



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

APRIL 1990

Volume 33, Issue 4

APRIL MEETING

The next meeting of the MCA will be held Wednesday, April 18th, 7:30 pm, at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, top floor, Third and Eagle Sts., downtown Anchorage. This month Dan O'Haire will show slides of his summer in the central Alaska Range and of the last club trip to the Matanuska Glacier.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- April 14-15 HIGHER SPIRE
Reed Lakes area. Ice axe, crampons, avalanche beacon, shovel.
Basic Mountaineering skills required. Class D.
Leader: TBA
- 21-22 MINT HUT
Ski/hike to the hut on Saturday. Dig down to the door. Spend
the night (hopefully with no bear). Ski back on Sunday.
Leader: Gretchen Staeheli 344-3986
- 22 CREVASSE RESCUE AND GLACIER TRAVEL CLASS
Class takes place at a local glacier for the day. Need ice axe
harness, carabiners, and prussik loops (or ascenders). Sign up
at the next meeting or call Mike.
Leader: Mike Miller 243-8838
- July 20 - ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Aug 5 Explore the peaks and valleys of the headwaters of the Kongakut
River drainage to the upper Sheenjek River. Backpacking and
peak-scrambling with lots of stream-crossings. Group size
limited to nine. Cost will be around \$600 for charter flights
via Fort Yukon.
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184 h, 271-4565 w

The Hiking and Climbing Committee is always looking for leaders. If you have an idea for a trip, whether an afternoon or several weeks, give Tom Brigham a call at 276-4406. H and C Committee: Tom Brigham Chairman, B. Wakeland, D. Hansen, A. Shayer, J. Baker, N. O'Donnell, W. Hersman.

IT'S A HUT-RAISING!

Schedule for Hut Construction:

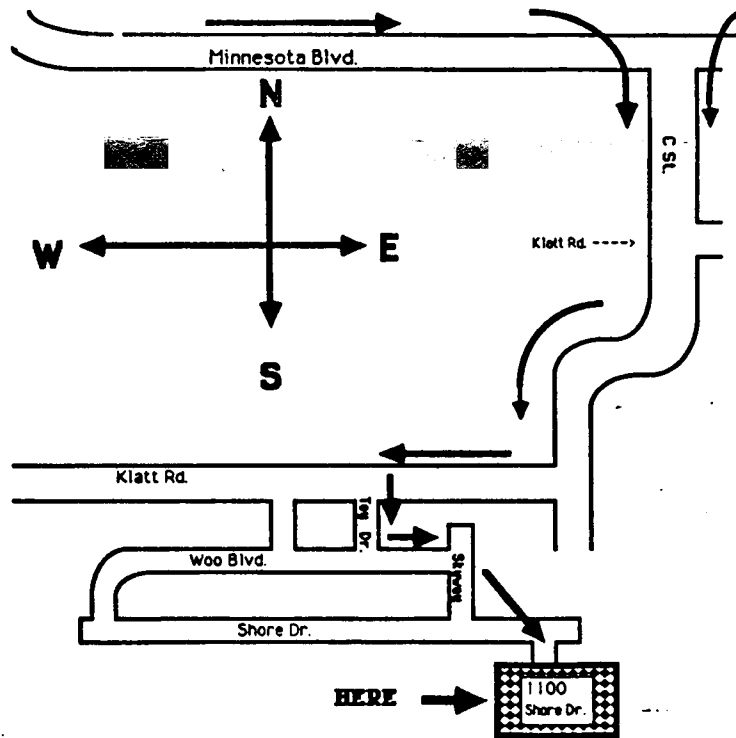
April 28, 29 Bomber Hut 9:00 am until ?
 May 19, 20 Matanuska Hut 9:00 am until ?

Tentative schedule for on site construction:

July 14 Matanuska Glacier
 August 4 Bomber Glacier

All pre-fabrication will be done at Gretchen and David Staeheli's (see Map). We need people to help with the pre-fabbing. Please come and be sure to bring hammer, gloves and screw drivers.

Gretchen & Dave's House
 344-3986
 1100 Shore Drive



It will be potluck for lunch, so bring a food item that can be shared. If you are unable to help with the construction perhaps you can bring by some food instead.

TRIP REPORTSVista Peak

Tom Meacham

Tom Choate, Gary Lawton and I met at 8:00 am in Eagle River on what gave promise of a sunny or partly-cloudy day. We turned off from the Loop Road to Meadow Creek Road (which was surprisingly well-maintained), until that road forked near the end, although the maintenance continued. Tom had earlier had a run-in with a resident on the lower road, so we skied the upper road for a quarter-mile, then bushwacked down through the open forest until we hit the Meadow Creek trail, which someone had conveniently pre-skied for us. The snow in the valley was deeper than I have seen it in my six or seven previous winter trips, and we saw no sign of moose, or even of ptarmigan.

After a quick ski up-valley, with several kick-wax experiments (and finally skins) by Tom, we cached our skis at the foot of the prominent northwest ridge of Vista Peak (5070). Gary led the post-holing up the ridge in deep snow, since he was getting shape for a Denali Highway traverse the next week. Tom and I certainly did not object. Ski poles were a real aid on the lower section of the ridge, but they were cached near the exposed rock ridge, where the going got steeper and ice axes were employed. The promise of clearing weather proved false, as the wind picked up and we saw long steamers off the upper section of the ridge and the summit. The wind gusted upwards of an estimated 45 knots, with unpredictable calm periods, and we pressed on.

We reached the summit around 5:00 pm, but spent little time on top, as the wind grew in intensity. After a fast and semi-blind descent (due to iced eyeglasses), we exchanged ice axes for skis and cruised down-valley in the growing darkness. Our earlier trail was hidden by drifted snow for a time, but in the more-protected lower valley, the reflected lights of Anchorage highlighted our earlier track sufficiently for easy going. At the highest house on the lower Meadow Creek Road, a cable was stretched across the road and a "No Trespassing, Beware of Dog" sign posted. This is a recent development. I believe that a public right of access over the past 20 years has already been established on this road -- something which we pursued. We reached our cars about 8:00 pm, and adjourned to Eagle River for a beer.

When I announced this climb at the February MCA meeting, I claimed that it would be a good trip for bringing a dog, since I had done so twice before. I am now thankful that no one took my advice, because the snow was so deep this year that a dog without snowshoes would have been helpless. However, this climb again demonstrated what an excellent one-day winter objective Vista Peak can be, under all but the most severe weather or avalanche conditions.

April 1990

Matanuska Glacier Ski Trip

Dan O'Haire

MCA members Steve Cook, Ken Farmer and I flew to the 5000-foot level of the Matanuska and established a camp. Fellow members Todd and Mark Miner, and Bill Ennis did their thing but were in the neighborhood. Curt Smith and Greg Fischer landed for a day of ski touring on the west fork.

After spending the first night in the tent at minus fifteen degrees Fahrenheit, we dug a comfortable snow cave under the glacier surface, where we could escape from the cold wind. Our first tunnel had to be abandoned when a crevasse was uncovered in the floor, and we burrowed in the other direction from the entrance hole.

We had two cloudless days, two mixed, and a day when we watched gales charging across the glacier. From our camp at the fork of the glacier we could look in several directions and see ice caps terminating in huge overhanging masses that towered above the valley floor. Large glaciers tumbled down great icefalls.

We revisited an upper proposed hut site at NW 1/4 Sec 23 T17N R11E and found the rock cairn which we built last year. It was still upright with its bamboo wands intact. The moraine looked like it hadn't changed from last year but someone from the club should visit the site in summer before making a decision. We can report that winter access is easy, but don't know the extent of underlying ice. I built a second cairn around a bamboo pole where it is visible from the glacier and tied my red scarf to it. We lingered in the warm afternoon sun before heading back to camp.

Eklutna Traverse Hut Repairs

Neil O'Donnell

On March 23, Dave Staeheli, Kneely Taylor, Jeff Mow, Margaret Stock and I flew into Rosie's Roost on the Eagle Glacier to perform much-needed hut repairs. We were flown in by Lowell Thomas, Jr., who donated his services to the club for the cause. On the way in, Lowell made intermediate drops of materials at Pichler's Perch on the Eklutna Glacier and Hans' Hut on the Whiteout Glacier.

Repairs at Rosie's Roost consisted of adding another layer of plywood over the top of the very weathered side of the hut. Another window was added to the same wall and the entire wall was covered by sheets of rolled aluminum. Several missing strips of rolled aluminum were replaced on the roof and all the aluminum on the hut was anchored down by battens. Tables, benches and shelves were added inside. A lantern, a large primus, a fire extinguisher, paint and a ladder were flown in and remain at the hut. An emergency door was installed in the loft. This hut is probably in the best condition it has been in since its construction in 1968.

April 1990

On March 28, we skied in whiteout conditions across the Whiteout Glacier to Hans' Hut. There we met a group of seven MCA members headed the opposite direction. They had already hauled the materials dropped off by Lowell from the glacier to the hut. The exterior of the hut was in good shape. All the aluminum on the roof was in good condition, save for one small section which was repaired. The aluminum printing plates Dave and Gretchen had previously nailed over the windward side of the hut were also intact. A roll of aluminum and plywood was left at the hut to cover this wall if and when the need arises.

A formica table was added inside, along with a fixed bench along the rear wall and new shelves. The emergency door was placed in the loft area. A week before a group had carried over a lantern and fire extinguisher from Pichler's. We added a lantern globe, a new coleman stove and a ladder. This hut is in good condition. It could, however, use a window in the back.

On March 26, we skied to Pichler's Perch. The MCA group headed towards Girdwood had already hauled the materials dropped off by Lowell and had begun to cover the windward side of the hut with the new plywood. Stiff winds prevented us from finishing the job of covering the wall with aluminum, but we did build a table, a bench and additional shelving. The winds the next day not only prevented us from working outside, but prevented us from walking outside. The best one could do was stagger from boulder to boulder during infrequent lulls in the tremendous wind blasts. On March 28, the wind died down, the hut was still in place and we were able to leave, one day late, for Eklutna Lake.

Pichler's Perch is in generally good condition although the remaining plywood and the rolled aluminum needs to be added to the windward side of the hut and the emergency door added to the loft. A couple of small items should also be carried to the huts. Finally, it appears the primus at Rosie's Roost could use a new gasket. If you are headed out to the huts, I would appreciate a call to see if you could carry in the needed (and light-weight) items. Also, if you are interested in finishing the repairs to Pichler's, please let me know. The materials are all there, including a ladder.

Thanks to Karen Cafmeyer for making new plaques for Hans' Hut and Rosie's Roost, to Dave Pahlke for making the emergency doors for the lofts, to Dave Staeheli for serving as construction foreman and to Lowell Thomas, Jr. for flying all this junk in.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING

The March meeting was held on the 21st and called to order by President Neil O'Donnell. About eight new members and visitors introduced themselves and were welcomed. The meeting was then turned over to the Honorary Membership Committee and Tim Neale, chairman.

A lifetime honorary membership was presented to Tom Meacham, past MCA President, and MCA member since 1967, for his dedication to conservation of the Alaska wilderness, and his many years of service to the club. Tom served as chairman of the Chugach Advisory Board and has been instrumental in helping to preserve much of the wilderness areas near Anchorage that we all enjoy so much. He also did much to preserve and expand the Vin Hoeman Library, the club library, when it was first put together, and also has acted as legal advisor on behalf of our club on many occasions. Tom also has long been an active climber, having accomplished many noteworthy ascents throughout the state, some of them first ascents, most recently on Nagishlamina Peak, in his favorite climbing area, the Tordrillos.

A lifetime honorary membership was also presented to Doug Fesler, Alaska's foremost expert on avalanche and rescue technology, for his service to the mountaineering community since he first days working for State Parks as a ranger in 1971. Doug began the Alaska Avalanche School in 1979 to teach backcountry travelers about avalanche awareness and sound descision-making. He is, and has been for years, an active member of the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, participating in most of the missions they have had in the past 15 years. Doug has collected a huge amount of information about the history of avalanches in Alaska, cataloging as many as possible that have affected man into a large data base. Doug's sharing of knowledge with his fellow mountaineers has done a lot to help minimize some the risks of the sport which we enjoy so much.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$3877.00
Checking Acct	-	1349.03
Hut Fund	-	1135.19
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$6413.32

COMMITTEES:

Hut Committee. Gretchen encouraged volunteers to help with the hut construction. Pre-fabrication dates have been set for the two huts, and more details can be found later in this issue about when and where to meet for the big bash. New t-shirts were available at the meeting, with new designs and colors. Sales in the past have been very successful and support of everyone is needed to continue to raise needed funds for the huts.

Parks Advisory Committee. Ken Zafren discussed the latest in legal action concerning the access problems to Rabbit Lake. The Millers are still attempting to block access to the trail which has been in use since the early 1960s. Ken also reported on the Hilltop Ski Area proposed expansion.

April 1990

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Neil gave a few details from the Park Service annual report for 1989 Climbing Activities.

A most excellent slide show was presented by Brian Okonek, who started his long climbing career in the local Chugach Mountains. Brian reminded us all of the joys of loose rock, devil's club, and unequaled vistas that are in our local area. It was very entertaining.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dan O'Haire

FREEZE-DRY ORDER

Willy Hersman is putting together an order for MCA members to purchase freeze-dried dinners, etc. at a discount from Mountain House. There is a possible savings of about 40 percent off the regular price for everything from breakfasts and dinners to vegetables and fruits. The only restrictions are that the order in case lots and in sufficient amount to get the discount.

Order forms are available from Willy or at each meeting until the order is sent in. It is asked that anything you order be at least a half-case (cases are 12 each). Call 338-5132 or get a form at the next meeting.