



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA BOX 2037 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

April 1983

Volume 26, Issue #4

#### APRIL MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, April 20th, at 8:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of Central Junior High School, 15th and C Streets, Anchorage, Alaska. After the business meeting Askley Young will present a slide show of his travels along the Pacific Crest Trail through Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, and the Canadian border area.

#### \*\* SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS \*\*

\*1. MCA and REI presents Northwest Images' highly acclaimed slide show of Bill Denz' and Scott Woolums' three month ski trek and climbs in the Alaska Range, including the first ascent of Kitchatna Spires East Face. This is a three projector-stereo program, narrated live by Scott Woolums.

Please Note: The program is Friday, April 15, at 7:30 p.m., Romig Junior High School multipurpose room. Admission - \$3.00.

\*2. ATTENTION ALL HIKERS WHO HAVE SIGNED UP FOR THE BROOKS RANGE TRIP IN JULY: there will be a meeting from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on April 20, at Central Junior High School (prior to the regular MCA meeting). We will discuss equipment and routes. Wear your boots and bring any other gear about which you are in doubt. Also bring your maps.

-Submitted by Dona Agosti

#### MINTUES FOR MCA MARCH GENERAL MEETING

The March meeting of MCA was held on the 16th, at Central Junior High School, 15th and C Streets, Anchorage, Alaska. The meeting was called to order by President Rick Severn at 8:06 p.m. The reading of the February general meeting was approved as published in SCREE. Treasurer Reggie Buchanan reported:

\$ 948.68	- Bank Account
4,990.35	- Money Market Fund
202.21	- Petty Cash Fund
<u>\$6,141.24</u>	- Total

New members were: Kathryn Engle, Blanche Crandall, and Ray Michaelson.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Hiking: Dona Agosti 248-0089 (as given by John Nevin)  
If you are interested in being a leader please contact Dona. The following trips need leaders: June 11 & 12, Squaw Creek Trail; August 13-17, Chitna Pass via Hicks Creek and Boulder Creek; and August 20 & 21, Surprise Creek or Harding Icefield.
- B. Library: Mike Frank 243-7645  
Nothing to report.
- C. Programs: Ernie Borjon 344-8661  
The slide show scheduled for the April meeting is on the Pacific Crest Trail. Scenery will encompass Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, and the Canadian Border. Two carousels will be presented by Ashley Young.
- D. Scree: Pauline Dickey  
All members interested in collating, stapling, and mail sorting for the monthly distribution of SCREE please contact Pauline. This is a once-a-month social enterprise which needs about two hours to accomplish (depending on amount of help available). Your assistance is requested. (You would not be reading this without someone's contributed time and effort.)

II. OLD BUSINESS

None

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Alaska Environmental Lobby, 1069 West 6th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska, is sponsoring a ticket raffle from now until the prize date, April 29. Grand Prize is a two-person Klepper folding kayak. Second Prize is six days at Camp Denali for two. Third Prize is an Alaskan Expedition sleeping bag (down) from REI. Cost - 1 ticket for \$10.00 or 3 tickets for \$25.00.
2. Alyeska Resort is holding Telemark Races on Saturdays at 3 p.m. on the Nastar Course, March 19 through April 16. A variety of special prizes will be awarded including medals, meals, and trips. Inquire at the Ski School.
3. The April MCA meeting will be held at Central Junior High School, 15th and C Streets, Anchorage, in the multipurpose room at 8:00 p.m. on April 20th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandi Macdonald, Acting Secretary

THE PLEASURE OF SUCH AN ADVENTURE WAS OBVIOUS

El Rojohombre

I thought about going climbing once. I'd seen a slide show the night before where a group of ordinary-looking folks had cavorted about in an impressive cathedral of white peaks scrimshawed in a blue sky. In every slide they wore little more than shorts and smiles as they wandered leisurely through sparkling blue walls of ice, waltzed merrily along wildly corniced ridges and then, after reveling in the exotic beauty of a snow and ice wilderness for a couple weeks, strode jubilantly onto the culminating pinnacle surrounded by voluptuous views.

The pleasure of such an adventure was obvious; it was something I had to enjoy for myself. It only took a couple months to round up a few of my backpacking buddies, to buy the gear the book said we needed, and set out for a peak I'd read about once.

We met our pilot at a small dirt strip and, while he was off calling about the weather, I eagerly loaded gear for the first flight, the one I was to go in on. The pilot came back mumbling about marginal conditions but I sure couldn't figure out what he was talking about; it was all sunny and clear except for a couple clouds on the horizon. He finally agreed to try so we flew off for our great adventure. It was really exciting watching all those bits and pieces of ethereal blue ice and black rock flash by in the fog as we approached our mountain.

The pilot landed on the glacier, unloaded the gear, and took off leaving me in an eerie gray wilderness. I heard my first avalanche, a spooky roar somewhere up in the fog. I didn't have any thing to do since there wasn't much of a view and I'd left all the tents for the second load so I decided to see just what I had brought in. After a half hour I had several piles - one with all the expedition fuel, another with all the expedition's sleeping gear, still another had our packs (except for Fred Schmurkle's, he was repacking his when I loaded the plane), and a last one contained all our freeze-dried food.

After a couple hours I began to wonder what was happening. The pilot hadn't been very eager to fly, even though I could see a few patches of mountain here and there, so I figured he must have chickened out. I resolved not to fly with him again.

Later snow began to creep out of the gloom and I thought I should make an igloo or something since I didn't have a tent. By the time I'd been digging for a couple hours and had made a three-foot-deep hole with my cooking pot, the snow was cascading out of the gray sky in an apparently frantic attempt to refill my hole. The wind conspired with the snow because every pot of snow I flung out came flailing back into my face.

I managed to pile enough gear over the hole to make a roof, and, after the blizzard had filled all the little cracks, finally made a secure shelter. Somehow, the slide show hadn't even hinted about this sort of thing. I wasn't having any fun at all. I was wet, cold, hungry, and cramped. And, somehow, freeze-dried chili (still frozen and dry because, in spite of having ten gallons of fuel, I hadn't packed a stove) didn't improve anything.

I'd never been so miserable, for three days I lay scrunched in my hole eating dry freeze-dried eggs and powdered milk. Another day, though, and I crawled out of my burrow to see vast hordes of peaks, white against blue. There were so many peaks I couldn't decide which one we were supposed to climb. Not that I cared - I was just hungry and stiff.

At last came a plane from the blue sky out of which erupted a cacaphony of hysterically happy delerium. I, too, joined the wild insanity, but not until I'd devoured a three-day bag of lunches.

This was more like it - sun streaming down onto our cheery, shorts-clad forms as we packed to start the real climbing. I had a moment's hesitation when I attempted to pick up my loaded pack but was unable to. A simple matter of dumping out some stuff and making a second trip later. Lighter, but still heavy packs couldn't diminish our eager enthusiasm for the climb. We were off for the summit!

We skied in shirtless ease down a gentle decline then began to ascend the rising river of ice. I quickly noticed that something had changed. Sweat started dribbling into my eyes, the pack straps were attempting to wrench my arms from my body, and my skis were slipping at each step (sure wished I knew something about cross-country waxing). And Fred kept jerking on the rope. My patience tried once too often, I finally demanded that he lead whereupon he went too fast, constantly yanking me off balance, then, as I struggled to catch up, he'd slow down, and I'd ponderously dance around trying not to step on the rope too many times.

At last we tottered to a common place and collapsed. My eyes burned with sweat, my shoulders were a moaning mass of mutilated muscle, and my legs felt as substantial as shimmering illusions. Someone had forgotten the tents, again, so I just grabbed another lunch sack and crept into my sleeping bag on the open glacier, praying for the release of sleep.

Morning came and the sun returned. I rolled over and felt the piercing jaws of a million fire ants on my sun-scorched back and shoulders, dearly regretting those shirtless hours the day before. Each muscle made its own separate complaint.

I know the mountains must have been spectacular that day as we returned to the landing stip and brought up the tents and remaining gear, but I saw little more than my alternating ski tips as I agonized on, stifling my cries through gritted teeth. We were all too tired to cook that night so it was another lunch bag, and, again, the oblivion of sleep.

Morning came and, even though I craved my moist mass of damp down, I knew we had to continue. This was, after all, a great climbing adventure. We actually cooked breakfast then slumped off for the Face.

The Face turned out to be fun, kicking steps up a 60° snow slope while swinging my axe. That big cornice hanging out over our brilliantly white snow chute looked tough, but, wow, what fantastic scenery! A few hundred feet up, though, and I suddenly saw not the height of our ascent but the depth of any fall. Abruptly, my steps

became crumbly and trecherous, my axe never solid enough. With every step I clutched more tightly the tenuous bosom of the Face. Pickets and screws became nothing more than precarious placebos, something I put in for protection but knew would never hold my certainly impending gravity-guided descent. Cries and moans echoed shakily off the Face.

After six hours of clinging desperately to my little piece of the Face with increasingly wobbly legs I knew we had to get down. Somehow, the sunrise found us dragging our dessicated bodies back to camp, the terror of our descent mercifully expunged from our conscious memory. Food had no appeal and each vanished into his down cacoon.

The next morning, while celestial dandruff piled up on the tent, I lay wondering where all the fun was, the eager excitement I'd felt at the slide show. My shivering sleeping bag had about an inch of loft that slumped soggily around the ice clots and it was my turn to get soaked shoveling snow away from the tent. An adventure into misery, pain, and fear. Suddenly, I heard a rapidly increasing storm of sound as an avalanche launched itself down the Face, undoubtedly aimed right at our camp. But where else, I thought as I sucked down into my bag.

For two more days the four of us lay sardined in our remaining tent, but finally we awoke to sun and glory. The smiles and shorts returned and our joyous shouts shook the valley. Our smiles, though, were a bit hysterical and our enthusiasm directed at the possibility of retreat, not at the gloating peaks glaring maliciously down upon us.

The mountains flung defiant masses of boiling snow at our sulking expedition as we went ignominiously slinking back to the landing spot. Mountains were something we snarled at, wishing that they would be devoured by greedy glaciers and reduced to mundane lumpy hills smothered under eight lanes of interstate asphalt.

But all things end and so did our expedition. Finally plucked from the sweltering glacier by a tardy and thoroughly reviled pilot we reveled in the ecstasy of civilization, of showers, of restaurant food, and luxurious four-wheeled transportation.

A few weeks following the demise of our adventure I stood behind the projector spewing forth tales of fortitude and daring. My slides showed an impressive cathedral of white peaks scrimshawed in a blue shy. They showed us wearing little more than shorts and smiles as we wandered leisurely through sparkling blue walls of ice and reveling in the exotic beauty of a snow and ice wilderness. After the show one fellow came up eagerly babbling about rounding up some of his backpacking buddies, getting the gear the book said they needed, and heading off for a peak he'd read about once. The pleasure of such an adventure was obvious...

MCA MEETING REFRESHMENTS

According to the letter of your last name, all members are requested to bring edible refreshments of their choice (cookies, cake, sweet rools, chips, etc.) to the MCA meeting for the month designated. Liquid refreshments will be provided by the club.

Jan	A B	May	I J	Sept	Q R
Feb	C D	Jun	K L	Oct	S T
Mar	E F	Jul	M N	Nov	U V
Apr	G H	Aug	O P	Dec	W X Y Z

And thank you to all!!

LIBRARY

The new library committee consists of Dona Agosti, Jim Morrison, and Mike Frank.

The yet unorganized library is now located at Mike Frank's house which is at 2224 Turnagain Parkway, phone 243-7645. Take West Northern Lights towards Earthquake Park. At the traffic light about two blocks beyond the ARR crossing, turn right on Turnagain Parkway. The Franks are home most weekday evenings, some weekends, usually every Sunday evening after 7:00 p.m. Feel free to come over anytime, but it is advisable to call in advance to make sure someone's home.

GENERAL RULES FOR ALL MCA HIKES

1. Proper equipment is required for all MCA hikes. This means good hiking boots, warm clothes, and rain gear on ALL hikes. A tent is almost always required for Alaska overnights because of rain, mosquitoes and cold.
2. No dogs will be permitted on MCA hikes. Dogs and bears just don't mix.
3. The leader's suggestions are to be followed by all hikers. Do not rush ahead without his permission, and above all, don't ford a stream before the leader has had an opportunity to assess the situation.
4. All hikes will commence at UAA Sports Complex unless otherwise instructed. Because construction is in progress here, look for the group in the southeast corner of the lot.
5. When carpools are arranged, please plan to pay the driver for gas. Don't wait for him to ask you for your share. The best way to divide this expense is to divide the total mileage by miles per gallon and multiply by the driver's actual cost per gallon. Larger cars get lower mileage than smaller ones, so calculate accurately.
6. If you are a leader and discover at the last minute that you can't go, please help the chairman find a new leader.

PROPOSED HIKING SCHEDULE for the MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

SUMMER 1983

Editor's note: If you have comments or suggestions please call Hiking Chairman Dona Agosti at 248-0089.

- May 14 Rainbow Peak via Old Johnson Trail. Drive to Rainbow Valley, then hike back on Old Johnson Trail to a starting point about midway between the Valley and McHugh Creek. May be some snow yet, but this is a good spring conditioner. Meet at UAA Sports Complex at 7:30 AM. By leaving early, we may have time to hike the ridge back towards the Suicide Peaks. Leader: Gene Klymko, 349-4258.
- May 28, 29, 30  
(Memorial Day Weekend) Sheep Valley via Kings River and Young Creek. This will be a new adventure for MCAers and anyone expecting groomed trails and no surprises, should not sign up for this one. Trail leaves from Kings River on the Glenn Highway and crosses Young Creek enroute to Sheep Valley and Sheep River Glacier. Leave UAA Sports Complex Saturday morning at a time to be determined by leader Bill Wakeland. Phone, 563-6246 (home).
- June 4 Near Point and beyond, if desired. One day hike. This peak is on the ridge between North Fork Campbell Creek and an unnamed valley in the Chugach Mountains above Anchorage. Leave UAA Sports Complex at 9:00 AM. Leader: Larry Brys, 265-4509 (Days), 243-5932 (Evenings).
- June 11,12 Squaw Creek Trail via Gunsight Mountain Trail. Road leaves gravel pit at Mile 117.6 (opposite Powerline Pole No. 7151) on the Glenn Highway. This hike is described as "No. 49, Squaw Creek to Belanger Pass" in *55 Ways to the Wilderness...* However, the hike is too long to complete in two days, so we will aim for Twin Peak about 9 miles in and return by the same route. Leader to be announced.
- June 18, 19 Annual Flat Top Sleepout. Leader: President Rick Severn. Amble up to Flat Top at your convenience Saturday afternoon or evening and enjoy the summer solstice with fellow hikers. Tent overnight or leave when you wish. If we get a fire permit, we'll have a fire.
- June 24, 25, 26 Blackstone Bay, Prince William Sound. Take train to Whittier Friday. Board cruise boat to Blackstone Bay. Camp out and hike or ski on the glacier. You will need downhill touring skis with good edges, also skins; it will be necessary to rope up while crossing glacier. Those who prefer to walk will find delightful beachcombing. There are also fish in the bay. Ludwig Ferche, who will lead this group, believes this is one of the more beautiful places in North America. Call Ludwig at 344-9881 for further details. Round trip train fare will be \$18.00. Trains will probably leave Portage around 1:20, 3:20, and 6:20 PM. Cruise boat fare estimated to be about \$50.00 round trip.

- July 1, 2, 3, 4 Girdwood-Arctic Valley Traverse. Leave Friday evening from Crow Creek Parking Lot. Camp in Clear Glacier cirque Friday night. This is an energetic 40 mile hike through some very beautiful country. Call Bill Stivers for details. 562-4885.
- July 2, 3 Victor Creek Trail to Andy Simon Mountain area. This is an untested trail which leaves the Seward Highway at Mile 20. Hiker last year said he was surprised to find a mountain goat at the 3500 foot elevation. Meet at Kenai Cutoff at 10 AM, July 2. Please call leader ahead of time, however, to let her know you are coming. Dona Agosti, 248-0089.
- July 8, 9, Eklutna Glacier hike to Pichler's Perch. Drive to Eklutna Lake Friday evening, boat across to campground at foot of glacier and camp overnight. Climb to Eklutna hut Saturday. Hike out same route Sunday. Elevation gain about 3000 feet. Crampons, ice axes and ropes can be checked out at AMH. Leader: Tim Neale, 274-4952.
- July 16, 17 Castle Mountain. Leave Glenn Highway from Chickaloon Road and exit via Permanente Road, Mile 71.8. There is a trail around the mountain in this very pretty Talkeetna Mountain area. Four-wheel drive volunteers needed. Leader: Mark Skok. Call Dona for reservations and details. 248-0089.
- July 23 - Aug. 2, 3 Gates of Arctic National Park and Preserve, Brooks Range. Group 1 will depart International Airport on Wien Flight 71 at 7 AM on July 23, arrive in Fairbanks at 7:50 AM, depart Fairbanks at 9:00 AM and arrive in Bettles at 10:10 AM. Shortly thereafter, Group 1 will depart Bettles in two Beavers and a 206 for Chimney Lake in the Central Brooks Range. Hiking route will parallel Clear River, then St. Patrick's Creek to confluence of Amawk Creek and North Fork Koyukuk River. Group will then hike down Koyukuk to Bombardment Creek, climb Doonerak Mountain and return to Amawk. Exit will be from Summit Lake. Group 2 will leave Anchorage on same schedule as Group 1, but will not depart Bettles until Sunday, July 24. Group 3 will depart Monday, July 25, and return August 3. Group 2 will be led by Don Hanson. Group 3 will be led by Jim Schiewe. All organizational arrangements and equipment checks will be handled by Dona Agosti. Bill Wakeland will co-lead Group 1. Reservations are now closed for this trip.
- July 30, 31 Reed Lakes. Leader: Joy Hornberger, 561-1933 (Days), no home phone.
- Aug. 5, 6, 7 Wolverine Canyon from Wolverine Road, Palmer. Leader: Bill Wakeland, 563-6246.
- Aug. 13 - 27 Arrigetch Peaks, Brooks Range. Ludwig Ferche has offered to lead this hike through a very spectacular area of the Brooks Range. At present, he plans to land at Takahula Lake, hike up Takahula River valley, then cut across to 4662 Creek valley, and up to the "Valley of the Three Lakes" (named by a previous MCA group). Read September 1976 SCREE for a summary of this route to the Arrigetch. Call Ludwig for further details 344-9881.



- Aug. 13 - 17 We would like to schedule a hike through *Chitna Pass via Hicks Creek and Boulder Creek*, but need a volunteer to lead this five day adventure. The trip is described as Hike 48 in *55 Ways to the Wilderness in Southcentral Alaska*. Call Dona if you'd like to offer your help. 248-0089.
- Aug. 20, 21 We have a choice this weekend of either *Surprise Creek*, across the Kenai River from Jim's Landing (Skilak Road and Sterling Highway), or the *Harding Icefield* via the new road and bridge about 4 miles out of Seward. I need a leader for either one. Call Dona, 248-0089.
- Aug. 27, 28 *Bird Pass, via Bird Creek*. We tried this one last year using the swinging bridge across Bird Creek, but ran into impenetrable brush about two miles beyond the crossing. This year we're going to hike all the way to the creek on the south side, then ford the creek and hike the horsetrail to the lake at the pass. Some who tried fording the creek last year ran into shoulder-high water, so if anyone knows any tricks for getting across Bird Creek, please let us know. Bill Stivers and Michael Frank will lead this one. 562-4885.
- Sept. 3, *Curry Ridge, via Byers Lake entrance*. Even though the trail gets steep at times, this hike to the ridge with its awesome view of McKinley is worth the effort. Meet at UAA Sports Complex either Friday evening or Saturday morning. Check with leader Ludwig Ferche, 344-9881.

If the weather holds, we'll schedule September hikes. To be announced later.