

the **SCREE**

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

May 2016

Volume 59 Number 5



Contents

**Pushing for Pistriakoff Peak
Peakbagging from Oolah Pass
Thunder Bird Peak
Peak of the Month: Mount Ascension
The MCA's 17 Honorary Members**

Monthly meeting: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 17. Robert Sheldon will present on the Sheldon Mountain House, which is located on the Ruth Glacier in the Alaska Range.

"In the end, we only regret the chances we didn't take."

- Lewis Carroll



The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

www.mtnclubak.org

"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 meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17, BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, Alaska.

<http://www.alaskageology.org/graphics/meetingmap.gif>

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit

<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=members.form>.

Contents

Pushing for Pistriakoff Peak
Peakbagging from Oolah Pass
Thunder Bird Peak
Peak of the Month: Mount Ascension
The MCA's 17 Honorary Members

Cover Photo

Jorge Machado climbing on Thunder Bird Peak's scenic northeast ridge.
Photo by Brendan Lee

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 24th of each month to appear in the next issue of *the Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, May 17, at 6:30 p.m. Robert Sheldon will present on the Sheldon Mountain House, which is located on the Ruth Glacier in the Alaska Range.

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

May 20: McHugh Peak - This will be a leisurely hike from Bear Valley. The pace will be suitable for children. Contact Steve Gruhn at scgruhn@gmail.com for details.

May 26: Mount Eklutna - This will be a leisurely hike suitable for children. Contact Steve Gruhn at scgruhn@gmail.com for details.

June 10 - 12: Symphony Tarns. Contact Matt Nedom at 278-3648 or mattnedom@yahoo.com for details.

June 11: Pioneer to Eklutna Traverse. This traverse takes advantage of trails to access great ridgeline hiking and scrambling with zero bushwhacking. It's approximately 20 miles with 12,000 feet of elevation gain. Participants should be fit and prepared for a full day in the mountains. We shouldn't need any technical climbing gear, but everyone should have plenty of water - up on the ridge there won't be opportunities for re-supply - and lots of snacks. Participants should also prepare for a wide variety of weather, as temperatures on the ridgeline can vary dramatically from the valley floor. Trip leader is Katie Strong (kgstrong@gmail.com).

June 18: Flattop Mountain sleepout. No leader.

Online? Click me!



Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.

UAA is offering a beginning rock climbing class in May and a crevasse rescue class in June this summer. There are still many openings.

Beginning Rock Climbing: Tuesdays and Thursdays, June 7 to 21 (6 p.m.—9 p.m.), all day Saturday, June 11, and all day Saturday and Sunday June 18—19. Cost: \$450ish.

Crevasse Rescue: Tuesdays and Thursdays, May 17 to 31 (6 p.m.—9 p.m.), all day Saturday, May 21, and all day Saturday and Sunday May 28—29. Cost: \$400

These courses are designed and planned for working individuals and are being offered in the evenings and on weekends to meet working schedules. It is easy and free to become a UAA student.

If there are questions or anyone needs help registering, they can contact the Health, Physical Education, & Recreation Department at 786-4083.

Climbing Notes

Kathy Still reported that Azri-el Sellers and she had climbed and skied Peak 5050 east of Summit Lake Pass in the Kenai Mountains. The October 2011 *Scree* contained a trip report that mentioned that Paul Lindemuth and Eric Opland had climbed this point in 2001. After conferring with Eric, however, Kathy reported that the summit that Opland and Lindemuth reached in 2001 was Point 4790 north of Peak 5050.

Dan Evans reported that Eric Speck and he had climbed Peak 3105 in the Davidof Lake and Great Arm drainages and Mount Yanovski (3492) in 2013, not 2016, as had been initially reported in the February *Scree*. They climbed the peaks as part of a multi-year north-south traverse of Baranof Island.

Atop Polar Bear Peak on April 18, Ross Noffsinger completed his goal of climbing each of the 120 peaks in Chugach State Park. Congratulations, Ross!

Trivia Time

Answers on page 15.

1. What is the southernmost peak in the Chugach Mountains that is at least 10,000 feet high?

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| A. Peak B | G. Mount Gannett | M. East Peak of Mount La Perouse | R. Plateau Peak |
| B. Bashful Peak | H. Mount Gilbert | N. Mount Leeper | S. Mount Steller |
| C. Bellister Peak | I. Mount Goode | O. Mount Miller | T. Mount Tom White |
| D. Columbia Peak | J. Mount Grace | P. Peak O-4 | U. Truuli Peak |
| E. Mount Dagelet | K. Mount Hawkins | Q. Peak O-5 | |
| F. East Peak | L. Mount La Perouse | | |

2. What is the easternmost peak in the Chugach Mountains that is at least 10,000 feet high?

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| A. Peak 10514 | H. Peak F | O. East Peak of Mount La Perouse | U. Mount Powdertop |
| B. Appalachia Peak | I. Mount Fafnir | P. Mount Leeper | V. Mount Steller |
| C. Bellister Peak | J. Flat Top Peak | Q. Peak M-138 | W. Mount Tom White |
| D. Mount Bertha | K. Frederika Mountain | R. Mount Miller | X. Peak X |
| E. Blackcliff Mountain | L. Peak G | S. Peak O-4 | |
| F. Mount Dagelet | M. Peak H | T. Peak O-5 | |
| G. East Peak | N. Mount Hawkins | | |

Pushing for Pistriakoff Peak

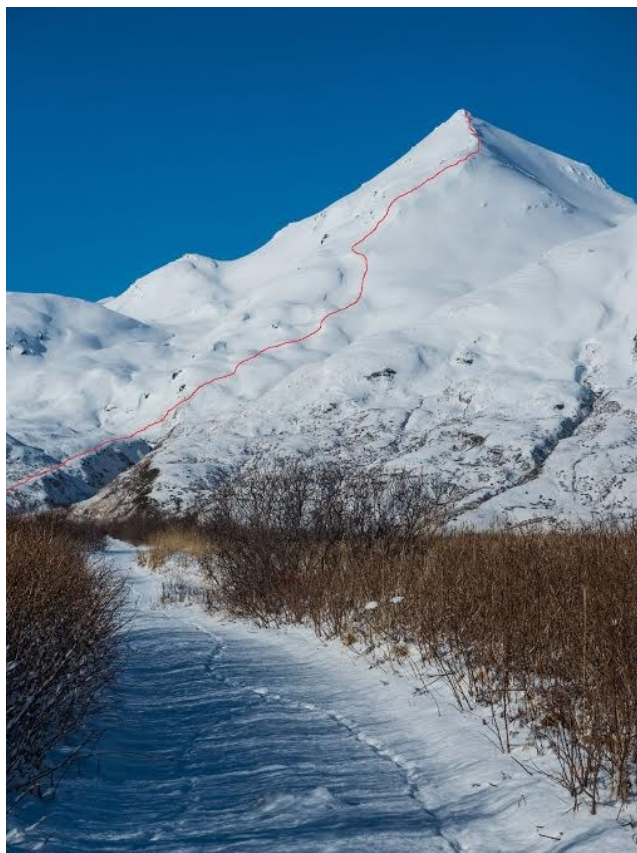
Text and photos by Sam Zmolek



Erik Rook descending from the summit of Pistriakoff Peak.

Pistriakoff Peak sits as the high point of a cluster of three distinct summits just north of the Shaishnikof River valley on Unalaska Island. The summit is listed at 2699 feet above sea level, and looms prominently above the surrounding landscape for miles. While Pistriakoff has been climbed before historically [Ed. note: In his article titled “Reminiscences of Alaskan Volcanos” (sic), published in the July 1918 Scientific Monthly, William Healey Dall reported that Henry Wood Elliott and he climbed Pistriakoff Peak in 1874.], it is far enough from town that it doesn’t get much attention despite the obvious dominance over the nearby landscape.

My buddy Erik Rook had climbed it before me a couple years ago, and found it to be a transformative experience as far as Unalaska snow ascents go. I remember jealously listening to his account about the final chute he climbed that led to the summit, a feature he dubbed “The Birth Canal” because of the feeling of being born anew after emerging on to the summit after passing through. Our competitive sense of humor as explorers even led to him referring to the peak as “Neener-Neener,” which I was forced to accept as a name until I found to my relief that Pistriakoff is the historic name already applied to the mountain. [Ed. note: The name Pistriakoff is derived from the Russian pistriaki for puffins, which reportedly nested in its walls.]



Erik Rook's and Sam Zmolek's route up the east ridge of Pistriakoff Peak.



Erik Rook following fox tracks on the ascent of Pistriakoff Peak.



Erik Rook kicking steps in the icy snow on the ascent of Pistriakoff Peak's east ridge.

I finally climbed Pistriakoff for myself in the summer of 2014, and found it to be a very worthy scramble, with a fantastic view. It wasn't until Erik and I were sitting around together in early March this year that I realized it was time to go for a winter ascent of the mountain. We had a weather window for the morning and afternoon on March 6th, so we geared up and went for it.

We arrived at the end of the road mid-morning, wide-eyed with excitement over a rare winter bluebird day, following a light dusting of snow overnight. After a short stroll, we got to the Shaishnikof River, and decided to keep our mountaineering boots and gaiters on, relying on sheer speed to keep our feet dry while we hustled to the other side. Luckily, this tactic worked well enough, and we were quickly bushwhacking across the lowlands to get to the base of the mountain.

The route-finding was easy, and after the first little hill we were following fox tracks in the snow for almost a mile as we worked our way upward to attain the east ridge. The snow was pretty good, with a couple inches of fresh powder over a relatively firm base. We put crampons on before climbing the first steep section, but they weren't really necessary until we reached the crux of the route.

The east ridge of Pistriakoff is a glorious route, with enough exposure to make one feel alive, but without a lot of technical danger. The trickiest part of the climb was attaining the ridge, which required ascending a slope that felt like 40 degrees or more, regardless of which variation one took. Erik and I took as gentle a line as we could find, but eventually we had to ascend a few hundred feet up this steep section, and this was where I started struggling a bit mentally.



The view to the east from the east ridge of Pistriakoff Peak with Captains Bay at left and the Shaishnikof River at right.



Erik Rook traversing the summit block of Pistriakoff Peak.

In softer snow, that slope wouldn't have bothered me at all, but as things got steeper the ice just under the surface snow seemed to get harder. It was just enough to unnerve me a bit, but there was nothing to do but kick in harder, trust the front points of my crampons, and bury my axe as deep as possible with every step. It didn't matter that the potential runout was fine, or that I'd done harder, scarier slopes quite a few times in my life, my panicked mind thought about everything before I settled in and just forced myself over the lip where Erik was waiting for me.

Once I was over the crux, things started getting better. Erik sensed my mental struggles, and was nice enough to lead the rest of the way up the ridge, which involved a bit of post holing in the drier snow up high that was noticeably deeper. The ridge was beautiful, menacing, and inviting all at once, and we savored that stroll. I didn't want it to end, but eventually we had to come to the summit block.

The finish of Pistriakoff provides two route options when approaching from the east ridge. I took the left option, which was a fun rock scramble to the top, when I climbed it in summer. This route seemed a bit insane in the winter, however, exposed to the entire south face of the mountain on potential ice. Erik took the lead and headed right, traversing to "The Birth Canal" just below the ice-covered crags above, in deep snow on a 45-degree slope. I was still a little rattled, but as soon as I took stock of the snow conditions it wasn't hard to follow Erik's lead, and I was emerging from "The Birth Canal" onto the summit in just a few minutes.

It had been a beautiful day, and I was glad to have had Erik help push me to the top. We didn't linger long on the summit, however; we could see the dark clouds coming from the southwest and we knew our window was already closing. The descent was very enjoyable, and we bombed several glissades to speed things up, including the crux. I'll always remember watching the summit go under as we stood on the valley floor, knowing that we had definitely made the most of that lovely day while we drove home in a snowstorm. That, and being quite jealous when Erik picked up the second half of his breakfast burrito from a snowbank where it had waited for him unmolested during our climb.

It's the mental process as much as anything that kept me coming back to mountains, overcoming fears, pushing boundaries, and achieving goals. That day on Pistriakoff certainly exemplified that inner push to the summit, and reminded me how great it was to have good companions on big pushes.



Erik Rook traversing the summit block of Pistriakoff Peak.



View southwest from the summit of Pistriakoff Peak toward Makushin Bay.



View to the south from the summit of Pistriakoff Peak with the Shaishnikof River at left.

Peakbagging from Oolah Pass

By Timm Nawrocki



Jeff Nawrocki crossing into Gates of the Arctic National Park.

Photo by Timm Nawrocki

Oolah Pass in Gates of the Arctic National Park is very accessible and is a great location from which to explore surrounding peaks. Because the pass is approximately eight miles from the Dalton Highway, it requires only a single day of travel, but feels separated from the highway corridor. An easy starting point is directly off the Dalton Highway south of the Chandalar Shelf. Several pullouts are available on both sides of the road just before the Dietrich River branches to the north. Travel directly up and over the slope to the west to gain access to Gates of the Arctic National Park (there is also a radio tower on that ridge at Point 4664). Then follow Kuyuktuvuk Creek to the pass. Travel is generally easy above 3250 feet and along creeks. Most bushwhacking below 3250 feet is through low shrub that does not present a major obstacle or restrict visibility. From Oolah Pass, many options to explore the surrounding peaks are possible. Many potential longer trekking routes are also possible from Oolah Pass, including routes to Anaktuvuk Pass and beyond.

My brother, Jeff Nawrocki, and I spent a day peakbagging from Oolah Pass as part of a longer trip in early September 2015. For both of us, this was our first trip to the Brooks Range, and we were focused on exploring the area. From the pass, the ridge to the northwest forms a jagged and prominent line. We hiked up

to the ridge and then traversed to what appeared to be the summit. Looking at a map later, we realized that we had reached Point 7030, but had not traversed all of the way across the ridge to Peak 7040. The realization wasn't a disappointment, but was interesting. Traversing the ridge was a fun mix of rock scrambling and steep consolidated snow, which was never challenging enough to require any specialized equipment.



Jeff Nawrocki hiking to the ridge.

Photo by Timm Nawrocki

We continued to traverse to the west from Point 7030 until we found a snow-filled chute that led down off the ridge. It would be possible to traverse farther over to Peak 7040 for those who hike that ridge in the future. Although we had great weather for our peakbagging day, we did receive about a foot and a half of snow over the course of our entire trip. Visitors to the area in September should be prepared for the onset of winter at higher elevations. The upper elevations can be very windy and the wind greatly affected the snow depth while we were there. I think on protected slopes at least that the alpine touring potential would also be high from Oolah Pass.



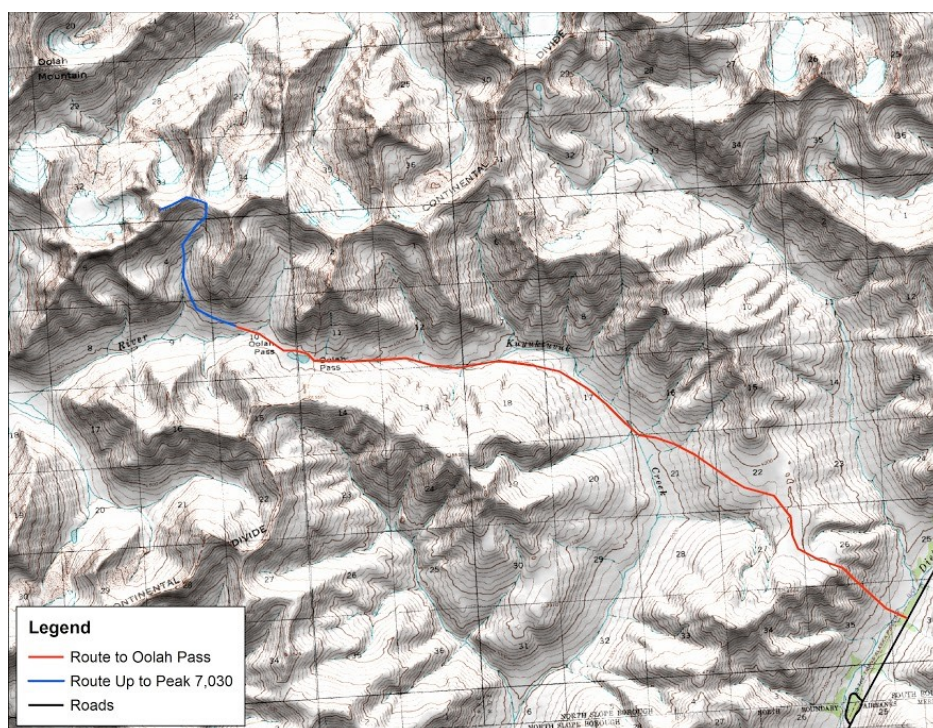
*Timm Nawrocki standing on Point 7030.
Photo by Jeff Nawrocki*



The jagged ridge northwest of Oolah Pass from the lake at Oolah Pass. Photo by Timm Nawrocki



*View along the ridge toward Peak 7040.
Photo by Timm Nawrocki*



Thunder Bird Peak

Text by Brendan Lee



From left: Paige Hoage, Jorge Machado, and Nathan Hebda on top of Thunder Bird Peak. The team lucked out with the weather.

Photo by Brendan Lee

Friday April 15th, 2016, I rendezvoused with Nathan Hebda, Paige Hoage, and Jorge Machado at the Eklutna Lake parking area, our objective for Saturday: Thunder Bird Peak. Our purposed route was up the northeast ridge that rises from the Eklutna River near Bold Airstrip: a bushwhacker's paradise. We biked to Bold Airstrip, and set up camp nearby – the Eklutna Valley is such a beautiful setting.

The next morning we woke up at 6:30, enjoyed breakfast, and set out for 2100 feet of vertical bushwhacking, which would be followed by 3575 feet of class 2 (maybe a little class 3-ish) scrambling along the northeast ridge. We climbed out of the crumbling riverbanks and approached the timberline, everyone stopped and looked at each other, who would be the fearless trailbreaker through this jungle of alder, devil's club, shrubbery, and wildlife? Nathan and I alternated the lead, going over, under, around, and even through the vegetation. Keeping a watchful eye on our ridgeline, we navigated up and over several bluffs and a small cliff band, and emerged in a beautiful meadow with great views of Eklutna Lake and the valley below. The sun had warmed the cool morning air considerably, and it looked as though we were close to punching through the timberline to join our ridge – the good vibes started to set in. After a quick session of post-holing through snow and navigating alder, we had

reached our ridge and started to climb up, up, and away. Nathan led the charge up the ridge and set a great pace. Eklutna Lake and the impressive line of Bold-Bashful-Baleful sat behind us, such an awesome sight! Eventually our route met up with the route/ridge walk that can be accessed from the Eklutna Lake parking area, it was at this point that we began to notice several large cornices higher on Thunder Bird Ridge; we hoped these



Nathan Hebda enjoying the bushwhack. What a sane place to be at 8 a.m. on Saturday!

Photo by Brendan Lee



*Brendan Lee taking a break with Bold Peak, Bashful Peak, and Baleful Peak towering behind.
Photo by Jorge Machado*

wouldn't thwart our attempt. The wind kicked up, temperatures dropped, and we donned extra layers. I stopped to eat some beef jerky as the group pressed onward. I took a few photos of my surroundings and expediently got moving again to catch back up. The angle of the ridge leveled out around 5550 feet, and we traversed across preparing to make our final push up the northeast ridge; we had about 1000 feet to go. The final 1000 feet proved to be difficult, as it was about 2 inches of steep, loose Chugach scree that sat on top of thick ice – a Chugach special! Dig your feet too hard into the scree, and you made contact with the ice layer below – which inevitably sent you sliding downhill, try again! Eventually we arrived at a col with two summit choices: to the south a snowy summit, to the northwest a clear and melted summit (which appeared a bit farther away). Which summit was Thunder Bird? According to Nathan's National Geographic Chugach State Park Map and my GPS, which was loaded with Garmin's "TOPO Alaska Enhanced," Thunder Bird Peak was to the northwest of our current position. We pressed onward to what we believed was the summit, down-climbing a few hundred feet and crossing a ridge, climbing back up to the summit. Views at the summit were amazing. I got my first look at the west face of Benign Peak, which was stunning. Bellicose Peak and Mount Rumble looked great, too! So much Chugach goodness!

After some photos, food, and sightseeing, it was time to climb back down. We reversed the route, enjoying the scree and ice on the way down. Eventually, we made it back to the timberline, and reluctantly surrendered our mountain scenery and unobstructed path to the forbidden forest below. After a quick route find through a cliff band we were on the home-'shwhack. Twelve hours after leaving camp, we arrived back in the Eklutna River Valley near Bold Airstrip, our tents just a short walk away. Paige, Jorge, and I settled into camp, kicked off our boots, and

cooked dinner as the evening alpenglow began to illuminate the mountains – Alaska never disappoints. Nathan had to work the next day, so he packed up and prepared for an evening bike ride home. I was a little surprised how cold it got that night, I didn't have a thermometer but the four ounces of water left in my Nalgene bottle froze solid like a hockey puck.

On Sunday morning we all slept in and relaxed in camp. In the afternoon we biked back on the Lakeside Trail; it was another bluebird day. It was a great trip; I enjoyed photographing and admiring the big Chugach Peaks nearby. If I ever climb Thunder Bird again I would love to incorporate it as part of a Ram Valley-Peters Creek-Eklutna Lake traverse.

There appears to be some confusion as to which peak is Thunder Bird. The Chugach State Park map from Imus Geographics, Chugach State Park Map from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the popular website Peakbagger.com show the southern peak (from the col described above) as the true summit; however, my GPS and the National Geographic map show the northwest peak as the summit.

Does anyone have any more information on this? [Ed. note: In the February 2005 Scree, Stu Grenier reported that the southeastern summit was higher than the northwestern summit, Point 6575.]



*Stunning views of Benign Peak and Bellicose Peak.
Photo by Brendan Lee*

Peak of the Month: Mount Ascension

Text by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Kenai Mountains

Borough: Kenai Peninsula Borough

Adjacent Pass: Martin Pass

Latitude/Longitude: 60° 15' 30" North, 149° 29' 57" West

Elevation: 5710 feet

Prominence: 4860 feet from Peak 6250 in the Tustumena Glacier drainage

Adjacent Peaks: E Peak (5150), Peak 4144 in the Forty Days Creek and Martin Creek drainages, and Primrose Mountain (4732)

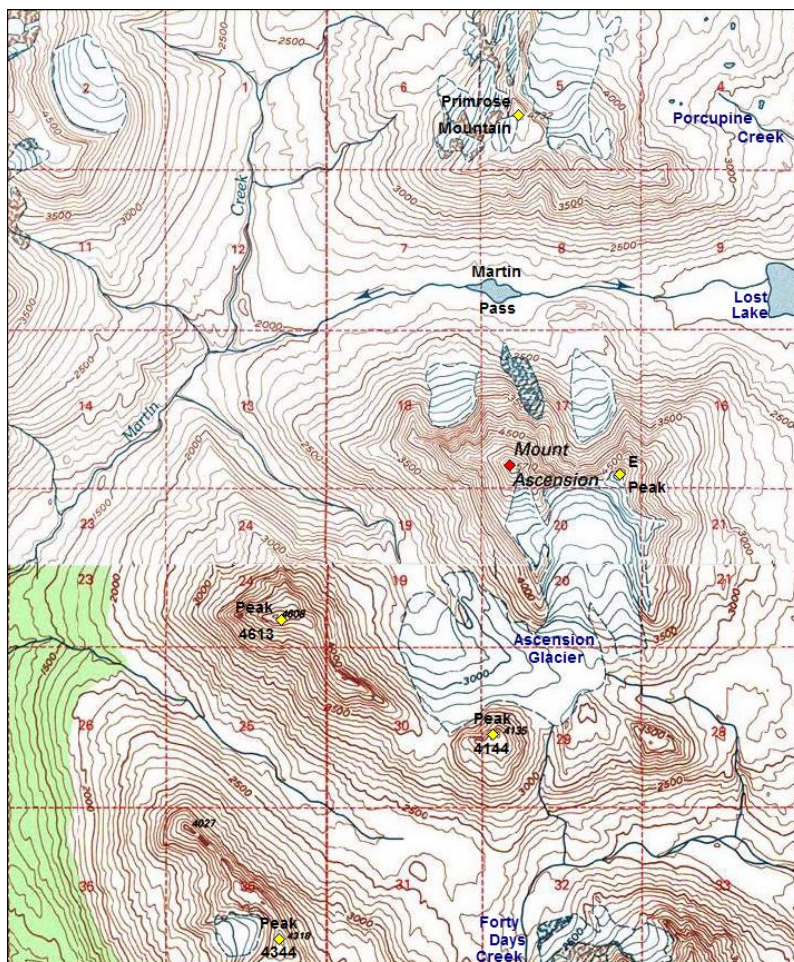
Distinctness: 1160 feet from E Peak

USGS Maps: Seward (B-7)

First Recorded Ascent: October 6, 1968, by Grace Hoeman and John Vincent Hoeman

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Southeast ridge

Access Point: Lost Lake Trailhead (Mile 5 of the Seward Highway)



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

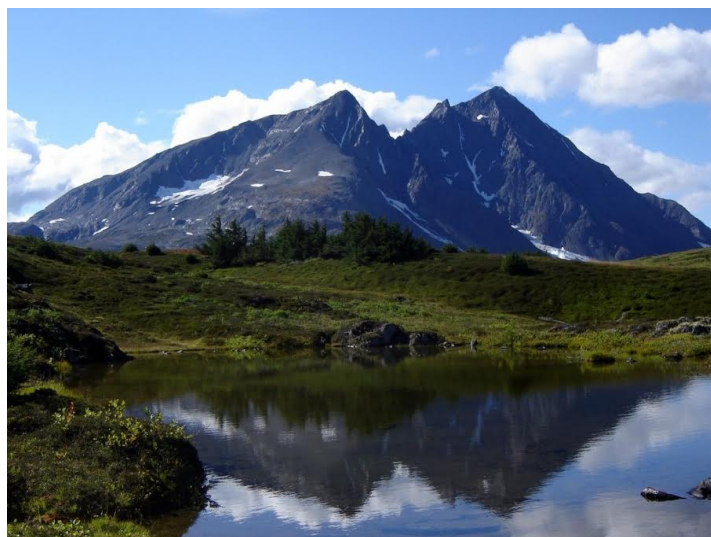
Rising high above Lost Lake, Mount Ascension is the third most prominent, and the 66th highest, peak in the Kenai Mountains.

Mount Ascension was originally proposed to be named Pointed Peak in June 1967, but that name was rejected by the State Geographic Board in October of that year. After his 1968 ascent with his wife Grace, Vin Hoeman proposed the name Mount Ascension to commemorate the ascension of Jesus Christ after His resurrection. The name follows a Messianic theme of geographic names in the area and was officially adopted by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names in 1969.

On October 6, 1968, the Hoemans started out from the Seward end of the Lost Lake Trail and climbed Mount Ascension's southeast ridge for the first recorded ascent of the peak. Vin Hoeman described the climb as very easy, but recommended taking a rope for crossing the Ascension Glacier southeast of the southeast ridge.

On September 24, 1972, Bob Coleman, Frank Farr, Bob Spurr,

and Kevin Waring made the second recorded ascent of Mount Ascension via the Ascension Glacier in about eleven and a half hours.



Mount Ascension (right) and E Peak, also known as Lower Mount Ascension, from Lost Lake.

Photo by Harold Faust

On August 28, 1982, John Nevin led a large MCA party to the summit of Mount Ascension. They approached the peak from the Lost Lake Trail's Primrose trailhead.

On September 4, 1983, Ron Van Bergeyk traversed from E Peak to the summit of Mount Ascension.

Chris Casadi, Harold Faust, Brent Mahan, Diane Ramey, and John Ramey skied from the Seward end of the Lost Lake Trail, and camped in a snow cave below the Ascension Glacier. Casadi, Faust, Mahan, and John Ramey skied up and down the south face on February 22, 1986, and then the entire team skied out to the Primrose Trailhead.

David Hart and Ross Noffsinger approached Mount Ascension via snowmachine from Snug Harbor Road and reached the summit on April 28, 2011.

The information for this article came from Vin Hoeman's article titled "Mountain Nomenclature," which appeared in the June 1967 *Scree*; from Vin Hoeman's article titled "Names," which appeared in the October 1967 *Scree*; from Vin Hoeman's trip report titled "Lost Lake and Mount Ascension," which appeared in the November 1968 *Scree*; from Grace Hoeman's note in the September 1969 *Scree*; from Vin Hoeman's article titled "The Kenai Peninsula, Alaska," which appeared on pages 308 through 311 of the 1969 *American Alpine Journal*; from Kenneth A. Henderson's summary titled "North America," which appeared on pages 240 through 242 of the 1969 *Alpine Journal*; from Bob Spurr's note in the November 1972 *Scree*; from John Nevin's trip report titled "Lost Lake," which appeared in the October 1982 *Scree*; from John Nevin's trip report titled "Lost Lake," which appeared in the October 1983 *Scree*; and from my correspondence with Harold Faust and Ross Noffsinger. Additional information on Mount Ascension can be found in Willy Hersman's trip report titled "Lost Lake," which appeared in the October 1984 *Scree* and in Greg Bragiel's trip report titled "Lost Lake and Mt Ascension," which appeared in the February 2006 *Scree*.



Southeastern aspect of Mount Ascension
Photo by Ross Noffsinger



Northwest aspect of Mount Ascension
Photo by Ross Noffsinger



Southeast aspect of Mount Ascension
Photo by Harold Faust



Mount Ascension as viewed from the summit of E Peak.
Photo by Ross Noffsinger

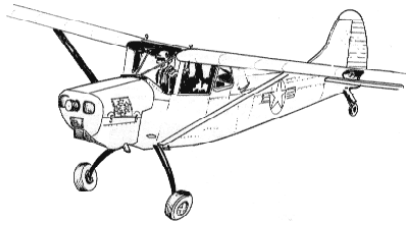


The MCA's 17 Honorary Members

Text by Steve Gruhn

Over the course of its 58-year history, the MCA has bestowed honorary membership status on 17 individuals – 11 MCA members who provided exceptional service to the club and 6 members of the community who provided contributions to aid and inspire future Alaskan mountaineers. Three of the six community members are now deceased, but it is important to remember them, for their contributions to the MCA continue after their deaths.

The living honorary MCA members and their contributions to the MCA and Alaska mountaineering are described below.



H. Erik Barnes was one of the MCA's founding members who served on the Board of Directors from 1958 to 1960. Barnes was a pilot who rescued Art Davidson, Ned Fetcher, Matt Hale, George Millikan, Rick Millikan, and David Roberts from their 1967 exploratory trip to the Revelation Mountains after their pilot Jim Cassady perished in a crash in the Western Chugach Mountains after depositing the party on the Revelation Glacier. Having only a map of Alaska with an "X" marked on it, Barnes set out to search for the team and found them seven days after Cassady had been scheduled to arrive. Barnes' diligence saved the lives of the six men who would likely have perished if they had made a late-season attempt to walk out to civilization.



Paul Crews, Sr., was the MCA's first President, serving from 1958 to 1959. Crews also served on the Board of Directors from 1959 to 1960 and from 1966 to 1968. Crews co-authored Tordrillo: Pioneer Climbs and Flights in the Tordrillo Mountains of Alaska 1957 - 1997.



Paul Denkwalter served as the MCA's President from 1977 to 1978, Vice-President from 1975 to 1976, and on the Board of Directors from 1976 to 1977 and from 1978 to 1979. As the owner of Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking, Denkwalter provided space to



Helga Byhre (formerly Bading) was instrumental in the formation of the MCA and coalesced the individual mountaineers in Southcentral Alaska into a club. She served as Secretary/Treasurer from 1958 to 1960. She also led numerous MCA trips.

house the MCA's Vin Hoeman Library for many years and also donated equipment for the MCA to loan to members and to use in its training courses.



Tom Choate was a Hoeman Award recipient for his exploration, documentation, and promotion of mountaineering in Alaska. He served as Vice-President from 1998 to 2000 and served on the Board of Directors from 1988 to 1990, 1991 to 1992, and 1996 to



1998. Choate led numerous MCA trips and conducted many training sessions and chaired the Geographic Names Committee.

Doug Fesler is a former Chugach State Park ranger who helped to conduct avalanche awareness and safety courses for the MCA and its offshoot organization, the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group. Fesler also co-authored Snow Sense: A Guide to Evaluating Snow Avalanche Hazard, which has become a foundation for many avalanche safety courses.



Peter Hackett operated a high-altitude medical research facility at the 14,200-foot camp on Denali for many years. He presented his findings obtained from research at that facility and others he operated in the Himalaya, South America, and Colorado in hundreds

of articles in medical journals and in six books on altitude illness, high-altitude mountaineering, wilderness medicine, and the effects of altitude on the people living and working in such environments.



Willy Hersman was the first Hoeman Award recipient for his exploration, documentation, and promotion of mountaineering in Alaska. He served as President from 1987 to 1988, Vice-President from 1985 to 1987, and on the Board of Directors from 1983 to

1985 and from 1988 to 1989. Hersman was the Editor of *the Scree* for 20 years and was the de facto historian. Hersman led at least 69 trips for the MCA and authored at least 72 articles in *the Scree*. He created and hosted the MCA's website and created the invaluable "Willy's Index of Peaks in *Scree*." When he reached the summit of Hunters Peak in 1990 Hersman became the first person to climb the 21 recognized 7,000-foot peaks in the Western Chugach Mountains. Hersman also maintained the MCA's summit registers and volunteered his time to site, construct, and maintain the Scandinavian Peaks Hut, the Bomber Hut, the Dnigi Hut, and the since-decommissioned Bock's Den.



Greg Higgins was a Hoeman Award recipient for his exploration, documentation, and promotion of mountaineering in Alaska. He was the de facto historian for the MCA who maintained the MCA's summit registers and authored numerous

articles in *the Scree*.



Tim Kelley was a Hoeman Award recipient for his exploration, documentation, and promotion of mountaineering in Alaska. Kelley served on the MCA's Board of Directors from 1993 to 1994. He has made over 90 first recorded ascents in Alaska and documented

them with many trip reports in *the Scree*.



Tom Meacham was the MCA's first two-term President, serving from 1972 to 1973 and from 1976 to 1977. He also served as Vice-President from 1971 to 1972, Treasurer from 1968 to 1969, and on the Board of Directors from 1973 to 1974 and from 1977 to

1978. Meacham provided *pro bono* legal assistance to the MCA, including incorporating the club, working to help the MCA have immunity from lawsuits, and keeping it organized.



Helen Nienhueser (formerly Wolfe) was the Secretary from 1965 to 1967 and co-authored [55 Ways to the Wilderness in Southcentral Alaska](#), which has become the standard introductory guidebook for hiking in that region.



Nick Parker served as the MCA's Vice-President from 1968 to 1969 and on the Board of Directors from 1998 to 1999. Parker conducted avalanche safety courses for the MCA and volunteered at the MCA's Ice Climbing Festival.



Lowell Thomas, Jr., flew materials to help construct and maintain the huts on the Eklutna Traverse and also contributed to [Tordrillo: Pioneer Climbs and Flights in the Tordrillo Mountains of Alaska 1957-1997](#).

Honorary MCA members who are now deceased are described below.



George Hall was the Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park in 1967 during the Wilcox Expedition tragedy that left seven men dead. In the wake of both this tragedy and the well-publicized first winter ascent of Denali during which one man per-

ished and three others narrowly escaped with their lives, the National Park Service's Regional Director, Hall's superior, wanted to close Denali to climbing. But the authority for such an action rested in the hands of the park's Superintendent, and Hall steadfastly refused to ban climbers from Denali.



Terris Moore was one of the famous Harvard Five (along with H. Adams Carter, Robert Bates, Charles Houston, and H. Bradford Washburn, Jr.). Moore made pioneering first ascents of Mount Bona in 1930, Mount Fairweather in 1931, and Mount Sanford in

1938. In 1932 atop 24,790-foot Minya Konka, now known as Gongga Shan, Moore and his partner Richard Burdsall had climbed higher than any other Americans. Moore was the President of the University of Alaska and proposed the names for the University Range and University Peak to honor that institution. Moore initiated the Mount Wrangell observatory project and piloted aircraft in support of it. He authored *Mt. McKinley: The Pioneer Climbs* and co-authored *Men Against the Clouds: The Conquest of Minya Konka*.



H. Bradford Washburn, Jr., was one of the famous Harvard Five (along with H. Adams Carter, Robert Bates, Charles Houston, and Terris Moore). Washburn made pioneering first ascents throughout Alaska (Pointed Peak in 1933; Mount Crillon in 1934; Mount Marcus Baker, the North

Peak of Mount Marcus Baker, and Mount Sanford in 1938; Mount Bertha in 1940; Mount Hayes in 1941; Mount Deception in 1944; West Pyramid Peak in 1945; Gunsight Mountain, McGonagall Mountain, and Oastler Mountain in 1947; Kahiltna Dome in 1951; and Mount Dickey in 1955). Washburn pioneered the West Buttress route on Denali, created a high-quality map of Denali, and tested and evaluated cold-weather and high-altitude gear and equipment for the military. He was dedicated to refuting Frederick Cook's claim to have made the 1906 first ascent of Denali.

Adapted from the History Moment presented at the April MCA meeting.

Trivia Time Answers from page 3

1. What is the southernmost peak in the Chugach Mountains that is at least 10,000 feet high? S. Mount Steller
2. What is the easternmost peak in the Chugach Mountains that is at least 10,000 feet high? V. Mount Steller

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Cory Hinds	229-6809	Board member (term expires in 2016)	Jamye Mack	382-0212
Vice-President	Galen Flint	650-207-0810	Board member (term expires in 2016)	Carlene Van Tol	748-5270
Secretary	Max Neale	207-712-1355	Board member (term expires in 2017)	Nathan Hebda	310-3255
Treasurer	Aaron Gallagher	250-9555	Board member (term expires in 2017)	Stephen Austria	402-540-7037
			Board member (term expires in 2016)	Jennifer DuFord	227-6995

Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$25

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 Membership Committee at membership@mtnclubak.org.

The Scree is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to MCAScree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 24th of the month to appear in the next month's *Scree*.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to vicepresident@mtnclubak.org.

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

Mailing list/database entry: Aaron Gallagher - membership@mtnclubak.org

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Ed Smith - 854-5702 or hcc@mtnclubak.org

Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 or huts@mtnclubak.org

Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127 or stugrenier@gmail.com

Scree Editor: MCAScree@gmail.com Steve Gruhn (344-1219) assisted by Dawn Talbott (dawn.talbott@yahoo.com)

Web: www.mtnclubak.org

Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MCAK/info>.

Mountaineering Club of Alaska
Box 243561
Anchorage, AK 99524-3561