

vol 10, no 6 april 1968
mountaineering club of alaska
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SCREE

happenings on the way

april meeting...Ben Crawford Memorial Park, 3rd and Eagle, Monday, April 8, 8 p.m. Program will be a fine film, "Sentinel--the West Face," about a difficult direct ascent of one of the walls in Yosemite. This movie costs \$40 to show, so the executive committee decided to pass a donation hat to help cover the cost, but the committee felt that the film was unusual and exciting enough that it was well worth it. Come and see!

BIRD CREEK RIDGE, Saturday, April 6...GRACE HOEMAN leading...277-7871, Easy rolling ridge separating Bird and Indian Creeks. First summit is 3505' at two miles. The hardier can continue to 3855' at five miles, or even 4650' at 6½ miles. Beautiful vistas and no difficulty in good weather.

MOOSWA PEAK, 5020', Sunday, April 21...RON LINDER leading...272-5968. High point in the Johnson Pass area. From 600' approach via Silvertip Creek 2½ miles. Easy climb up long sweeping 2½-mile ridgeline to summit. Impressive views in all directions.

MARY'S MOUNTAIN TRAIL CLEARING . WORK PARTY, Sunday, April 21... TONY BOCKSTAHLER (Trails Committee member), 694-2323, in charge. Here's something new! The Trails Committee is going to try to find and clear a good trail through the alders and devil's club to above timberline on Mary's Mountain (the southern shoulder of the Pioneer Peak massif). Meet at Alaska Woodcraft, Mile 14, Eagle River, at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch, hand ax, machete, or brush saw, if you have one. If you don't have any of these, come anyway. Some trail tape would be useful if someone has some. This will be a work party, but Tony says he intends to enjoy the day and expects others will too!

TANAINA PEAK, 5300', Saturday-Sunday, May 4-5...ROD WILSON (272-6219) leading expedition deep into the heart of the Rod Wilson Range... really an easy approach into the North Fork of Campbell Creek just behind the city. Time, muscles, and weather permitting, the trip might also have a try at neighboring KOKTOYA, 5100', for an unforgettable view across the North and South Forks of Ship Creek watershed.

happenings that were

executive committee meeting March 26 discussed climbing and glacier schools for the summer. Emphasis will be on general mountaineering rather than just rock technique. Leaders are needed...Considered a proposal to have a week-long outing...Again discussed the new cabin near Whiteout Glacier. Transportation is still a problem.

NEW MEMBERS: J. Robert Sherwood, POB 218, AMU, Anch, ph 272-4401, ex222. Arthur J. Bestrop, 13810 Densmore Ave. No., Seattle, Wa. 98133. Thomas J. Cloonan, Box 4-2066, Anch, hm ph 279-3954, wk ph 277-1531, ex15. Charles Wettling, 843 11th Ave, Apt 207, Anch 99501, hm ph 277-0886.

"AMULET PEAK" 8290'

March 9-10-11, 1968

Vin Hoeman

Known as "Peak 8290" until now, at 6 miles from Mile 94, Glenn Highway, it is the closest Alaska mountain over 8000' to a paved highway, although Bashful Peak is only $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Eklutna Road. On a reconnaissance in January, 1967, Grace and I learned that a hunting guide claimed to have climbed this beautiful peak, but when we interviewed him, he said, "Yeah, I been up there lotsa times. I went right up the front side and shot a goat on the very top!" Obviously the man did not take climbing or climbers seriously and might have told us the same thing if we'd asked about Moose's Tooth!

On 18 March 1967, John Ireton, Grace and I made the first major attempt to climb this mountain from a camp we'd placed at 5250' on the NE ridge the day before. We crossed the spires of Point 6012' but were stopped by the great gendarmes on the ridge beyond, as the rock is incredibly rotten. A week later Bill Babcock, John and I tried again attempting the drainage that leads to a glacier on the east face, and this route might go, but it would be difficult and long. Bill, John, and Chet Hackney tried once more in April but the essential ice on the Matanuska River and Gravel Creek was getting bad so that ended last year's attempts.

The conclusion was forced home that this is more than a 2-day mountain; hence Grace, Bill and I managed a 3-day weekend starting 9 March this year. We were determined to get around to the easier south side this time and snowshoed far up beyond the snow-traveler tracks in Gravel Creek Valley passing an almost totally devoured moose, probably a wolf kill from early in the winter, but everything down to shrews and birds had fed there and packed the snow with tracks. Crossing some beaver lakes, Grace stepped into a soft spot, soaking one leg to the knee, but luckily she was wearing Korean boots. Finally we turned west up a nameless tributary to gain our "Access Valley" up which we webbed to about 5000' to pitch our tent and end our nine hours of continuous movement.

The 10th was beautiful and cold enough to calm our avalanche fears, as we had some steep snow slopes to negotiate getting to, and especially above, the 6200-ft shelf on the south side of our peak. It went pretty well in these conditions, however, and we joined the SW ridge about 7600. On it the usual corniced gendarmes of terribly rotten Chugach crudrock barred our way, but careful belaying allowed safe traverses and bypasses, and by three in the afternoon, we became the first non-flying vertebrates (and that includes goats and guides) to visit this room-sized balcony in the heavens. In the highest rocks on the southern edge of the summit snow oblong we left a register bottle with a 50-year supply of paper. The view was fantastic: Blackburn, Wrangell, Sanford, Kimball, Hayes, Deborah, McKinley, Foraker, Torbert, Marcus Baker, Willard Gibbs, just to name a few of the greater bumps on our horizon. Nearer at hand, "Awesome Peak," 8645', less than 5 miles SW, will be a much more difficult climb than this one, and it concealed "Skybuster" or "Ice Cream Cone Mt" 8675' undoubtedly the best as well as the highest climb yet done in the Northwestern Chugach. In the other direction, Mt Sergeant Robinson, 10,650', will be an easy climb from Gravel Creek some winter when there's enough snow to cover the lower part of its glacier deeply, but that does not appear to be this winter. cont.

"AMULET PEAK" cont.

We followed our tracks to regain camp ten hours after leaving it, and on Monday, a six-hour march got us back to the highway. The name "Amulet" was chosen for the jewel-like hanging glacier that adorns the steep north face of this mountain, the side seen by passersby on Glenn Highway when the weather is good.

SUICIDE II, 5065'

October 14, 1967

Dave DeVoe

Bill Lockinger wanted a sample of something different from what he'd been experiencing in Viet Nam and Japan with the Navy, so while he was on leave in Anchorage, he called me about climbing "something."

The only other climb I'd been on with Bill was the Pinnacle by the east face in September 1963, so I thought he'd probably like to do something more challenging than Bodenburg Butte. At the same time, I had myself to think of, so we settled for something less than what Bill might have aspired to do.

Early on Saturday morning, October 14, we picked up Bill's friend, John Crittenden, and drove up Rabbit Creek to the end of the road near King's cabin. Beyond Rabbit Lake, up on the steep blue ice between the peaks, was a bull moose. He was having a terrible time keeping his feet under him. In case he had it in mind to compete in a summit attempt, we decided to discourage him with a few shouts, and he retreated unhurriedly.

We took the obvious gully route to the ridge just below the summit, which we couldn't see through hard-driving snow. Not being able to pick a route too far ahead, and with considerable snow on the rocks, we decided to rope up at the base of a steep rock pitch. The place was very exposed to the wind, and along the ridge we were quite aware of the void on the north side. The summit air was full of snow, but we knew it was the summit because we found the C-ration can register.

We descended the gully, roped, in a pseudo-glissade-avalanche in autumn-wet snow. Damp, cold, and staggering a little I think, we made it to the car in very dim light. Well, I guess that was different anyway--eh, Bill?

BLUEBERRY HILL 4550'

March 16, 1968

Vin Hoeman

"Climb Blueberry Hill! Are you kidding?" People always acted as though I'd proposed an expedition to Bodenburg Butte or Flattop, until this mountain and Mt. Palmer became the last officially named summits in the Western Chugach for which there were no recorded climbs. It's all in the name; close as it is to the Seward Highway, if it had been named Mt Holy Terror it would have been climbed long ago, but nobody wanted to expend effort on something named Blueberry Hill.

On March 16 Grace and I drove across the railroad tracks and tidal basin on a little road about Mile 83 (from Seward) on the Seward Highway, parking right by the foot of an avalanche chute that comes down from the SW Ridge of Blueberry Hill. We could sit in the car while putting on our crampons, a rare situation in Alaska. Our (cont.)

BLUEBERRY HILL, cont.

seasonal timing was excellent, as big avalanches had covered the rotten rock waterfalls of this gully, but now it was cold enough to negate the danger of slides this day. We had absolutely no brush and in two hours had gained the 3850 feet of elevation to the broad ridgecrest. On the first easy subsummit, Point 4033, a bump we dug into proved to be a cairn, but the difficulties were still ahead. The ridge narrowed and broke into a series of sharp teeth, tartared with grotesque cornices, and the last of these teeth seemed highest. It took us nearly another two hours to traverse and skirt these obstacles, probably touchy going even in summer. The end one may have been point 4490 and not highest, but we climbed them all and dropped a register bottle in the end one's snow. We'll call it a first-recorded-ascent until someone unearths an earlier record.

"HELGA MOUNTAIN" 3350'

February 24, 1968

Carol DeVoe

Six hardy hikers drove out of the Safeway parking lot February 24 for the scheduled climb of McHugh Peak. The plan was to drive up the Potter Homestead Road to eliminate several round trip miles of walking and to gain over 1000' of elevation. Upon attempting to get the cars up the road, we found it too slippery with fresh wet snow. Since to continue would have meant a 12-mile round trip up and down the 4301-ft peak, we hardy hikers mutually agreed to a change of objective.

The alternate turned out to be Helga Mountain, so named unofficially because it was Helga Byhre's practice ground for the 1960 MCA McKinley expedition. This red-hued rock peak rises above the Seward Highway between McHugh and Rainbow Creeks.

The party, consisting of Dave DeVoe, leader, Paul Hillburn, Bruce and Judy Van Deusen, Chuck Wettling, and me, chose a route on the Rainbow Creek side of the mountain. We parked the cars on the Seward Hwy at the Rainbow Creek road (described in March '68 Scree by John Wolfe) and started out on snow shoes and skis following the road to three large cottonwood trees that stand prominently above the alders on the uphill side of the road. These trees mark a well-watered gully where there is a year-around flowing stream.

Following the gully upwards toward the ridge along a fairly well-defined trail, the party began leaving skis and snow shoes behind as the hill steepened and the snow was only 4 to 5 inches deep. As we progressed up, the ridge narrowed and became rocky and snow drifted toward the brink above McHugh Creek. Here we stopped for a quick lunch before slogging on through drifts and scrambling up rocks to the summit. Dave thought he knew where to dig for the register he left there last year but was unsuccessful. The clouds lifted enough for a view of our earlier objective, McHugh Peak, a mile and a half away and 1000' higher, but we were satisfied where we were. The temperature registered a windy 15° on Chuck's thermometer. Glissading was great sport and speeded our descent for an arrival at the highway just before dark.

ESKA MOUNTAIN, 5680'

March 3, 1968

Vin Hoeman

Only the presence of nearby Granite Peak, 6729', the most outstanding mountain on the southern edge of the Talkeetna Range, has kept climbers from taking particular notice of Eska Mountain until recently. On the 3rd of March Grace and I got together with Dub and Harry Bludworth and Dub's workmate, Ronnie Stevenson, at the locked cable on the Jones Coal Mine Road. A mile up this road to their pits on the side of Wishbone Hill (which Grace and I had climbed last winter scouting the area), we started north across their tailing piles, finding many interesting broadleaf and coniferous fossils where the snow had melted before lacing on our snowshoes to cross the open forest and snowed-over brush to Eska's SW ridge. When the climb up the ridgeside became too steep for webs, we left them and soon were using crampons. The upper part of the ridge proved unexpectedly difficult with gendarmes we had to skirt or climb over, but finally our ridge met the eastern and northern ones and there was nowhere to go except the haystacks of snow that stuck up 50 feet along each of these, the one to the north slightly higher. Dub proclaimed it the best climb he'd ever made as he, Grace and I had some lunch and fixed a register to leave in the snow where the ridges join. Harry'd had boot trouble so he and Ronnie hadn't come up the ridge. Perhaps a summer group will make a proper cairn on Eska. Gloryhole Creek would provide an interesting new route. The round trip took ten hours.

THE RAMP, 5240'

October 7, 1967

Dave DeVoe

(See 30 Hikes, #4)

John and Joanne Merrick and Carol and I made this ascent on October 7, 1967. We drove the VW bus on the powerline road to a point opposite the creek that heads into the valley between The Ramp and The Wedge. Crossing Campbell Creek, South Fork, was the toughest problem of the trip. What stones were above water were ice covered, but no one got wet. We lunched in the lee of a large erratic boulder near the 3500' level. It was an off-and-on snow and sunshine day. At the summit it was snowing hard, but we found the register. The gradual slope of this particular route to the base of the peak made it worthy of consideration for a repeat climb--in better weather!

ARCTIC VALLEY SKI TOUR

March 23, 1968

Tony Bockstahler

In lieu of the Lazy Mt trip, Chuck Wettling and I started out from the upper parking lot at the Arctic Valley civilian ski area March 23 at about 9:30 a.m. He was on snowshoes; I had cross-country skis. We proceeded up the valley (east) to the saddle, arriving there about 10:30. Then we climbed the peak to the right (south). This has an elevation of about 4000 ft and gives an excellent view of the surrounding country. We returned via the same route, arriving at our cars about 12:30 p.m. Snow and weather were excellent.

This is a nice, easy trip for snowshoes or cross-country skis with absolutely no bush-whacking.

NONNAMOUS POE

Cold, abandoned, bare

Broken, old, tumbledown shack?

---Weekend ski chalet!

{Snowbird? }

{Crow's Nest? }

{Craigie Creek? }

BYRON PEAK, KENAI MTNS.

March 17, 1968

Bob Spurr

Just before 7 am Sat, MCA-ers Duane Anderson, Lotte Kramer, Ned Lewis, Tom Meacham, Peter Vlasveld, Chuck Wettling, and I departed cars on foot, moving alternately on bare ground and frozen granular. I had checked out the ice-fall with Ned Lewis the previous Wednesday. Despite the season's moderate snowfall and the recent thaw, it proved easier than a year earlier in mid-April. We went up on the left, traversed right directly above the old route (followed Apr '67 and attempted in Nov), struck a line toward the central N ridge and reluctantly turned back, hoping the spectacular weather would hold for Sunday. It did, with near zero temperatures. After roping up at the snout, we wound up glacier, slogging through 10 in. of powder once above the lower ice-fall. By 11 a.m. the lead rope (Spurr, Kramer, and Lewis) began the final 600 vertical feet of ridge leading to the subsidiary NE point, prominent from lower on the glacier. Where protruding rock existed a year ago, there was now 8 to 10 ft. of snow in perfect condition, molded to a smooth arete requiring belayed climbing without, however, any problems. From this point the route follows the periphery of the plateau glacier, then goes up the final 500 vertical ft to the summit, which three of us reached by 1:50. Peter, Duane, Tom, and Chuck, after gaining the subsidiary NE point, elected to descend after deciding too little time remained to continue the climb. The descent was uneventful although we took note of ice-avalanche debris that had come off the upper ice-fall in the interim since morning, strewing some sizable chunks a short distance down glacier. We arrived back at the cars near 6 p.m.

Despite any misgivings after November, this remains perhaps the finest one-day seasonal climb in the Anchorage vicinity and should be an annual MCA event in late winter.

"FRENCHY PEAK" 5079'

March 20, 1968

Vin Hoeman

Only one mountain on the Kenai Peninsula in the approximately 500 square miles of mountains west of the Seward and north of the Sterling Highways exceeds 5000'. We had called this mountain Frenchy Peak because it lies at the head of Frenchy Creek, which crosses the Seward Highway near Mile 54 (from Seward). Library research turned up one ascent in the form of a photograph taken from its summit in a 1915 USGS bulletin. It seems likely that this was taken by R. H. Sargent in August 1911.

The day Grace and I set out to climb it, the weather was turning bad, and we were snowed upon the whole way up and back down. Some distance from the highway, we were surprised to come upon an old outhouse with no dwelling nearby. It contained sluice-mining paraphernalia, and a couple of covered drums nearby were full of ore and 1946-47 magazines. This is near the old mining settlement of Wibel and mines are marked on the map along Frenchy Creek though we saw nothing of them.

Visibility was almost nil, but the mountain has no false summits of consequence on the SE ridge and slope we followed, and would, in fact, make an easy ski climb. Digging into the snow on the definite top we found large flat pieces of slate that undoubtedly were once piled as a cairn, perhaps in 1911. We made this climb on 20 March, reaching the top 8 hours after winter ended officially by the ephemeris, but winter conditions are not governed by calendars. ***

bits and pieces

The State Geographic Board has accepted the following names for features submitted by the MCA Committee on Geographic Names:

Arkose Peak, 5850', at the head of Arkose Ridge east of Little Susitna Roadhouse

Artillery Hill, 580', on Attu in the Aleutians

Crystalline Hills, 6510', at the head of Crystal Creek in the Chitina River valley

Dogsled Pass, 4250', at the head of Craigie Creek in the Talkeetna Range

Institute Peak, 8050', long a common name for this Alaska Range mountain near Paxson.

They wanted more information on Hoary Peak, 6057', another name we submitted. They rejected the names Caribou Knob and Hatchedhead Pass. Of the several other names we submitted last time, there was no mention.

THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB announces THE CLIMBING FELLOWSHIP FUND AWARDS 1968...to encourage mountaineers (generally below age 26) who wish to undertake expeditionary mountaineering ventures or research in alpine related science. Grants of \$100 - \$150 are available for mountaineers of demonstrated ability. Awards are based upon need, past mountaineering record, letters of recommendation, and worth of the specific project proposed. Applicants need not be members of the American Alpine Club. Deadline for applications is May 1, 1968. Recipients will be notified by May 31, 1968. Address inquiries to: Chairman, Climbing Fellowship Fund Committee, American Alpine Club, 113 East 90 Street, New York, NY, 10028.

Scheduled MCA climb of Mt. Alpenglow was cancelled because of weather. The Portage-to-Whittier trip was cancelled because ice on Portage Lake melted!

WANTED: Fibreglass canoe, any condition. Dick Snyder, 279-2808.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Dick and Liska Snyder, 2806 Alder Dr, Anc. hm ph 279-2808. John V. Burns, TM3, B93-01-32, 3rd Division, U.S.S. Horne (DLG-30), FPO San Francisco, Calif.

INVASION OF THE KNEE MEN

Sharon M Cissna

In the interest of peace and art I snowshoeingly bounded into the wilderness around Independence Mine some weeks ago. The sun was shining, the snow crunchy--gorgeous, empty northland.

Bbdkrrhhbbdkrrhhbbdkrrhhbbdkrrhhbbdkrrhh....Sudden civilization. Ah, the glories of modern invention. More than a dozen ear-cracking, smoke spitting "Beings" engulfed the landscape. Within a few moments four of these healthy stomached men had offered me rides. I looked for the turnpike exit and finally tromped into a quiet little valley with a crumbling old building. I whipped out my sketch pad and was delightedly scratching away, when.....bbdkrrhhbbdkrrhhbbdkrrhh...

"Hey lady, I noticed you over here all alone holding your hand. Did you break it?"

"No, I'm drawing."

"Oh. Would you like a ride?"

"No." (Nothing against snowgoers specifically--I just prefer my men on their feet.)

Dave Johnston's Antarctic fossil bone (March Scree) is getting famous. Time Magazine (some March issue) has a blurb about bone and theory.

O'MALLEY PEAK ATTEMPT

January 28, 1968

Peter Vlasveld

After a traditional meeting at the Safeway parking lot and later at the end of Upper Huffman Road, Ruth Moulton, Louise Rydell, Tom Meacham, Duane Anderson, Joanne Merrick and I started walking up the hardsnow road about 8:15 Sunday morning, January 28. We donned skis about halfway up Glen Alps. We skied along the power-line road, crossed the South Fork, and proceeded up slope. Generally the snow was thin and hard to icy. After an hour or so, we were overtaken (overrun!) by Steffen Maagoe who pretty soon disappeared over the shoulder in front of us. After caching the skis at the foot of the ridge, we proceeded up the ridge where about 1:30 p.m. we conquered Point 4630 from which we observed smoke from the summit of O'Malley (Steffen's Amphora) and Bob Spurr and Ned Lewis strolling down the gully toward the NW. Notwithstanding the ideal weather we preferred to return from there, which turned out to be a good idea when some glare ice slopes had to be traversed and all but one of the party lacked crampons and axes as well as broad experience. Partly skiing, partly walking back in the dark did not give too much of a problem, and around 6:15 we reached the cars.

NEW MEMBERS: James A. Maharas, HQ USARAL, G-3 Section, Ft Rich 98749, hm ph 272-0187, wk ph 863-6112. Al E. Randall, Rt 3, Box 6368, Issaquah, Wash. 98027. David S. Roberts, 883 S. York St, Denver, Colo, 80209.

MCKINLEY AGAIN! Ray Genet will be heading up McKinley for the third time when he leads a local party on the West Buttress Route this month (third time for that route too!). Hans Van der Laan, Pete Robinson, and Frank Nosek are to go with him, all hoping to get under way about the middle of April.

Scree is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, which is affiliated with the Anchorage Dept of Parks & Recreation. Scree staff: Marie Lundstrom, Callie Van der Laan, Sharon Cissna, Joanne Merrick, Carol DeVoe. Send Scree material to Box 4-964, Anc. 99503.

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