



vol 10 no 7
may 1968

mountaineering club
of alaska
box 2037
anchorage alaska 99501

may meeting...Ben Crawford Memorial Park, 3rd and Eagle, Monday, May 13, 8 p.m. Program will be concerned with Mountain Safety, proceedings to be led by Vin Hoeman.

MOOSWA PEAK, 5020', Sunday, May 19...RON LINDER leading...333-5363. High point in the Johnson Pass area. From 600' approach via Silvertip Creek 2 1/2 miles. Easy climb up long sweeping 2 1/2-mile ridgeline to summit. Impressive views in all directions. (rescheduled from April) Telephone Ron and meet at 5 a.m., Sears parking lot.

HOBO'S HIKE, Thursday-Friday, May 30-31, Saturday-Sunday, June 1-2. Four-day Memorial Day trip as annual warmup trip for the hibernators. Put your meager belongings on your back and walk the RR tracks from Portage to Moose Pass. Upstream through Placer River Valley through 4 or 5 railroad tunnels past Spencer, Bartlett, and Trail Glaciers. Through a very low pass at Grand View (1,060') and down Trail Creek to Upper Trail Lake and the city of Moose Pass. Lots of time to meander and dawdle over the four days. Spectacular scenery and flat grade all the way...JOHN WOLFE leading...phone 272-7844 days.

GRANT LAKE TRAIL, 1 or 2 days, June 1 and/or 2. Very easy and very short trip. Help the hoboes back to Anchorage. LEADER: GWYN WILSON, 272-6219.

CLIMBING SCHOOL: Organization by Frank Nosok and Ray Genet plus various club members as instructors. There will be two divisions -- I. General Mountaineering, II. Snow and Ice (to be held in August).

I. GENERAL MOUNTAINEERING SCHEDULE, classes from 8 to 10 p.m. (place to be announced). Monday, 5/27 -- Equipment: camping and sleeping. Tuesday, 5/28 -- Travel, maps and compass; first aid and rescue. Thursday, 5/30 -- Climbing practice, rocks on Seward Highway, 6:30 until dark. Monday, 6/3 -- Knots and ropes, rock climbing. Tuesday, 6/4 -- Knots and ropes, rock climbing, continued. Thursday, 6/6 -- Rocks on Seward Highway, 6:30 until dark. Saturday & Sunday, 6/8 & 6/9 -- weekend in Independence Mine area with climb of the Pinnacle.

NOTES: MCA membership is required and registration will be at the May meeting and on first class night. Parental permission for those under 19 is required. All participants will sign a waiver agreement at first class. Equipment necessary will be two carabiners; 20' of webbing for sling which can be bought from MCA at cost at the first class. The snow and ice school will be held in August when the glaciers are clear. Many of the skills necessary for this division will be taught in the General Mountaineering session.

TRUULI PEAK - HARDING ICEFIELD April 17-25, 1968 Vin Hoeman

In 1842 Ilia G. Wosnesenski visited Fort Kenai collecting specimens and information for the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. He learned the Indian name for the Kenai Mountains which was translated into German eight years later by Dr. Constantin Grewingk as Trüüli or Truüli. In 1963 we began to apply this name to the highest mountain on the Kenai Peninsula and to begin to think about climbing it in the course of a "grand traverse" of the Kenai Range and Harding Icefield. An abortive attempt in December 1966 made us consider carefully the time of year for the trip, as the proximity to the Gulf of Alaska produces infamous weather. April was chosen as the driest month with best snow conditions, and this year we were ready to go.

Bill Babcock, Bill Fox (Daily News sports editor), Dave Johnston, Yule Kilcher (age 55, he tried to cross the Icefield once before, in 1936), and I left the Kilcher homestead near Homer on 17 April with 15-year-old Otto Kilcher along to help handle the five horses we packed up the Kachemak Bay beach and Fox River. A long trek this, and at the end of the second day, Bill Fox decided to turn back with Otto and the horses in order to rest his blisters. The next day the remaining four of us had to wade Fox River several times with our large loads including skis, finally beating the brush around a canyon and over moraine to the foot of Chernof Glacier at 1050' elevation. It provides easy access to the icefield at this season and about three miles up at 3000' we set up camp where a ski-wheel plane could easily land directly west of Truuli Peak, 6612'.

Fate blessed us with a perfect morning the 20th. Eric Barnes flew in Kenai Moose Range manager Dave Spencer, my wife Grace, and Helmut Tschaeffert, then parked the plane in a hole to make a total of eight of us on the first ascent of Truuli. We climbed to the west ridge from the south, quite an easy tramp exchanging leads. The view was too fine for us to feel this was an anticlimax, and many fine peaks we photographed will be much harder. Shortly after noon we were gazing down at an unexplored glacier we christened Truuli. We were on top-- for 93 miles in any direction, no mountain stands so high.

The wind picked up as we descended and Eric had to be off before his plane left without him, but the rest of us planned to traverse the icefield to Seward. Not that day nor the next could we move, however, for it was a maelstrom of blowing snow outside our two big tents. By the 22nd it was not so bad, and we packed up over a 4950-foot pass to drop down on Tustumena Glacier and reach a nunatak at its forks that night. The following morning a couple of miles was the best we could do before whiteout closed in and storm winds forced us to camp again. As fabric strained in 60-mile-per-hour gusts, we made plans to dig in if the tents failed, but both wind and whiteout were dissipating on the 24th, and we set out for the node of the icefield, the wide flat area where the biggest glaciers originate. We admired "Dilemma Ridge" west of us, the several horns of which will be fine climbing on granite for some future party and the spectacular "Towers of Decision" 5528' and 5641' to the east. A plane, tiny as a mosquito in that vastness, came to drop us kind invitations to be feted in Seward. Optimistically we set "Node Nunatak" 5912' as our goal for a lunchbreak and reached its base in the evening so deceptive is distance. Dave Johnston, Yule, Helmut, Grace, and I climbed it that evening; Dave Spencer and Bill Babcock early the next morning.

cont.

TRUULI PEAK - HARDING ICEFIELD, cont.

The 25th started out easily enough with a long ski run (Bill, I should mention, made the whole trip on snowshoes!), but became more difficult as we descended the soft snow along our exit glacier to Resurrection River, and downright tedious as we battled brush and gravel bars out the final seven miles of that river to Seward...a truuli Grand Traverse!

TRAIL WORK PARTY REPORT

April 21, 1968

Tony Bockstahler

The following MCA-ers met about 9:30 a.m. Sunday, April 21, in the parking area of the Knik Bar (an out-of-business bar on the south side of the bridge across Goat Creek on the old Palmer Highway, six miles beyond the turnoff from the new Palmer Highway): Leo Hannan, Ellen Hannan, Roger Crosby, Tom Meacham, Andy Anderson, and Betty and Tony Bockstahler. Ellen brought a guest, Anne Brodin, and the Bockstahlers brought their 4-footed child, Kokluk.

We walked across the bridge over Goat Creek and then turned right at the abandoned houses and followed the jeep road east for about 1/4 mile. At the forks we turned right and followed the jeep road up to the power line, then left along the power line. Several hundred feet short of the highest power line poles we turned right for about 100 feet to an old alder-overgrown logging trail. We followed this about 1/4 mile, then forked left on another even more overgrown logging trail for another 1/4 mile.

Several weeks ago, when scouting this trail, we had found that straight up from this point was a feasible route to timberline on Mary's Mountain. Our work party did not attempt to clear a trail through this devil's club area as there was still considerable snow on the slope. We did clear the trail from this point down to the power line--a task for which future climbers of Mary's Mountain should be thankful.

It is intended to schedule a similar trip in a month or so to continue marking and clearing the trail to timber line.

MT EKLUTNA 4210'

March 31, 1968

Vin Hoeman

Many times in passing Mirror Lake at Mile 23.5 Glenn Highway, climbers have looked at the steep brush of the end of the west ridge of Mt. Eklutna and shaken their heads, but this brush is cut by some avalanche gullies, the most spectacular of which lured Grace and me on the last day of March. However it contained ice waterfalls we did not care to tackle, so we climbed instead the prominent rib immediately south of it, the lower part of which seemed to be where devil's club was invented. Finally we reached the ridge and the first point, 3160', which showed signs of Boy Scout ascents. It was a long walk to the true summit from there over Point 3605 where a BLM bench mark was established last summer. The true summit, 4110', bore a fresh but empty cairn in which we left a register. A wolverine had traversed it only hours before. We were surprised to see that a road of some sort comes up to a cabin on the North Fork of Peters Creek. This would be a very easy route, but the one we chose, down a gully further south on the end of the west ridge was very satisfactory.***

MCA AFTER TEN YEARS?

How about an irreverent-impudent-impertinent history of MCA [MCA punster-in-residence Ruth Schmidt suggested a "Scree-amble"] to celebrate its ten years of precarious-perilous-precipitous existence? Comments welcomed from members, especially long-timers like Paul Crews, Helga Byhre, Rod and Gwynneth Wilson, John Wolfe, Hans Metz, Marge Maagoe, Helen Nienhueser, and others who have been around through storm and shot and stretches of high order chaos in meetings, firesides, letters, climbs, hikes, arguments, parties, tent sit-ins, executive board sessions, bushwhacking, and lost people trips. What happened to charter members and others who are no longer current members--Johnnie Johnston, Gregg Erickson, Erik Barnes, Gene Horning, Larry Straley, Gary King, Norm Pickler, Lois Gunther, George Wichman, etc.?

(ML)

"MT SIGNIFICANT" 5485'

April 14, 1968

Vin Hoeman

Significance among mountains may be divorced from their effects on man and measured in respect to each other, a good way being the amount of "free-height" that a mountain rises above its connection with higher mountains. If one makes 1000 feet of free-height the break-off point between significant and lesser mountains, there are 52 of the former in the whole Western Chugach, the greatest landmark being, of course, Bashful Peak, with 5275' of free-height. Other officially named important peaks are, in order of importance, Williwaw, Organ, Bellicose, Yukla, Crow, Whiteout, Beelzebub, Bold, Bird, Pioneer, Benigh, Eagle, Suicide (north), East Twin, Baleful, Gordon Lyon, Polar Bear, McHugh, Blueberry, Mitre, Temptation, and Peril, but scattered among these are 29 others which do not yet have official names, these including 16 for which there are no records of ascent.

Ten miles up the north side of the Eagle River Valley from Eagle River post office is the highest mountain on Anchorage B-7 quadrangle. Since it is the 23rd most important landmark peak in the Western Chugach with over 1500 feet of free-height, and Mt. Magnificent, Blacktail Rocks, Roundtop, and Vista Peak are all subsidiary to it, we decided to call it Mt Significant. Grace and I came up from the south to point 5235 in threatening weather 14 April. Batteries and stones circled into a rudimentary hearth indicated surveyors were here once, probably by helicopter about 1960. It is doubtful that they went the short distance to the main summit as helicopter time is expensive and they were never left at one station much longer than it took to complete their work there. Our altimeter showed 250 feet difference between Point 5235 and the main summit, so the latter's height can be called with some degree of accuracy, 5485. The first known ascent of this mountain was by Helen and Gayle Nienhueser and Jim Krob in July 1965 from High Valley, and we found the record of the second ascent party, Kyle Atkins, Harry Bludworth, and Jerry Buckley on March 17, 1967, in a small summit cairn to which we added some handy rocks.

This was also an interesting climb from a wildlife standpoint. A black bear we watched moving lithely over a snowy alpine basin and wondered what he could find to eat so early; 6 ewe Dall sheep fled ...

(MT SIGNIFICANT, cont) from a windswept ridge near the summit; and as we came down a Golden Eagle rose from an old moose carcass. Examining this carcass, we found another freshly killed adult female Golden Eagle nearby, apparently killed by the first in a dispute over several hundredweight of rotten moose.

BIRD CREEK RIDGE

April 6, 1968

Report:

Personnel: Chuck Wettling, Bruce and Judy Van Deusen, Lotte Kramer, Grace Hoeman, Sharon Cissna, Callie Van der Laan, Fioletta and two pups.

Weather: terrible

Goal: not accomplished

Recovery: tea and rum

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Hoeman

EDITOR'S WOES---Corrections and Notations about last issue of Scree: Bob Spurr's climb of Byron Peak was Sunday, March 17 (I misread something that now seems so clear!). In an enlightening discussion with Vin Hoeman, he told me that (1) Tony Bockstahler and Chuck Wettling really climbed Rendezvous Peak on their Arctic Valley ski tour...whether they realized its name or not! (2) Dave DeVoe's article should have been entitled Suicide I (rather than II) because 5065' is the higher (northern) one. (This is unofficial--maybe someone will settle this issue once and for all!) (3) Bird Creek Ridge is better titled Birdseye Ridge to avoid confusion with another ridge in the same area. (Also unofficial--do traditionalists have a word to submit to the Names Committee, Vin Hoeman, Chairman?) (4) He doesn't like the name "Ice Cream Cone Mt" and is trying to get "Skybuster" approved for 8675' in the Northwestern Chugach. (So far, neither name has been approved by the State Geographic Board. Maybe Dave Johnston, Hans Van der Laan, and John Samuelson would like to get into the fray, since they made the first recorded ascent.)

NEW & NEWLY PAID UP MEMBERS (see attached membership list for addresses and phone numbers): John Unger, Richard F. Baum, Charles D. Evans, John A Todd Jr, Albert J Kamps, Theodore & Margaret Vieira, Marga Zink, Robert D Stocking, Ronnie Skillin, Carolyn F Wadman, Allen H Parker & family.

PURISTS ARISE! Devil's Club scuttlebutt has it that Superclimber Vin Hoeman really used a snowmobile in acquiring access to Amulet Peak (see April Scree). Any comments--Purists or Fellow Travelers?

Over 100 people showed up to watch "Sentinel--The West Face", listen to Bill Long's commentary, and donate enough to cover the cost of the film. A far cry from the chair-less and sometimes people-less meetings in Willow Park during the "old" days.

How do MCA-ers feel about flying in for climbs of major peaks, particularly first ascents? Where is the line between "pure" climbing and "other" (whatever that is!). This issue gets into the interesting area of climbing "ethics" (?) and deserves comment.

100 WILDERNESS ROUTES IN ALASKA

Helen Nienhuuser

Summer is coming and with it the need to go into high gear on the 100 Wilderness Routes in Alaska project. As many of you will remember this is a project co-sponsored by the Seattle Mountaineers and the Alaska Conservation Society. The primary objective is to give detailed information on hikes in Alaska. Also included will be canoe trips and cross country ski trips. Gallic van der Laan and I are handling it for this area.----and we need your help!

We hope to compile information and photographs on about thirty trips in this area. We will repeat some of the standard trips listed in Thirty Hikes in Alaska, such as Flattop, but would like to include as many new ones as possible since the Seattle Mountaineers intend to keep Thirty Hikes in print.

Following is the tentative list we have drawn up, going from the Talkeetnas in the north to the Kenai: Craigie Creek, Reed Lakes, Independence to Willow on skis, Gunsight Mtn, Lazy Mtn, Twins, Bold Peak valley, North Fork Eklutna valley, Roundtop, Girdwood to Eagle River, Peters Creek headwaters (Rumble) from Eagle River, Eagle Lake, Ship Creek to Indian, Kanchee, Wolverine, Flattop, Powerline Pass (S. Fork Campbell Creek to Indian), Rabbit Lake, Bird Creek Ridge, Bench Lake, Hope to Cooper Landing, Starmigan Lake, Palmer Creek (Hope Area). Thirteen of these twenty-three are not in Thirty Hikes.

We need your help in the following ways: (1) ideas for other trips. These need not be confined to the Anchorage area; it is quite possible there is no one else covering such areas as Nabesna, Thompson Pass, or parts of the Kenai. (2) Information: if you are going on one of the above trips or another suitable one, please take along one of our forms which indicates what information we need. Or call when you return and we will ask the questions. (3) Photographs: This is the hardest part of all. Each trip must be illustrated with a full page (7" x 8 1/2") black and white photograph. These can be of the view from the hike, of part of the terrain traveled through, of the mountain you are climbing, of particular attractions (e.g. wildlife) to be seen often en route.

APRIL FOOLS' EXPEDITION... Led by Ray Genot, the AFE consisted of Hans van der Laan, Pete Robinson and Frank Nosok plus assorted camp followers. After a fortunately uneventful train trip to Talkeetna, the Expedition faced its first challenge in transporting gear and people on top of Sheldon's blue jeep through the breaking-up roads of Talkeetna. After nearly toppling the jeep and after taking traditionally ridiculous photos by the plane (with wives and children yet), all managed to get to the mountain. The women and children left behind could not resist flying over the next day to see what it was the mighty climbers were facing and also excitedly waving while taking photos and dropping four quarts of ice cream with appropriate messages. Also worth mentioning is that the mountain being attacked is Mount McKinley. (Postscript: Unfortunately, Frank Nosok had to return to Anchorage after eight days because of altitude sickness. The other three reached the summit on Friday, May 3, about noon, calling assorted wives from the summit. They should be back now.) -----CBNvdL

MT SERGEANT ROBINSON ATTEMPT... between March 29 and April 5, Ned Lewis, Chuck McLaughlin, Norm Stadom and I -- intent on the first ascent of Mt Sergeant Robinson, 10,600' -- were turned back at the second icefall at the 3600' level on "Assassination Glacier", proposed name for the dog-log glacier plunging from 9500' to eventually intersect Gravel Creek. Article to follow in June scree. -----Bob Spurr