no-trace ethics thing.

A nice bomber edge for the hands and good friction for the feet allows me to lie-back up and over the loose boulder and get myself into a chimney that brings me up 20 feet to another ledge. At the back of that, a left-facing dihedral with a crumbly crack looks like the only way up. I reach up as high as I can and place a nut. I stand up on an edge on the left face and the edge crumbles away. I find another and stand up on that. Doing the Wiley Coyote while the holds crumble away I spin my

way slowly up this horrible inside corner. About three quarters up this section I reach into a hole and grab a hold. As I step up the hold crumbles away and I slap at the rock with that loose hand and by a miracle it finds a nub to hold onto. A good chunk of rock bounces off my thigh, continues down and I hear the last piece I had placed pop out and slide down the rope. On top of my wiggling the "Eff" out, it feels like Craig has the rope braked off in his belay device. "SLACK", I yell (a little too much like a young schoolgirl). "You GOT slack, that's just the rope drag." His anchor that I had placed caused the rope to drag around a corner into the chimney then I had placed some pro in that chimney, one piece at the bottom



of this vertical section – of course it was rope drag. Shit. Relax. Breathe. Find a good hold. Put a piece in. Clip it. Continue up. Standing on another ledge I girth-hitch a multi-trunk bush. Damn - that was easy.

A little scramble to the top. I wrap some long runners around a boulder on top and I'm off belay. Pull up the rope, put Craig on belay. We drop down the back side from there a couple feet then solo an easy fourth-class scramble on solid rock to the top of the entire buttress. An airy walk off the top to the easier walk down to the right gets us back to our packs. Later that night we celebrate with a couple Tecates around the campfire.

The next morning we wake up to 2 inches of snow on the ground. I lay in my tent, warm in my sleeping bag, big smile on my face. What a great trip. Trad leads. Sport leads. Falls on lead. New places. New people. New climbs. Melting snow falls from a branch, hits my tent and slides off to the side. The snow outside reminds us its time to head home. Alaska beckons with its endless ice climbing.



# Peak of the Month: Peak 6370

by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Brooks Range; Philip Smith Mountains

Borough: North Slope Borough

Drainages: Kaviq Creek and Atigun River

Latitude/Longitude: 68° 6' 34" North, 149° 26' 39" West

Elevation: 6370 feet

Prominence: 520 feet from Peak 6902 in the North Fork of the Chandalar River and Atigun River drainages

Adjacent Peaks: Peak 6360 near Atigun Pass and Peak 6902

Distinctness: 520 feet from either Peak 6902 or Peak 6360

USGS Map: Philip Smith Mountains (A-5)

First Recorded Ascent: August 6, 1988, by Mike Miller, Dan Shearer, and Mitch Skinner

Route of First Recorded Ascent: West ridge via Peak 6360

Access Point: Dalton Highway at Atigun Pass

On August 2, 1988, Mike Miller, Dan Shearer, and Mitch Skinner drove south from Prudhoe Bay to climb some peaks in the Brooks Range. In that era travel on the Dalton Highway required a permit, so the group had to contend with traveling past a checkpoint without a permit. Sometimes social skills can be a climber's most effective tool.

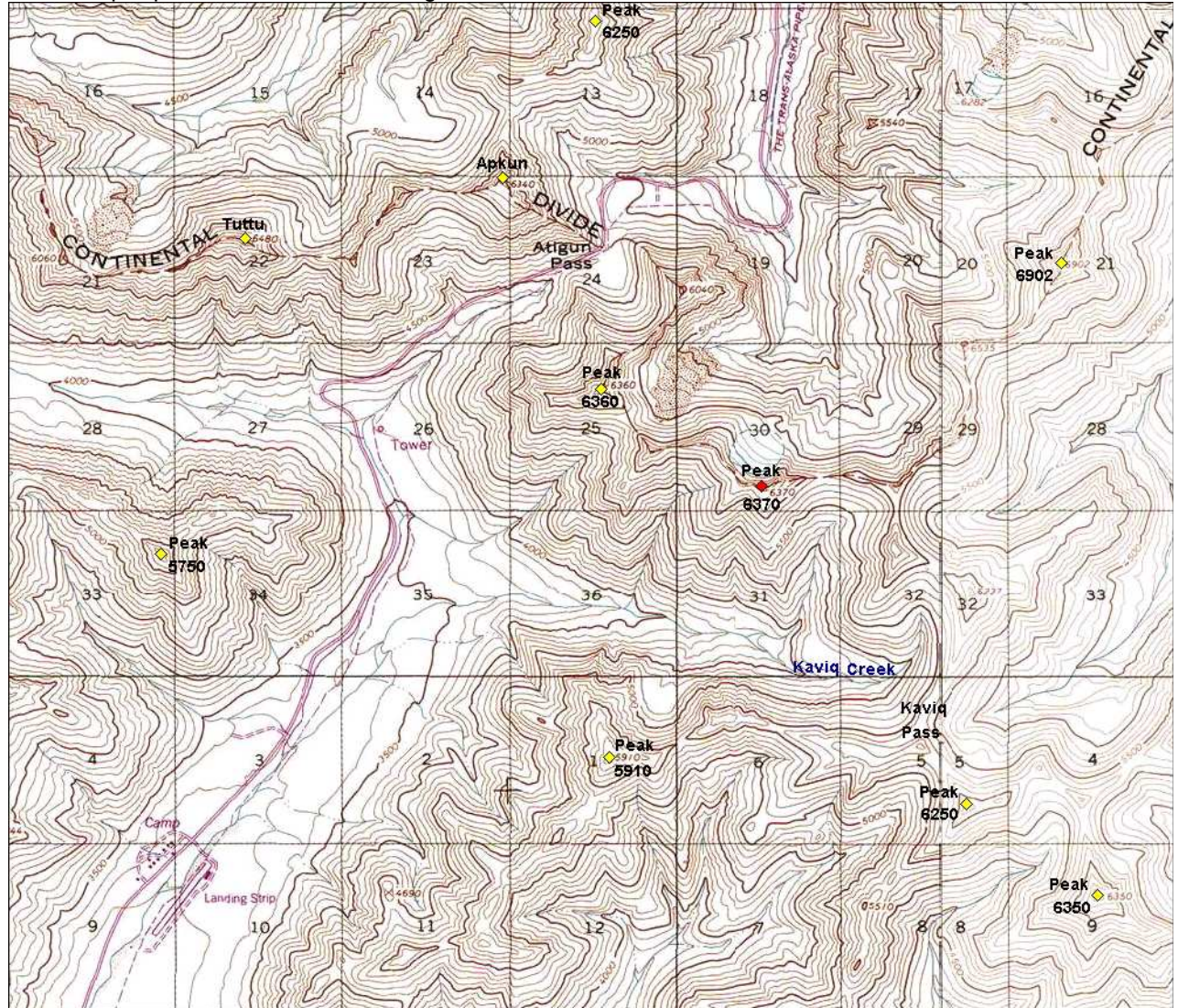
After climbing Dillon Mountain and Sukakpak Mountain, the group camped along the Dietrich River. Setting out on August 6, they drove to Atigun Pass on the Continental Divide. Following the Continental Divide to the east and south of the pass, they climbed both Peak 6360 and Peak 6370, noting a 7-foot cairn on Peak 6360. Rain chased the group back to their truck and south to their Dietrich River campsite.

The next day they again drove north through Atigun Pass and climbed Peak 6324, Peak 7250,

and Wellsung Mountain (7580) in the Atigun River drainage, returning to Prudhoe Bay in the early morning hours of the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Climbing" appeared in the September 1988 Scree. He noted that the "trip was very inexpensive and logistically simple." He also reported seeing lots of sheep and caribou.

Mike's trip report entitled "Brooks Range



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)



## Alaska Mountain Rescue Group joins Pick, Click, Give campaign

January 2010

**The Alaska Mountain Rescue Group** ([www.amrg.org](http://www.amrg.org)) was founded primarily by MCA members nearly 50 years ago in the spirit of climbers helping climbers in need. This close link between MCA and AMRG has continued through the decades and AMRG appreciates the many current MCA members who serve their community by volunteering with AMRG to provide help to those who need it in the mountains.

Although the time commitment of volunteering with AMRG is not for everyone, MCA members can still help support local volunteer search and rescue by helping to support AMRG through donations.

We are pleased to announce that AMRG is now part of the "Pick, Click, Give" campaign – the online PFD Charitable Contributions Program that allows Alaska residents filing for their PFD on-line to donate a portion of their PFD to eligible non-profits organizations they want to support. As an all-volunteer non-profit organization that relies entirely on donations to provide search and rescue services in Alaska, AMRG is excited about the opportunity to participate in this program in 2010.

All over Alaska, search and rescue is initiated by the Alaska State Troopers, but largely performed by trained volunteer organizations such as AMRG. For 50 years AMRG has been serving the people in Alaska by returning those who are lost, injured or stranded in the backcountry to their families. By giving through Pick, Click, Give, you join others who support our mission and ensure that our volunteers are properly trained and equipped to continue providing search and rescue services in the local community. For those of you who

already support AMRG, we appreciate your gifts and hope you will use this option to make an additional donation.

When you go on-line to sign up for your PFD dividend via MyAlaska, you will see an option to "Pick.Click.Give". Locate us on the Pick, Click, Give page by choosing **Region: "Complete List-Alphabetized"** and then select the **"Alaska Mountain Rescue Group"** from the drop down list of organizations. At the same time, please take the extra step you will see after you make your donation to provide your contact information to us. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it's you making the gift.

You can find more information about the program, including frequently asked questions at: [www.pickclickgive.org/](http://www.pickclickgive.org/). For more information about AMRG, please visit our website: [www.amrg.org](http://www.amrg.org), or feel free to call us at 907-566-2674.

AMRG Board of Directors

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**Alaska Mountain Rescue Group**  
**P.O. Box 241102 | Anchorage, Alaska 99524**  
**EIN# 92-0084973 visit us at <http://www.amrg.org>**

## Training to Trips Program (TroTs)

This incentive program is designed to educate Mountaineering Club of Alaska members and inspire them to safely lead (and instruct) trips for the MCA.

Existing or future leaders/instructors will be reimbursed by the MCA for 30% (to a maximum of \$50 for WFA and CPR) of the cost of the standard Wilderness First Aid (WFA) class after leading/instructing five full days. Higher level medical training is encouraged but will be reimbursed only to the WFA rate. Recertification's will also be reimbursed with the same stipulations.

Existing or future leaders/instructors traveling on avalanche potential slopes will be reimbursed by the MCA for 30% (to a maximum of \$100) of the cost of the Avalanche Level 1 class after leading/instructing five full days. The trips need not be exclusively snow trips.

Higher level avalanche training is encouraged but will be reimbursed only to the Level 1 rate. Recertifications will also be reimbursed with the same stipulations.

Participants in this program are required to maintain their own receipts and paperwork. Notifying the treasurer and/or the MCA board of your participation in this program is advisable to confirm funding status.

The MCA will have an annual cap on this program. Should Trots exceed this cap the MCA may reimburse participants equally at a lower rate, or vote to exceed the budget. Should there be extra funds for TroTs during the year, participants may be reimbursed at a higher rate.

The first group of responders to this program will be reimbursed at the original rate.

By Wayne Todd

## Alaska Huts Association Benefit

**Thursday March 18 - 8:00 PM - \$8.00**  
**Bear Tooth Theater Pub**

Got Huts?

Hut-powered Adventures in the Alps

An outdoor adventure show straight from the mountains of Europe

Alaska Huts welcomes professional mountain sport photographers Dan & Janine Patitucci for an outdoor adventure show straight from the mountains of Europe. Learn how hut-based trail runs, alpine climbs, hikes, and ski tours facilitate the rich and diverse mountain-sport culture that permeates the Alps, strengthening the bonds between fellow skiers, climbers, hiker, and runners of many nations.

More than simply refuges for mountain excursions (backcountry skiing, hiking, climbing, etc.), huts are a vital social element of European mountain culture

that also allow for better understanding and greater stewardship of the surrounding ridges, peaks and valleys. This show highlights the peaks, the people, and the places of European mountain sports culture through the spectacular photos and entertaining tales of Dan and Janine's professional work and endurance adventures – their own light-n-fast hikes, climbs, grand ski tours, and mountain runs.

The Patituccis, splitting their time between the American West and the Alps, have made a life together as photographers, writers, and managers of the online mountain sports resource [www.Dolomitesport.com](http://www.Dolomitesport.com).

[www.Alaskahuts.org](http://www.Alaskahuts.org)

[www.Patitucciphot.com](http://www.Patitucciphot.com)

[www.Dolomitesport.com](http://www.Dolomitesport.com)

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Wayne Todd	522-6354	Board member	Jayne Dixon	382-0212
Vice-President	Ross Noffsinger	336-2233	Board member	Mark Kimerer	360-5935
Secretary	Brian Aho	223-4758	Board member	Travis Taylor	382-4823
Treasurer	Tim Silvers	250-3374	Board member	Mark Smith	868-3155
			Board member	Tony Lutes	242-3559

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

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address at right. 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, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles can be submitted anytime.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by the monthly meeting to pick one 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: Jayme Dixon - 382-0212

Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008

Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127

Scree Editor: John Recktenwald - 346-2589

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Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoogroups.com)

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