

# the **SCREE**

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

May 2007

Volume 50 Number 5

There are two kinds of climbers,  
those who climb because their heart sings  
when they're in the mountains,  
and all the rest.

Alex Lowe

**Big Timber Peak**

**The Wizard of Osborn**

**Redoubt attempts by sea**

**Tukgahgo Peak**

**Monthly Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 18th @ 7:30 PM**

**Program: To be announced**



# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

*"To maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering"*

Join us for our club meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9<sup>th</sup> and G Streets next to the Philips Building (you may use marked parking after hours)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org)

**Cover photo:** Richard Baranow on the summit of Big Timber with Bold Peak in the background. Ross Noffsinger Photo.

**Article Submission:** Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can also attach a word processing document to an email. Due to formatting problems please do not submit material in the body of an email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

#### May 5 Boggs Peak Class D

4,400 feet of elevation gain, 10 miles round trip Mountaineering experience required. Early start. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn [steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com), 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

#### May 7, 6:00 p.m. Peak 4009 (Four Mile Creek and Thunder Bird Creek) Class D

3,800 feet of elevation gain, 9 miles round trip, Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn [steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com), 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

May 17–June 01 Prince William Sound Kayak/Climb Whittier to Chenega Bay by Ferry, Kayak from Chenega Bay to Cordova. Climb some snow capped peaks on Knight Island, Montague Island and Hinchinbrook Island. Contact the leader [SeanBolender@gmail.com](mailto:SeanBolender@gmail.com)

#### June 9, Mount Yukla

Class G (Glacier Travel); 6,900 feet of elevation gain and 24 miles round trip Glacier travel experience and equipment required. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn 868-9118 (w); 344-1219 (h) [steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com);

#### June 18, 5:30 p.m. Homicide Peak

Class D; 4,400 feet of elevation gain and 9 miles round trip. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn [steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com); 868-9118 (w); 344-1219 (h))

#### June 22-23-24, Annual solstice Kenai climbing weekend

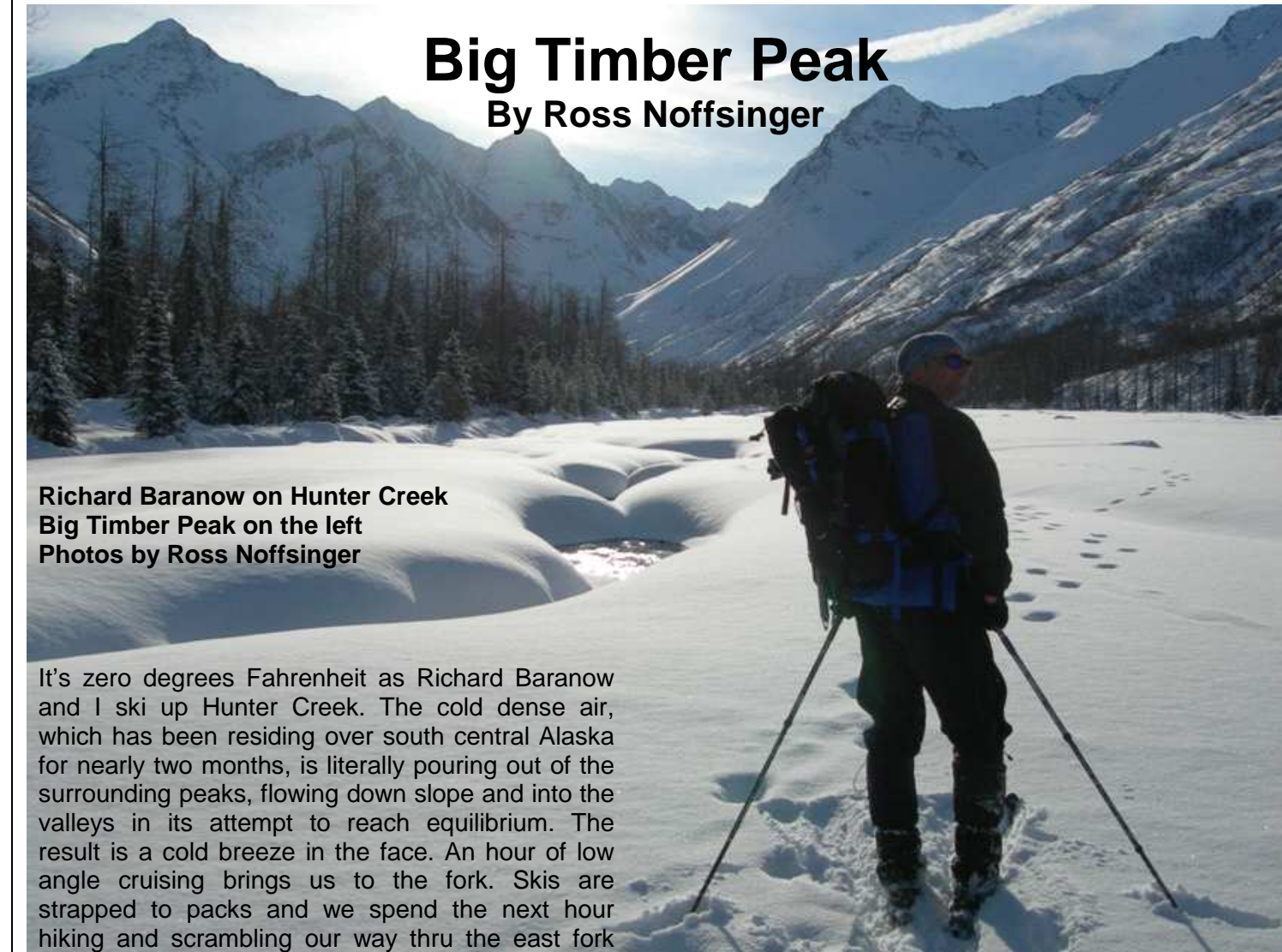
Third outing to the region around Resurrection - Summit Creek - Devil's Passes. Each year we climb 2 or more little-known or unclimbed peaks (44-4900 ft, 2000 ft above camp) and explore off-trail and enjoy spring flowers, etc. as you desire. This year departing from Devils Pass trailhead Friday afternoon/eve. and turning off trail to climb to a highcamp about 5 miles in. One peak planned for Sat and Sun mornings (we may get two Saturday). Day and overnight climbers welcome. Tom Choate 333 - 5309

#### July 20 – August 3 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Class B/C. The trip may include elevation gains over 2,000 feet on day hikes. Destination will be Lake Peters to Canning River with possible climb up Mt Chamberlin or set up base camp at Red Sheep airstrip along the Chandalar River and do 2 one week loop trips in the area. Leader: Don Hansen, [donjoehansen@msn.com](mailto:donjoehansen@msn.com)

# Big Timber Peak

By Ross Noffsinger



**Richard Baranow on Hunter Creek  
Big Timber Peak on the left  
Photos by Ross Noffsinger**

It's zero degrees Fahrenheit as Richard Baranow and I ski up Hunter Creek. The cold dense air, which has been residing over south central Alaska for nearly two months, is literally pouring out of the surrounding peaks, flowing down slope and into the valleys in its attempt to reach equilibrium. The result is a cold breeze in the face. An hour of low angle cruising brings us to the fork. Skis are strapped to packs and we spend the next hour hiking and scrambling our way thru the east fork gorge. Since I am new to the area, Richard points out each ice climb. Passage through the gorge is very condition dependent, and at times not possible. In summer this place must be a raging torrent.

Emerging from the gorge into a broad flat valley, we are bathed in warm sunlight. Our objective comes into view towering a vertical mile above the east end of the valley. Even though Big Timber is several miles distant, it looks near, distorted by the scale of the setting. It's going to be a good day.

Three miles of skiing brings us to the base of the west face. Feeling good about our progress (it is only 11:30am) we stop for a quick snack, stash our skis and begin to slog uphill. The post-holing is relatively short lived as we ascend above brush line to wind worked terrain. Our objective route ascends a spur ridge on the west face of Big Timber. The spur connects with the main northwest ridge at roughly 5,500 feet. As we near the top of the spur we traverse some steep terrain, but the mountain climb officially begins on the northwest ridge.

Richard being stronger (up to this point I have spent most of the day in his rear view mirror) and more technically savvy leads up the crest of the narrow ridge. After 150 yards or so, we encounter rock steps. Somehow they looked insignificant from 5,000 feet below, but now it is obvious they are quite exposed. Contemplating the situation, I suggest we down-climb onto the seemingly less imposing east side of the ridge. Richard leads the way down a tongue of snow. It is steep enough to stand upright and down-climb with both hands and feet. Below us, a series of cliffs command concentration. My self arrest ski pole pays dividends by providing a fourth point of contact. We descend 30 feet then traverse steep snow through sections of rock. The periodic strike of the ice axe against rock indicates unsettling soft and shallow snow. Eventually the effort pays off as we crampon up beautiful hard-pack toward the ridge. We proceed upward reaching the summit somewhere near 5pm.

## Traversing around the Northwest Ridge



The views are stunning; Marcus Baker and the Knik Glacier to the east, Bold, Bashful and Baleful to the west/southwest, Devil's Club, Hunters and Troublesome to the south, while Sky Buster dominates the northeast. We worked hard to get here and I do not want to leave, but the cold air and dwindling light dictate otherwise. After 45 minutes of taking it all in, we consider our options. Descending the time consuming, exposed ascent route is out. We resort to viewing images of Big Timber's west face stored in Richard's camera from a recent ascent of The Gatekeeper. A major gully that starts a few hundred feet below the summit will provide a fast exit if we can reach it. Since we have no rope, repelling is not an option. We descend into the unknown down the southwest ridge, and are rewarded with a 2000 foot glissade on perfect snow down the west face.

Its 7:15pm when we reach our skis. In fading light we drink warm tea, re-fuel, and medicate with vitamin I. Normally, a three hour slog out from a 6,700 foot day would drag on, but the ski through the upper valley under a star lit jet black sky is surreal. The sound of running water signals a chance to re-hydrate from an open lead in Hunter Creek. Even though I started with 3 liters, I am now seriously parched. Its 10:15pm when we arrive back at the car.

Yes, it's been a great day!

It should be noted that this climb was facilitated by the exceptional weather conditions this winter in the western Chugach. The combination of a lot of snow in December followed by an extended cold period with high winds and little snow created a relatively firm and stable snow pack for climbing. This stability was confirmed during two recent trips into the area where Richard climbed the west face of The Gorgemeister with Wendy Sanem and made a solo ascent of the Gatekeeper. For The Gatekeeper he used same approach route up the east fork of Hunter Creek.

Finally, a novel aspect of the climb was the ease of access (i.e. no bushwhack, no muck, no private property, no airplane). The first ascent in July 1993 by Willy Hersman, Randy and Isaac Howell and Bertrand Poinsonnet up the north side of the mountain involved a heinous bushwhack (see August 1993 Scree). In 1998 Tom Choate, Steve Gruhn and Bruce Kittredge did their research, discovered a trail on the east side of Hunter Creek and even received permission from a suspected landowner; however passage was still less than ideal with brush, muck and route finding to contend with (see October 1998 Scree). Others who have tried to access this aesthetic cluster of peaks have faced similar challenges with some resorting to flying in.

## Marcus Baker and Knick Glacier from Big Timber



# The Wizard of Osborn

By Wayne Todd



There's no place like Nome, there's no place like Nome.....

Stepping back a decade in time, a younger me spends a month with my brother in fish camp at Salmon Lake.

During an evening hike with my brother and Powell Strong, a Welshman and Fish and Game volunteer, I mention a hankering for a multi day trip that incorporates Mt. Osborn. The idea is discussed and Powell says he's in.

On a sunny and breezy late June evening, we hike up Deep Canyon Creek, then Buffalo Creek in perfect mountaineering weather. Perfect except for when the breeze tapers and the mosquitoes attack. From the summit of Tigaraha Peak (road to summit took only 3 ½ hours), we have unexpected views of jagged peaks and rock towers. I build a cairn and leave a film can register. We also have views of Mt. Osborn which gives me route ideas. By 1am we are camped at a valley lake, spotted from up high. Looking back at Tigaraha we are surprised by the steepness of the orange banded rock of our descent route.

The next morning, we continue north for an unnamed peak and for access into the Osborn drainage. From a north saddle, access is not feasible due to cliffs. The unnamed peak isn't readily attainable either but after a south-west

large-loose-rock traverse we gain the west ridge and then the summit. The diversity and rapid change of the rock is intriguing. There are no human signs, so we build a cairn and leave a register calling this Pen Tri Cwm, welsh for three something as this peak is at the head of three valleys.

After some excellent butt glissading back to camp, we wait out some sprinkles. When the weather looks good again, we break camp and head northeast up valley after 6pm (the endless summer light up north is a wondrous thing). Before the pass we cross recent large bear tracks in the snow. Our outdoor

awareness heightens.

The snow slope on the north side of this pass is a go!, though we do have to down climb without axes. (Never leave home without your axe). The new guy to mountaineering does a swell job of descending; i.e. no mishaps.

We are in splendid alpine country along partly snow-covered Crater Lake. Hiking along the lake we notice a few old long 1x4ish boards (we surmise remnants from an old cabin). Cresting a hill we are stunned to see miles of nearly 100 year old water ducts! Most of the valleys have these long thin slightly tapered boards fastened into tubes and wound by wire. So much for the cabin theory. These ducts were used to funnel water to the valley bottom for gold mining with large dredges. The man hours that went into the duct construction in this valley alone, not to mention the engineering, is mind boggling.

Excited and humbled, we set camp below the lake with a wind block made of duct timber. Eyes are shut at midnight.

Early the next morning we are ready for Osborn but foggy weather staves us off until 8:30am. In the fog I go long and don't realize until breaking above the mist that we're on the ridgeline from Pen Tri Cwm. The route works nicely though and with only the higher peaks protruding through we seem to be much higher.

## Powell Strong in the Lowlands



The summit ridge of Osborn consists of numerous cylindrical gendarmes ten to forty feet high. I climb the last one, build a cairn and leave a film can register. Powell has never been this high before, so this is quite a highpoint for him. (Wales does not have much relief).

After noon under mostly sunny skies we glissade toward camp on a more direct line than our approach. On our exodus the traveling is good and fun as we utilize the 'yellow brick road' of Nome, the water duct. The duct varies from being completely intact and sound, to being returned to earth; either buried in rock piles or being enveloped by brush. The duct path eventually becomes brushier than the surrounding slopes so we abandon it. This works well for awhile, though in the lowlands we end up wading through beaver ponds. I'm in a wee bit of a hurry as the departure time for my flight home is fast approaching.

At the Teller road we anticipate hitching a ride back to the truck but soon realize there aren't any vehicles. One rig passes us going the wrong way and doesn't stop for a thumb. I jog back to the truck in sloshing wet boots (always a pleasure). Along the way a jager protects a road-kill ground squirrel.

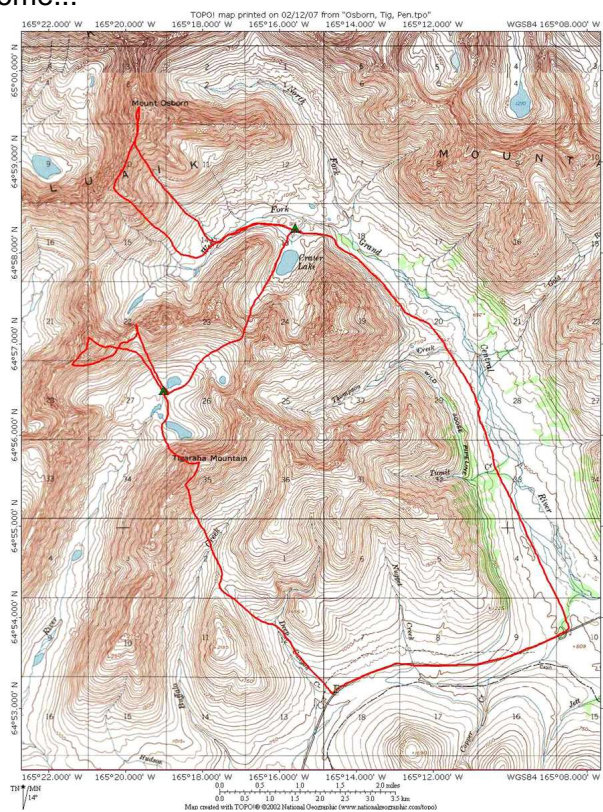
In the truck headed Powell's direction I pass by a truck with Powell in it. The jogging gained perhaps

two minutes of time. Now we race toward Nome in an attempt to catch the Alaska Airlines flight but drive more sanely when we realize the futility. The jet passes over as we approach town.

I sheepishly tell the counter agent about missing my flight (no details volunteered). She says no big deal, there is a cargo flight out later. Sweet!

On the flight, a few of the spartan passengers repeatedly enter the cargo area. I listen in and ask if I can accompany them when I hear something about animals. In the cargo hold, crated young and very bug-eyed Reindeer are staring about.

There's no place like Nome, there's no place like Nome...



*This story was written from a good journal, memory, trip photos and a route map from June 29-July 1, 1996. The impetus was an AAC article claiming a first recorded ascent of Tigaraha and Osborn about 2003. The idea of a first ascent of either of those two peaks in the last 80 years is ludicrous considering the proximity to civilization, relative ease of access, and the mining activity nearby in the early 1900's.*

*Other peaks Powell and I climbed along with Gary Todd (my brother) are: Smolt 6/24/1996 1,926'(Solomon D-6 T7S, R31W, S11) and Cohoe 6/25/1996 3,325' (Nome D-1, T6S, R31W, S17)*

# Redoubt attempts by sea

by Stu Grenier



**Allison, heading home**

In July of 2003 Sarah Quimby and I tried to get up the south side of Redoubt Creek from the beach in an attempt to climb or at least get to Mt. Redoubt by the 1959 route (Scree Sept. 1959). This was near the end of a five week paddle climb that had already resulted in summits on Mt. Susitna and Mt. Naqazhegi on Chisik Island (Scree Aug. 2005). With Redoubt Creek in flood, many dead beetle-killed spruce down everywhere in deep grass and alders we were introduced to the six hour mile with full expedition packs. After a day and a half of this fun we threw in the towel and headed for the beach. The locals at Drift River had suggested that the Drift was the way to go.

In 2006 the drum beat for another paddle climb attempt of Redoubt started again. Ads were run on the usual list serves and in the Scree and a team was formed. The plan was for Allison Sayer Panning and I to leave Anchorage and paddle to the Drift River, hike up it 18 miles to a location right at the foot of the mountain where we would mark off a 1000 ft. runway for a 205 piloted by Kirk Johnson to land with Greg Bragiell on board and our climbing gear. From there Greg, Allison, and I would try to climb the mountain. In order for this to work a lot of things had to go right. Some did and some didn't.

As expected, after departing August 24, it took Allison and me a week to paddle to the Drift River by the conservative Susitna Flats route. In the past

I had shot straight across from Fire Island to Ladd in one tide but I am older and wiser now.

At Drift River's south side we stashed the kayak, and hung our extra food. From there we were on an oil company's land which has asked us to tell people to respect their private property. In the future we will need to stay on the river or go up the north side of the Drift for the first 4 miles or so to avoid their property. At about mile 8 the Drift cuts into some steep alder covered faces on the south side. Allison and I first skirted these and then went back to our packs and decided to pack raft across the Drift to the north side which at this point looked like easy going. From there we moved up past the Drift River Lobe of the

Double Glacier and found easy going if you stay next to the Drift. It was clear that on the south side at about mile 13 the river once again cliffs out with something much more substantial than the mile 8 situation. We felt lucky to be on the north side. That is until it was time to cross back over to the south side which is where Mt. Redoubt and the potential 1000 ft. runway are.

## **Mile 17, North side of the Drift River**



About mile 14 we started trying to cross back over the Drift and found that the river had changed from the wide slow moving river we crossed at mile 8 to something way faster and much more channelized. It was too rough for our one small pack raft so we just walked up the bank hoping for a braided area that was shallow enough to cross on foot. It was not to be. Over waist deep and very fast again and again we turned back. At this point we started calling on the sat phone to tell Greg and Kirk to not

come. After many attempts we got through to an answering machine only, and I still am not sure the machine could hear us. About the time we reached about a quarter mile below where the big brown rock covered glacier almost cuts across the river from the south at about mile 20 we saw a plane flying in the area of our intended runway. This was one of our mistakes. We had agreed earlier that if we could not get a message out to come on Sept. 2 because the sat phones are not reliable. Our aviation radio was back in the packs that we had left at mile 18 for the recon. Greg and Kirk were not looking at mile 20 on the north side so they went back with the idea that something must have happened to us. That night the sat phone worked and I got through to Greg. They had never got our message not to come. I regretted not continuing to try until I talked with a real person as Kirk had requested. Due to the fact that we could not get across the river the climb was off and Greg and Kirk flew over for nothing due to the communication problems. Everyone was understandably bummed out.

The next day Allison and I decided to take the morning off and then the afternoon, too. We even allowed ourselves the luxury of cooking near the tent and even eating in the tent. This was the first time we had done this on the trip. That afternoon as I lay in bed reading and Allison slept, I heard a sound off in the alders. I quietly noted it and kept reading. About 45 minutes later I heard something again and looked at Allison sleeping. I decided not to be alarmist and just coughed loudly to let it know that we were present and people. What ever it was went away.

The earthquake started about 6 pm. and it hit us like a storm. Allison and I sat up to find the tent shaking violently. I looked at her and shouted, "Is that you!" She shouted back, "no!" We could hardly hear each other due to the loud shaking of the tent. I shouted the same question again in disbelief but she again answered no. I looked down at the ground and it wasn't moving but the tent was going crazy. In some kind of denial or shock it didn't occur to us that we were under attack until we both looked up and saw two paws on the side of the tent starting to crush the tent down. Boy did we start screaming. "Go away bear! Go away bear!" Allison was shouting. I can't write what I was shouting but then I went into kicking mode and started to kick between the paws with my bare feet. It wasn't working. I was having problems connecting through the tent which seemed to be holding up surprisingly well though now it was bending down on us.

Screaming and kicking was having no effect on this animal.

After a few attempts at kicking I pulled back and said to Allison as I unzipped my coat, "I have to shoot." She answered back with a loud and hearty, "okay!"

It was all happening in a slow motion dream like state. Almost as if I was forgetting to breathe. Out came the .44. I held it about 6 inches from the tent wall and aimed it between the paws and up. Pow!



Instantly the situation changed. The tent was full of gun smoke. It was as if there never was a bear. There was a large hole from the bullet with a powder burn around it. It was deafening quiet. We checked if we were okay and then I unzipped the door and went out gun first. To my relief I saw blacky walking away into the woods normally but slowly. I took a quick look for blood and found none. Due to the bug situation Allison and I went into patch mode immediately. We had patch tape and found that the polyurethane tarp that we had over the tent had gone a long ways in delaying the bear's entry into the tent. Its claws had punctured the tarp but not been able to rip it. This may have been due to the fact that we had this tarp on at least one bungee cord. The North FaceVE24 tent fly on the other hand shredded easily. The bear had not yet been able to rip the tent under the tarp and fly. Two poles were bent. In short the bullet did more damage to the fabric than the bear did, but neither one of us had any question at all that using the gun was the right thing to do. This was one frightening experience.

After patching the tent we did a better search for blood and found a trail about 40 ft. from the tent. We decided to follow it to finish the job if necessary but we lost it in the devil's club.



Oh, by the way, I guess it is important to remember to never ever cook and eat near or in a tent in bear country.

We moved camp that evening to an area that we thought we might be able to cross over to the south side at the next morning. We still planned to mark off the runway even if we were not going to use it this season. The markers we put up to watch the water level were showing that the water was dropping. By morning it looked as if it had dropped by over two feet. After trying to walk across some more we were turned back for the usual reasons but the wave height had also dropped so we agreed that it was reasonable to attempt a raft crossing.

Allison being the most experienced white water kayaker took the empty raft and ferried across and back like a pro for a test run. I was cheering as she did it. Then she took her pack and tossed it in and squeezed in while on her knees. Ten seconds after she launched she capsized in the middle of the river. We neglected to bring a life jacket. As she capsized I was taking a picture and then put my camera on a rock and started running down the bank in hopes of helping her. All I could see of her was her head and the raft. Amazingly she managed to hold onto the raft, paddle, and her pack. I could see her bear spray floating about ten feet in front of her. We lost it. She later told me she was doing something she called "the moon walk" which was bouncing off the bottom as if she was walking on the moon as the current rushed her along. It was a relief to see her get out of that river.

**Allison goes for a swim**



On the bank she rolled the raft up without discussion. Our efforts at crossing this section of river were over. Three days later we were back at the kayak and five days after that on Sept. 11, with a brilliant sunset behind the Tordrillo Mountains and perfectly flat water we pulled the kayak up onto the gravel of Point Woronzof. Off in the distance Mt. Redoubt's dark shape was highlighted by an orange sunset.

There is already talk of another paddle climb attempt. The Chigmitz are calling even stronger now. I was very lucky to have Allison join this expedition. I just wish we could have got Greg in the field, too.

With lessons learned we grow stronger.



**And she waits...**

# Tukgahgo Peak (4675), Winter ascent

By Greg Higgins

Wayne Todd, Carrie Wang and I hiked in November to Chilly Point above Haines, just south of the summit of Tukgahgo. Ever since then I have wanted to go back and finally got the chance on February 14, 2007. A group of local snowboarders made a trail to the ridge on Saturday, and I used it to avoid the route finding problems in the thick snow loaded hemlocks at tree line.

The marginal weather turned worse as I hiked up the east ridge and I reached Chilly Point with snow falling. More snowshoeing alternating with cramponing took me to the summit an hour later.

By then the visibility was minimal and I went back across to the east ridge mostly by compass. My up-track on the east ridge was mostly gone, so I used my compass again to regain Seven Mile Meadow.

The snow hid the trail down through the trees so I was thoroughly lost hiking back to the road, but since all downhill goes there, that is what I did. Some unexpected rocky ledges gave me a challenge and a funny moment as I caught myself admiring a handsome Licorice Fern while precariously perched on a steep ledge while clinging to the rocks. Despite the bad weather, it was a very nice day.



## Letter to the Editor

Steve Gruhn's article about Peak 5450 in the February Scree caught my attention. Loretta and I were there on June 1, 1974. We had camped in the East Twin Valley on the approach to that peak, but then ended up hiking the ridge and collecting plants. We found a lot of trash near the top that we assumed was from survey crews. This trip was memorable because we found Narrow Petaled Rock Cress ([Draba stenopetala](#)) along the ridge somewhat in abundance.

Greg Higgins.

## Calendar Committee

Stu with the Calendar Committee is collecting horizontal photos for the 2008 MCA Calendar. Photos should be 8x10 or 8x12. He plans on collecting your submissions until the committee has enough quality shots to make a respectable 50th anniversary Calendar. You can make an 8x10 for a couple of dollars at Costco. Contact Stu at oinkmenow@hotmail.com or 337-5127 to get your shots to him or just bring them to an MCA meeting. Watch the Scree to know when the voting will be. It will be no later than the September meeting. Shots submitted to the 2007 competition will also be added to the 2008 competition. Many excellent shots did not make it in. Thanks for supporting this project.

## Adze

Partner(s) wanted

Experienced paddle climbers. Mid to late May paddle climb from Anchorage to the mouth of the Big Su, if ice conditions allow, with a possible attempt on Mt Susitna. Hope to time it right to see what some say is Cook Inlet's highest known density of belugas. Maybe up to 10 days. Stu, oinkmenow@hotmail.com or 337-5127

For Sale

Garmin etrex GPS  
Hardly used. Retail for \$115  
You can have mine for \$60  
Call Margie, 952-5492

For Sale

Tua Excaliber randonee skis (190 cm). Silveretta 404 randonee bindings. Climbing skins (64 mm). Neoprene overboots (Forty Below Purple Haze). Package Price: \$320.00 Contact: Art, friesweiner@acsalaska.net or 345-3551

For Sale

One Sport boots in great condition, been in storage for many years. Many sizes to choose from. A great alternative to double plastics. Tango and high altitude Jannu available. \$175-250. Originally \$600. Rob 222-6114

For Sale

Mountain Hardwear Sub Zero SL Parka. XXL/Black. Conduit SL Laminate. Water resistant, 650-fill goose down, articulated sleeves, detachable hood. Like New - worn watching the Northern Lights. Reg. \$295, selling for \$240. Kevin 317-8868

# Peak of the Month

by Steve Gruhn

Willy Hersman and Kneely Taylor on the south ridge of Maynard Mountain, Carpathian back center



Photo by Steve Gruhn

Name: **Carpathian Peak**

Mountain Range: Kenai Mountains

Borough: Kenai Peninsula Borough

Drainages: Portage Glacier, Skookum Glacier, and Spencer Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 60°41'22" North, 148°49'55" West

Elevation: 6020 feet

Prominence: 3070 feet from Isthmus Peak (6532)

Adjacent Peaks: Peak 4920 near the Spencer Glacier, Peak 4530 near the Portage and Skookum Glaciers, Peak 4360 near the Northland and Spencer Glaciers, and Peak 3609 near the Whittier Glacier and Blackstone Bay

Distinctness: 1770 feet from Peak 4920

USGS Map: Seward (C-5), Alaska

First Recorded Ascent: April 1959, by Ted Barrett, Keith Hart, and Mat Nitsch

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Via the Portage Glacier on skis.

Access Point: Portage Lake Parking Lot

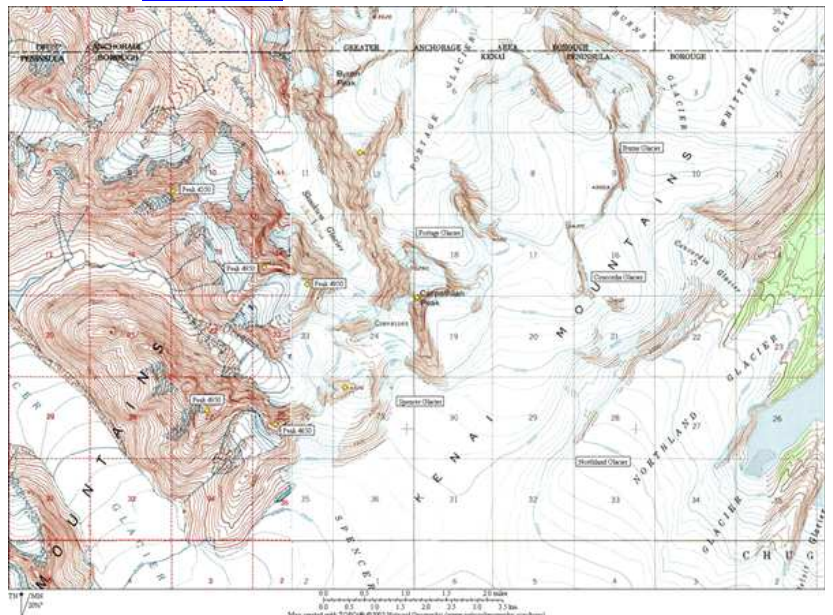
The May 7, 1959, edition of the now-defunct Anchorage Daily Times featured an article with several photographs of the first recorded ascent of Carpathian Peak. Named for the Carpathian Mountains of Middle Europe, there have been many attempts to climb this picturesque peak since the first recorded

ascent in April 1959. After all, it is quite enticing with easy road access at Portage and its status as one of the few 6,000-foot peaks on the Kenai Peninsula. However, most attempts seem to go something like this: Ski across Portage Lake, get on the Portage Glacier, set up camp, encounter weather, build walls and shovel out the tent repeatedly, give up on the tent and dig a snow cave, retreat at the first break in the weather (which usually coincides with three days after the last of the food ran out). Perhaps that's an exaggeration, but only a slight one.

The second recorded ascent was on July 26, 1964, via the Skookum Glacier by Keith Degenhardt, Paul Crews, Jr., Jim Phelps, and John Fisher. It was Degenhardt's third attempt and Crews' fourth attempt to climb the peak and involved wading up Skookum Creek for several miles, presumably

because the dense brush made travel out of the frigid creek less inviting. Although the USGS map doesn't specify a summit elevation (only a contour line indicating an elevation between 6000 and 6100 feet), Degenhardt's trip report in the August 1964 Scree specifies the summit elevation as 6020 feet. His method of arriving at that elevation, however, is unclear.

<http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?lat=60.68941&lon=-148.83192&datum=nad83&u=6&layer=DRG50&size=l&s=250>



# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Sean Bolender	333-0213	Board member	Steve Gruhn	344-1219
Vice-President	Annette Iverson	222-0581	Board member	Don Hansen	243-7184
Secretary	Bridget Paule	230-9903	Board member	Randy Howell	346-4608
Treasurer	Travis Taylor	382-4823	Board member	Andy Rembert	688-3230
			Board member	Sara Ellen Hutchison	382-7097

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, Please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the club treasurer. The Post Office will not forward the newsletter.

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles and notes submitted for publication and other communication related to the newsletter should be submitted on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) or mailed to Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage Alaska 99510. Articles should be received by May 16<sup>th</sup> to be in the June Issue.

Paid Ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be 'camera ready' and pre-paid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by our monthly meeting to pick it up or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant 243-1438  
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell – 346-4608, Jayme Dixon – 382-0212  
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008  
Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127  
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 346-2589  
Web: [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) (change your address here)  
Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoogroups.com)

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