

MAY 1998

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Volume 41 Issue 05

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

MAY MEETING

Wednesday

May 20, 7:30 pm

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: *Chris Flowers* and Ski Mountaineering
and Climbing on the Knik Glacier.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- May 16 Near Point, Wolverine Peak, and Rusty Point
Western Chugach. Class D. Elevation Gain:
Approximately 3600 feet. Distance: 10 miles,
round trip. Traverse the prominent skyline ridges
of Wolverine Peak.
Leader: Dennis Morford 522-1179(h) 269-0639(w)
- May 16 Gull Rock
Class B. Round trip 10.2 miles. Elevation Gain:
645 feet
Leader: Curvin Metzler 333-8766
- May 30 - Jun 7 Scandinavian Peaks
Class E. Glacier Travel and Mountaineering
experience required. This is NOT a training class.
Limited to six people plus leaders. Participants
will be expected to pay for travel costs. Mandatory
pre-trip meeting will be held Monday, May 18,
7:00 PM at Barnes and Nobles, Benson and A Sts.
Leaders: Richard Baranow and Wendy Sanem
694-1500, afbrb@uaa.alaska.edu

Jun 5-7 Kenai Kaper & Traverse

Class D. Strenuous traverse of prime back-country
terrain in the Kenai Mountains of the Chugach
National Forest with a peak-bagging ridge run.
Approximately 13 to 14 miles, mostly above tree
line; estimated 6500 feet or more gain. Proficiency
with ice axe/crampons. Must be at least 18 years
old. Car shuttle needed to do the trip. Cabin stay
Friday and after trip on Saturday evening. Limit:
7. Need ice axe, crampons, water pump or tablets,
bug dope, stream wading shoes. \$7 cabin fee.
Leader: Scott Bailey 696-7250

Jun 19-21 Mt. Ascension, Lost Lake

Kenai Mountains. Class B to Lost Lake. Class D
to Mt. Ascension.
Leaders: Tom Choate 333-5309, Dennis Morford
522-1179, Matt Nedom 278-3648

Jul 25- Aug 8 Kongakut River and Aichilik River

Brooks Range. Distance: 60 miles. Elevation
gain: 4000 feet. Class D.
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184

Sep 2 **Bomber Glacier Traverse**

Class: Glacier Travel. Visit two of the MCA's huts and view the remains of an Air Force bomber plane that crashed on the glacier. This is not a training class. Participants must be experienced with glacier travel.

Leader: Gary Runa 275-3613

TRIP REPORTS

Korohusk Peak

by Richard Baranow



It was a great delight, after waking up Saturday morning, March 21, at 5:30 AM (Ouch!), to realize that the temperature had dropped below freezing the evening before and the new day held promise...perhaps the scheduled MCA trip to summit

Korohusk peak in a single day would be possible after all! The weather here in the Eagle River valley this past week has been, to say it mildly...mild! Two days previous, Wendy Sanem had kicked (or shall I say, 'waded') a trail up to the Dishwater drainage, just short of four miles back behind the Nature Center, and then up to the 2800-foot level. She complained of sloppy, collapsing snow on the main trail; the river route near Rapids camp, being submerged with overflow in many places, would be of no use to us. Trudging up through the woods, she reported, was no better. We were not very optimistic on Friday night.

Our little group, on this first day of spring, included six hardy souls in addition to our four, 4-legged 'children,' who complained loudly at the suggestion of leaving them behind on such a beautiful morning! We met Kirk Towner, Cory and Elena Hinds, Troy Larson, Tom McDermitt and Bill English at the Nature Center parking lot at 7:00 AM. After checking everyone for the appropriate gear, we were off, frantically following Kirk, who marched off rapidly with a glint of summit fever in his eyes! Not much chit-chat for the first four miles of travel; we then split off of the main trail, after crossing a wooden bridge and shortly before reaching the Perch. Of course, Kirk motored past this cut-off point, being so far ahead of the group...we were able to lure him back...he mercifully shifted down a couple of gears after this. The travel up the next 2000 feet was surprisingly expedient following Wendy's snowshoe trail; the cool morning temperatures and low, patchy snow levels allowed travel without shoes for the most part, having to finally web up just below the toe of the moraine. The views of the Eagle River valley were spectacular, even at this lower vantage point. Peering across the river to the SW into the Heritage drainage, we could now

clearly see the north sides of Organ, Piano, Piccolo and Flute peaks...still in the throes of winter. In another month, this area will be prime for the picking.

Gaining altitude rather quickly in the now late morning radiation necessitated sunglasses, a dash of UV block on exposed skin. We stashed the shoes at about 3700 feet, having followed the northern trough skirting the moraine. Shortly after the big corner, Tom turned to leave us and tan the other side of his face...time commitments elsewhere. We remaining seven continued, traversing up and right to gain an hour-glass shaped couloir, 1500 feet higher, to the left of the prominent gully draining the south face...our future glissade route. Never requiring crampons due to the softening, but mostly firm snowpack, we made rapid progress. A few fun scrambles up Chugach crud, once dodging a volley of sheep-triggered missiles, then up and right again through some broken rock bands led us onto the south ridge at about 6400 feet; this easily up to the summit ridge...then a short two-minute stroll to the roomy summit.

The views of the surrounding Chugach, Talkeetna and Alaska ranges on this calm, relatively warm afternoon was nothing short of inspiring. So many peaks to climb and experience...so little time. While signing into the register, we noted that the "Strawn Bros.", Kevin and Travis, had been up just the day before...the final day of their spring break exploration. An unsuccessful attempt of the NW ridge of Kiliak and days of battling fierce winds had ended with the summit of this lofty peak...first climbed by Art Davidson, solo, in 1965.

A few bites of assorted goodies, a final glance at our beautiful backyard, and a buttoning down of all the hatches prepared us for the speedy glissade down the face; boldly initiated by Bill...who had obviously done this kind of thing before! We were all back down to the shoes in a few short minutes. Cory, having brought skis instead, headed down to the main trail, ahead of the gang...his mission: to rush out and augment the supply of beverages at our house near the Nature Center. We web-heads then waded down through the now slushy snow to the river trail where we were blessed with a fairly firm track. Although headlamps were required, we all made great time and arrived at the home base at about 9:30 PM, a total of 14 ½ hours having elapsed since our early morning start! Certainly, nothing even approximating the so-called 'death-march' that Nick Parker had alluded to during the March MCA meeting! Just a nice, easy stroll in the park...

Cory's timing was impeccable...arriving just in time (with cool drinks in hand) for salty popcorn, ranch-dipped veggies and a wonderful spaghetti dinner. Everyone seemed to have big smiles and a flush to the cheek when all was complete, a successful single day trip to the summit of Korohusk peak, and back, indeed!

Scandinavian Peaks Adventure

by Dave Hart



he dreaded "B" word that instills fear and loathing in all outdoor enthusiasts - Bivy - was at the forefront of our thoughts. Darkness was quickly approaching. Bock's Den was still three miles away. Between us and the hut were several hours of tedious route finding among the thinly covered Matanuska Glacier crevasses. Even though we had proper gear for the eventuality of a bivy, I for one was privately dreading it. Snow caves are not my favorite domicile. We were in an unenviable position.

Three days prior on Friday March 27, Mike Meekin flew the seven of us into the MCA Scandinavian Peaks Hut. We were Aze Azegami, Ned Friedman, Dawn Groth, Scott Hissong, Mark Miraglia, Art Weiner and myself. Dawn, Mark, Scott and I were fortunate to land at the higher glacier strip before poor weather forced Art, Aze and Ned to land 700 feet below the hut at the summer strip. By 9:00 PM, we were all rejoicing our safe arrival at the plush hut (elev. 5150). It wasn't long before the lanterns and stove had the temperature stoked up to 70 degrees inside!

Saturday we woke to clouds, wind and snow. So much for a peak climb this day. We did manage to go out that afternoon for a few hours of skiing and hiking before dinner. Euker, Hearts, knitting and reading consumed the remainder of our free time. There was, of course, plenty of food: Aze's Jelly Bellies, Mark's mints, Scott's weiners, Ned's ravioli, Art's cookies and Dawn and my tin o' chocolates filled our tummies.

Sunday the storm subsided, allowing us to make an attempt on Norway Peak (8960). We began wandering our way up the Scandinavian Glacier at 10:00 AM under partly cloudy skies. Relatively easy skiing brought us to 7500 feet where we began hiking up the steep glacier below the saddle between Finland and Norway Peaks. Unfortunately, the clouds began to descend and light flurries developed. Even though we were less than 1000 feet and half a mile of easy hiking from our goal, we opted to leave the summit for another day. The descent proved exciting when Ned punched through a bridge up to his chest. Fortunately Art "the Anchor" was Ned's ropemate. This wouldn't be the last time Art would be called upon. Two hours later, we were back at the hut, visiting with a group from the American Mountain Guides Association. Five guides and two instructors were there on a week-long final exam for their Ski Mountaineering Guide License.

Our original intent was to ski ten miles to Bock's Den on Monday, and the remaining ten miles to our truck at the Caribou Creek bridge on Tuesday. Unfortunately, the weather continued to hinder our plans. Our 10:00 AM departure time came and went as the snow persisted. We finally decided to head out, knowing we might have to return if visibility didn't improve. At 11:15 AM we were on the trail. Within an hour, the clouds broke and the skies cleared. Our first, and only, blue sky day had arrived. The views were glorious, both up and down glacier. Moments later, Scott punched through a crevasse up to his chest while crossing the lateral moraine. Good thing Art "the Anchor" was again there to help yank him out. The light snow cover and thin bridges made for slow travel down glacier. Mark survived our final crevasse incident when he, too, punched through up to his waist. Each of us was on pins and needles while skiing down the glacier, hoping we wouldn't be next. We managed to work our way left to the medial moraine and made good time until early evening. At this point we began to realize we might not make it to Bock's Den. This fact finally sank in when we crested the top of the medial moraine and had a good look at the final three miles to Bock's. My heart sank like a rock. Not only would we fail to sleep at Bock's this evening, we would be hard pressed to make it out to the car by the following evening. It was a sea of crevasses as far as the eye could see! We pressed on until 7:00 PM, when Mark and Aze found a protected spot for us to dig three snow caves and put up our one two-man tent.

We couldn't have asked for a better night for a bivy. Pink mountain alpenglow was followed by a wonderful Northern Lights display in the zero degree air. I'm sure Mark and Art were enjoying it even more than the rest of us since they had the only keys to the tent!

Morning finally came, and I do mean finally. What a long night. We packed up and hit the trail again at 9:00 AM Tuesday. Uncertainty was still high, as another low had moved in during the night. The light was terribly flat; it was hard to distinguish up from down on the glacier. Perseverance finally paid off and we found a friendly trough just left of the medial moraine which allowed us a few miles of easy skiing. A couple miles beyond Bock's Den, we cut far right to another trough visible during the flight in. This was the most enjoyable part of the entire ski - thick bridges, weaving in and out of crevasses, up and down, uncertain of the route. It was a great couple of hours. We finally reached the right side of the glacier - now it was simply a five mile slog to the Caribou Creek bridge.

We ended up walking through the moraine at the toe of the glacier until we hit the creek leading to the East Fork of the Matanuska River. Kudos to Art for coercing his sled down the entire glacier and through this jumbled moraine. From there we skied across the East Fork and headed up Caribou Creek at 8:00 PM. In an unbelievable

ending to our wonderful trip, Art and Dawn ran in to the man care-taking the homestead property at the northeast junction of the East Fork and Caribou Creek. He offered us hot coffee, hot tea, a warm fire and a ride to our awaiting truck, one mile distant. Alas, after our 12 hours of skiing we wouldn't have to bivvy again! Here's thanks to Sig and his son, Shawn, who created a wonderful ending to a challenging and enjoyable five-day Scandinavia Peaks Adventure.

ADZE



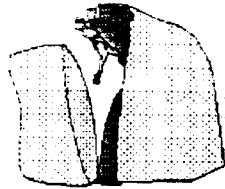
Partner wanted

Muldrow traverse, Denali. Our partner bailed!! After our food, fuel, and gear are cached on the Muldrow, he backs out. While trolling for partners who are your crevasse pro makes us nervous. Garth and I are still fired and looking for a 3rd. We fly from Talkeetna to Wonder Lake @ 5/15, 3-4 week climb. Traverse N to S and fly back to Talkeetna via the Kahiltna. Cost: \$1500-2000 per person, flight and permit included. We're safe but motivated. The climb of a lifetime. Interested, or know anyone reliable that may be? Call Mark Herkert at 907-543-3217 or email at mark_herkert@fc.lksd-do.org.

Reminder

Reminder to those who signed up for assisting Crow Pass Trips this summer for the Eagle River Nature Center: attend the free First Aid refresher course taught by Deb Ajango of AWS, May 21; 9am to 5pm at the Nature Center. Although this training is not mandatory, it is highly recommended. Richard Baranow 694-1500, alrb@uaa.alaska.edu or Asta Spurgis 694-2108

Climbing Notes



Richard Baranow, Joe Anders and Chris Morris made a one day assault of Yukla Peak (7535) Tuesday, April 21 under blue, sunny skies. Their route followed the Twin Falls approach, gaining the NE face/ridge route to the summit. Descent was made across/down the Icicle Glacier/drainage. 17 hours total time from the Nature Center. Richards' dogs 'Hooligan', 'Vista' and 'Keepers' also made it to the top! A grand time was had by all!