

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club
of Alaska

May 2020

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“When I dare to be powerful - to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

– Audre Lorde

"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."

This issue brought to you by: **Editor**—Steve Gruhn **assisted by** Dawn Munroe

Cover Photo

Janez Svolšjak climbing a beautiful pitch on the upper part of "Secret" on Wailing Wall.

Photo by Miha Zupin

MAY MEETING

The May 6 meeting, Mary Vavrik's May 16 Mount Eklutna hike, and the May 9 R.A.C.E. event in the Talkeetna Mountains have been canceled.

Mentorship Program

The MCA Mentorship program is temporarily on hold as per the "Shelter-in-Place" mandate and social/physical distancing guidelines. We will continue to follow guidance from the CDC and state/national government. If you are interested in being mentored or connecting with and mentoring beginner and intermediate folks, please email: mentorship@mtnclubak.org. The MCA will send an email update when the program resumes.

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Hut Needs and Notes

If you are headed to one of the MCA huts, please consult the Hut Inventory and Needs on the website (<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm/Huts/Hut-Inventory-and-Needs>) or Greg Bragiel, MCA Huts Committee Chairman, at either huts@mtnclubak.org or (907) 350-5146 to see what needs to be taken to the huts or repaired. All huts have tools and materials so that anyone can make basic repairs. Hutmeisters are needed for each hut: If you have a favorite hut and would like to take the lead on checking on the hut and organizing maintenance, the MCA would greatly appreciate your help!

HIKERS....

The Mint Hut will be closed for maintenance July 17-19. The Bomber Hut will be closed for maintenance July 20-22. If you are hiking in these areas, bring a tent and plan to camp outside.

— Greg Bragiel, MCA Huts Committee Chairman

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 11th 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. Send high resolution file photos separately, including captions for each photo. 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 don't forget to submit photo captions.

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit <http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?useaction=members.form>.

Online? Click me!



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

Announcements

Trips

June 19: MCA Annual Summer Solstice Campout on Flattop Mountain. No leader.

July 10: Rabbit Lake hub meet-up camping Friday night. Break into side groups Saturday morning for North and South Suicide Peaks and Ptarmigan Peak – event format over rigid trip format.

August 7: Eklutna Lake hub meet-up camping Friday night. Break into side groups Saturday morning for East and West Twin Peaks and Bold Peak – event format over rigid trip format.



What peak is this? Answer on page 22.

Photos by Wayne Todd

Klutina Peak (8090 feet), Central Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Ryan Hokanson



Trevor Grams below the northwest face of Klutina Peak.



Trevor Grams coming off the top of Klutina Peak.

On March 30, 2019, Trevor Grams and I departed Thompson Pass on snowmachines and established a camp just off the toe of the Klutina Glacier. The next day, we climbed and skied the northwest face of the tallest peak in the area, which we believe to be over 8080 feet high, based the most recent (2016) USGS data. I had previously referred to this peak as 8033, based on older USGS maps. This peak is located about 3.2 miles north-east of Mount Schrader. We climbed and descended the same route, passing the deteriorating hanging glacier on the climber's

left side. We were able to stay to the climber's left of the hanging ice during the approach, minimizing the objective hazard. I believe this peak had been previously unclimbed, but because it has neither a name or assigned elevation, it has proven difficult to research.

[Ed. note: This peak has been called Klutina Peak on bivouac.com.]



Trevor Grams sneaking by the ice.

Revelation Glacier Climbs, Revelation Mountains

Text by Janez Svoltjšak

with Miha Zupin

March 19 to April 7, 2019



Janez Svoltjšak ascending the upper part of the "Slovenian Route" on Apocalypse North.

Photo by Miha Zupin

Our table football skills started to improve when we finally heard, "Weather is good for flying; get ready." Beautiful views of the Alaska Range with Denali, the Cathedral Spires, and many more. Our first stop was the Fish Creek Glacier, where a Dutch team exited. There was almost a meter of powder on the glacier and on the flight to our glacier, we were worried of conditions there.



Base camp on the Revelation Glacier.

Photo by Janez Svoltjšak

The first step on the Revelation Glacier was a surprise, because there was no powder. We were happy and started to prepare a base camp. The first afternoon we put up the tent, made a wall around it, and dug a toilet and kitchen hole. The next day we

decided to climb Pyramid Peak (8572 feet). The alarm clock woke us up. Due to strong winds we had mixed feelings about climbing. We decided to stay in base camp. When we got out of the tent, we found that our kitchen was filled with snow. Digging out the food and improving the wall around the tent was our main work during that day. Strong winds made work "enjoyable."

The next morning was the same, but we decided to go. We failed

on the first pitch of Pyramid Peak due to blown snow in a corner. I saw a nice ridge to Four Horsemen East (8450 feet). A gully led us to a col and then we followed the ridge. The first pitch was a bouldery M6, with some loose blocks. The next pitches were easier, climbing left and right to find the way to the top. The ridge traverse on the top was demanding due to strong winds that occasionally forced us to crawl on our knees. We did one short rappel from the ridge and then climbed to the top. We descended to the couloir between Four Horsemen East and the highest peak of The Four Horsemen (8650 feet). We were happy with a climb, thinking about dinner. Base camp reality was not nice – a collapsed wall and a different shaped tent, covered with some snow. We worked during the night, with the wind that blew us down once. Luckily our tent poles were just bent, not broken.

After a rest day, we went to Golgotha (8940 feet). The chimney system on the east face offered steep and consistent climbing. Pitch nine was fully blown with snow that covered thin ice. Our battle with the snow went well, but the last part was too bad to continue. We started to rappel; the weather got worse and spin-drifts made the descent demanding. We rested for three days and then we went back to Golgotha. An easier line on the right side of the east face attracted our attention when we first saw it – 900



Janez Svöljšak leading the crux pitch of "Father" on Golgotha.
Photo by Miha Zupin

meters of snow, with the first half more "walking" than climbing. The upper part was steeper, with perfect snow conditions. We belayed for three pitches. A clear sky on the top offered us an endless view in all directions. We down-climbed the existing route [Ed. note: the 2012 east face route put up by Clint Helander and Ben Trocki; see the January 2013 Scree].

We took two rest days and then it was climbing time again. We went to an unnamed 8050-foot point above the cirque at the head of the Revelation Glacier

that we called Wailing Wall. The 700-meter face looked smaller from base camp. We followed a corner with perfect snow and ice conditions. We climbed un-rope for the first 350 meters. The crux was a corner filled with narrow and thin ice. Our route, which we called "Secret", followed ice smears through the big chimney under a chockstone with an overhanging exit. We followed the ridge and climbed the top boulder. The descent followed the ridge and dropped into a gully, right of our route. Some climbing and rappelling were required to reach the glacier.



Miha Zupin leading the crux pitch of the "Slovenian Route" on Apocalypse North.
Photo by Janez Svöljšak

The weather forecast was good, so after a rest day we went down the glacier to climb the line that we checked a few days before. Our route followed a gully on the north-west face of Apocalypse North (8985 feet). After 300 meters up to 80 degrees, we reached a vertical, dry, and loose corner. We climbed left of it. The first pitch was thin ice, hard to protect. The next pitches had perfect conditions up to 85 degrees and one pitch of M6. We reached the gully and followed it for 300 meters. We did not know the upper part because it was covered with clouds on our observation day.

Climbing above the gully was sketchy, with thin ice and unconsolidated snow covering the rock. To reach the ridge there were still 200 meters of slope with a rock band at the top. We found an easy passage between the rocks and then followed the ridge to the top. We did not want to descend by the route we had climbed, because the steep, unconsolidated snow and rock were hard to protect. We

tried to follow the ridge to the northeast, but the cornices made it impossible to pass and reach the col where we could descend back to the Revelation Glacier. We climbed down the east face, made two rappels, and reached an unnamed glacier that flowed to the South

Fork of the Big River. We did not know if it would be possible to reach the col from the east side, so we were very happy when we saw a snow gully to the col. The next days were colder and windier, so three rest days felt good.



Miha Zupin on the upper part of "Slovenian Route" on Apocalypse North.
Photo by Janez Svöljšak



Janez Svöljšak climbing the chimney of "The Last Supper for Snow Strugglers" on Seraph.
Photo by Miha Zupin

We started to plan our departure, but we decided to climb one line on Seraph (8550 feet) before we went. The gully was obvious, left of the French line from 2018 [Ed. note: "MaKeMaLo," put up by Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, and Antoine Rolle; see the August 2018 Scree]. The first 300 meters were easier than they looked. We reached a chockstone and steep chimney with blown snow. We started to belay. It was not easy to clean the snow. Climbing was enjoyable for the second climber, but an overhanging exit did not make it easy. The next pitch was easier with a steep,

bouldery problem. We found two anchors for rappels. We were standing below the chimney that was not seen from the base; the first part was narrow with ice and the exit was, again, blown with snow. The first part was really nice to climb; sometimes, there was no space to swing an axe. The second part was worse than the first pitch. It took me a while to remove all the snow. The crux was thin ice followed by an overhang and my competition experience was very useful. We coiled the rope after an easier pitch and followed easier terrain to the top of the peak [Ed. note: Although Seraph has been climbed several times, Svöljšak and Zupin appear to have been the first to have continued to the 8650-foot summit a quarter mile southwest of Seraph]. I discovered two crevasses on the ridge. Our descent followed to the east and then to the gully, which led us back to the base of the route.

Weather the next day did not allow a flight and on Sunday morning we packed up our equipment and flew to Talkeetna.

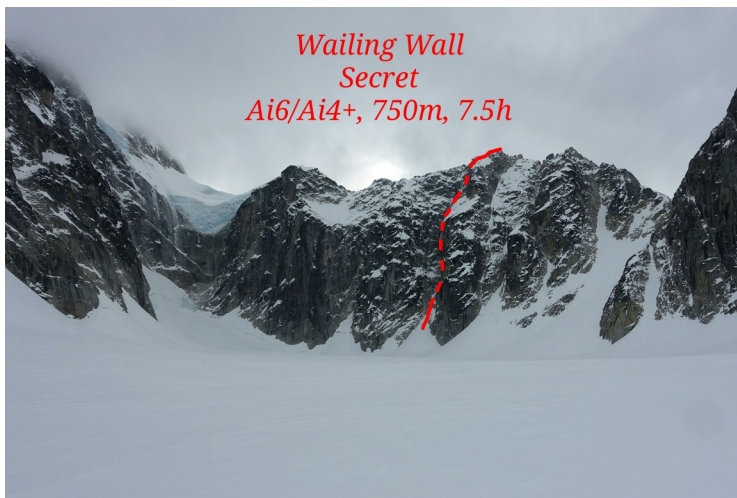
First ascents and new routes:



March 21. **Four Horsemen East** (8450 feet): East ridge, M6/M4, 50° to 70°, A1, 600 meters, 7 hours; first reported ascent. Photo by Janez Svolfjšak



March 27. **Golgotha** (8940 feet): "Father," AI5, 50° to 70°, 900 meters, 6 hours. Photo by Janez Svolfjšak



March 30. **Wailing Wall** (8050 feet): "Secret," AI6/AI4+, 750 meters, 7.5 hours. Photo by Miha Zupin

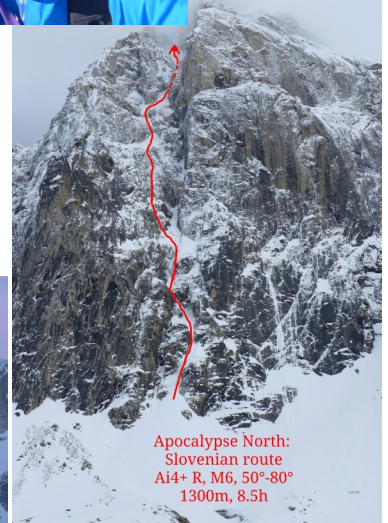
[Ed. note: This trip report was provided by Miha Zupin after Janez Svolfjšak perished on July 15, 2019, while on a climbing expedition in Pakistan.]



Miha Zupin (left) and Janez Svolfjšak on top of Apocalypse North. Photo by Janez Svolfjšak

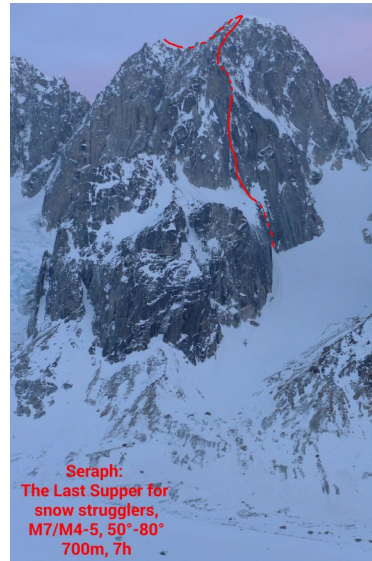
April 1. **Apocalypse North** (8985 feet): "Slovenian Route," AI4+ R, M6, 50° to 80°, 1,300 meters, 8.5 hours.

Photo by Janez Svolfjšak



April 5. **Seraph** (8550 feet): "The Last Supper for Snow Strugglers," M7/M4-5, 50° to 80°, 700 meters, 7 hours [Ed. note: the route continued to the 8650-foot peak a quarter mile southwest of Seraph for its first reported ascent.]

Photo by Janez Svolfjšak



Janez Svolfjšak on top of Wailing Wall.

Photo by Miha Zupin

Attempts:

- March 21. Pyramid Peak (8572 feet): West face
- March 23. Golgotha (8940 feet): East face

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve and Peak 1848, Seward Peninsula Highlands

Text and photos by Justin Hall



From left: Kim Edwards, Merryl Pohl, John Pohl, Susan Pohl, Brian Pinkard, and Ben Edwards on the way up Peak 1848.

“We are one of only a few commercial guiding operators in the park unit,” said my boss Dan Oberlatz, owner of Alaska Alpine Adventures, LLC. I knew we were about to go somewhere truly unique. Bering Land Bridge National Preserve (BELA) is one of the least visited places in the Alaska National Park system. According to statistics from the National Park Service, it received 2,642 visitors in 2019. That’s the second lowest in the state; rivaled only by Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, receiving 100 visitors in 2019. That’s a shame, because BELA offered some of the most interesting terrain I’d hiked in Alaska, as well as a natural hot spring to soak those tired feet at night, and a comfortable bunkhouse with amenities. Talk about soft backpacking. More on that later.

My co-guide Brian Pinkard; clients Ben and Kim Edwards and John, Merryl, and Susan Pohl; and I flew from Kotzebue to Serpentine Hot Springs. Flying into the park, we were treated to abundant wildlife viewing. Small herds of musk oxen huddled along the plains. A few caribou here and there. Fields of tussocks scattered the tundra, which to me look like potted plants without the pots. As we approached Serpentine, the tors came into view. These rock formations are a unique and notable feature of BELA. They are found in other places in Alaska, and the cluster in Serpentine is known as the Oonatut Granite Complex, one of seven

granite intrusions spanning across the northwestern Seward Peninsula. In BELA they are so abundant, scattered, and come in all varieties of shapes and sizes. The Serpentine valley looked like something out of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* – rolling convexities of rock and tundra, hammered by the rough weather of northern Alaska.

After landing at the small strip next to the bunkhouse, we did a short hike up the first ridge to the east, taking stock of the valley. Atop the ridge, we looked south and observed Peak 1848. The highest point in the valley proper, Peak 1848 sits at the southeast end, just before the Continental Divide; dwarfed only by Midnight Mountain (2720 feet), even farther southeast of Serpentine. Originally, our trip itinerary was exploratory. We had no set plans at BELA, which our clients and we enjoyed. But, after scouting Peak 1848, it was too enticing not to climb.

Back at the bunkhouse, we were treated to a kitchen area and two separate bunk rooms. The structure was an old army knock-down building, and had been transported to Serpentine years ago. Ar-



The Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse

archaeological studies suggested that the springs had been used for over 3,500 years. The Inupiat people of the region believe the spring contains healing powers and practice traditional soaks to cure ailments and for rejuvenation. We were grateful to have the opportunity to enjoy a soak and experience the rich history of the region. Hot Springs Creek ran swiftly under the bunkhouse. One of my clients brought a fly pole, and offered me a few casts. I know how to bait cast, but I'm a novice at fly fishing. After several failed attempts, he said, "You got to let the rod do the work. Answer the phone; hammer the nail." I heeded his advice – the next cast was successful. I slowly pulled the line between my fingers. Bite! I had a nine-inch grayling for dinner, served over some wild greens. Yum. The next morning, we had Peak 1848 in our sights.



The Hot Springs Creek valley

We started on the same ridge line as the previous day, adding some elevation to avoid the 'shwhack of the willow shrubs below. The weather gods blessed us with a bluebird day. Bog blueberry patches slowed our ascent as we collected for that day's snack and the next day's oatmeal. We traversed a few miles up and down the ridge until reaching the base of Peak 1848, then headed for a

saddle on the east face. The approach was moderate and

offered some interesting groups of tors at the bench above. Continuing up, I spotted something moving fast across the mountain. A four-legged creature came into view. A bushy, white tipped tail gave it away. A red fox was watching us with curiosity, keeping distance and skittishly moving away as we approached. I scrambled for my camera, but the fox took off faster than I could take off



Kim Edwards and Merryl Pohl navigating the tors en route to Peak 1848.

my pack. Very dark colored and not really red at all, I found out in later research that red foxes can vary in color from black to silver to a mix of red and silver, known as a "cross fox." More animal encounters came shortly thereafter. Atop the tallest tor in the area sat a peregrine falcon nest. Peregrines have four vocalizations; we were treated to "Kak! Kak! Kak!" Used against perceived threats, we were being told to leave. They swooped and circled above us as we continued our ascent.

We arrived at one of two benches before the summit. The tors there were impressive. One

stood at least 50 feet high. I couldn't help but view them as boulder problems. Putting moves together on a small tor, I ended up with what was probably a V2. Reaching up for a jug above my head, a granite hold broke as I fell off. The rock crumbled in my hand. Standing there puzzled, one of my clients, a geologist explained: "When water gets into the cracks and freezes, it expands and compromises its integrity. Add years of harsh weather, and these tors are extremely fragile."

Continuing our climb, we headed up Class-Two terrain to the summit. I took the final steps over the convex roller to a flat ridge top with stunning views. At the opposite valley end, the bunkhouse was now just a speck. With the endless horizon of the Chukchi Sea to the west, rolling hills filling all of the north, more tors rising abruptly east, and the Bendeleben Mountains south, I sat and marveled.

Pulling out my film camera, I saved those last frames for the summit. I took a few, then was overcome with a feeling to stop. In photography, there are times when the subject is too great to photograph, when the moment is too precious to interrupt with a viewfinder. That was one of those times. Those pictures were never taken, but they are burned into my memory. I felt a certain energy of that place. Maybe the Inupiat were right; the tors contain powerful spirits with healing powers, and although I had never been there before, I was comforted with a sense of familiarity. Despite a new place, this was still Alaska. This was still home.



Above: View from the summit of Peak 1848.



Kinnikinnick Mountain (4470 feet), Berry Peaks

Text by Mat Brunton



West aspect of Kinnikinnick Mountain.

Photo by Mat Brunton

On Sunday, March 22, 2020, Jess Tran and I headed up Winner Creek from the Girdwood Nordic Trailhead. With moderate to strong outflow northerly winds forecast as high pressure entered the region from the previous day's few inches of fresh snow with moderate southerly winds, there weren't really any expectations other than skiing sheltered powder up Winner Creek and doing more reconnaissance for an ascent and descent of Kinnikinnick Mountain (which has been on my ski-peakbagging to-do list for a few years).

We didn't get an early start and left the trailhead after 10 a.m. The late start lowered expectations further, as on sunny spring days solar aspects are typically heated up and destabilized by late afternoon. With that in mind, we skinned up to the pass between Lingon Mountain and Highbush Peak.

Upon arriving at the pass, I could see snow pluming off many peaks in the distance from the increasing northwest wind. However, Kinnikinnick itself didn't evidence significant snow transport and the west face we hoped to climb and ski was windward and getting modestly stripped of snow rather than loaded. It was also colder than expected at the mid and upper elevations and it seemed like the northerly wind was further cooling upper elevation solar aspects.

We didn't even bring glacier gear. First, as already mentioned, I didn't think we'd actually be giving Kinnikin-

nick a go. Second, Kinnikinnick would be a more-than-17-mile day with more than 7,000 feet of vertical and carrying a glacier kit for that distance would have added to the beatdown. Third, given my experience with coastal Chugach glacier travel, I don't really think it's necessary when visibility is good and the full topography of a glacier can be seen. After all, I've never seen an alpine coastal Chugach glacier with less than 10 feet of dense maritime-snow coverage by spring.

Considering plenty of daylight left despite our late start and the solar slopes of Kinnikinnick being windward and cooled by the northerly wind, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to take a closer look. It's a considerable slog, even from the Lingon-Highbush pass, over heavily glaciated terrain and I still wasn't committed other than having a closer a look.

Things continued to line up, and soon we had completed our few-mile glacier traverse (at or slightly above the Highbush-Lingon pass elevation) to the base of Kinnikinnick's west face. From there, realizing even more clearly the extent of the west face's recent shed (of loose snow avalanches without any resulting slabs), we felt comfortable with stability and began the climb. I pride myself on skin-track esthetics, and made a few elegant Zs up the west face before transitioning to booting. The booting was deep and Billy Goat plates for flotation would have been nice and greatly enhanced efficiency, but I was glad I hadn't car-



Mat Brunton skinning across the Rosehip Glacier toward Kinnikinnick Mountain.

Photo by Jess Tran

ried them for several miles for a relatively short section of calf- to thigh-deep booting.

Arriving at a small col on the north ridge a couple hundred feet below the summit, I realized the extent to which satellite imagery misrepresented the final ridge climbing section to the summit. Looking up at a giant, icy, and exposed gendarme followed by more rimed-up and extremely firm exposed snow climbing; I initially balked (especially considering that I'd only brought a lightweight aluminum axe and not a proper alpine tool). Nonetheless, I was determined to search around for a feasible route to the summit having traveled that far and being that close.

Surely enough, I was able to down-climb and go below and around the icy gendarme. That put me in an even better position for the few hundred feet of climbing to the summit: while I still would have to climb extremely steep and firm snow and rime that was very exposed, there was a path that was less technical than navigating through the several mini-, ice-covered gendarmes that initially presented upon arriving at the col. A final knife-edge snow ridge brought me to a nice summit with enough room to relax for a bit.

I down-climbed back to the col, where Jess had waited in a windless and sunny spot with outstanding views, and we readied ourselves to ski the line. The entrance was skinny and VERY steep, but luckily the sun crust from the prior day had softened a bit. We regrouped a few hundred feet below the entrance underneath a rock band, and from there we descended about 1,500 feet to the icefall.

I didn't want to re-trace our initial convoluted glacier-traverse approach, and felt comfortable descending the icefall based on satellite imagery research and looking at it closer earlier in the day on the approach. We decided to take the skier's right side, and that provided a great egress through incredibly esthetic terrain to the lower valley that feeds into the Twentymile River Valley. The total descent from the col on Kinnikinnick's north ridge was over 3,000 feet (definitely one of the most esthetic runs I'd ever made).

From the valley, it was about a 2,000-foot climb back up to the Lingon-Highbush pass. After which we had a typically exquisite more-than-2,000-foot run back down to the Winner Creek Trail. Chugach Powder Guides loves this run, and they typically farm the hell out of the protected powder in this glaciated hanging valley. This adventure was made all the more surreal by COVID-19's elimination of heli-ski traffic. No noise pollution. No carbon-gluttonous heli-recreationists. A sublimely beautiful and completely un-tracked Western Chugach valley with a deep wilderness feel.

A few miles of skinning followed by a couple miles of skating, double-poling, and a final rip of recently groomed nordic corduroy put us back at the trailhead in a little over 11 hours. This day was an exceptional blessing from the Chugach, for which I'll be forever grateful. We love the Chugach!

[Ed. note: To view Brunton's video of the trip, visit <https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/western-chugach/kinnikinnick-mountain/>.]



*Jess Tran booting the upper west face on Kinnikinnick Mountain.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Jess Tran skiing the icefall on Kinnikinnick Mountain.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*The Western Chugach Berry Peaks as seen from the Rosehip Glacier.
Photo by Mat Brunton*

Pastoralizing: Pastoral Peak (4764 feet), Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne Todd

March 29, 2020



Dave Hart skins toward the sun and Pastoral Peak.

During these trying times one learns to appreciate things usually taken for granted, such as a good partner and solid friends.

Carrie Wang and I drive separately from Dave Hart to the Sunburst Mountain parking lot. This seems wrong but many habits are changing. Being the first on scene seems a bit off, but knowing the snowpack is bomber hard is likely keeping the hard-core skiers away.

Our objective is Pastoral Peak on this idyllic bluebird day. The snow is so hard that a few slips and falls occur even before reaching the



Dave Hart (left) and Carrie Wang on the east ridge of Pastoral Peak.

Sunburst valley. This is where we should have employed the ski crampons. While the traveling is rather noisy, a benefit to the hard-pack is that we can travel abreast, making for easier conversation at distance.

A pronounced crown face on the southern aspect of Sunburst Mountain (3812 feet) is a reminder that we are in avalanche terrain, though today the stability is high. We're soon at Taylor Pass and have our first view of

Pastoral and our route. While mostly focused on conversation, seeing no one else out, though, strikes another oddity moment. Ice-hard skin tracks trace across the nearby slope. Carrie and I deploy the ski crampons, with mixed results, while Dave opts for the boot-hike method.

Skinning toward the rising sun over patches of loose snow gives us hope the ski out might not be as harsh as expected. At the east ridge of Pastoral we're greeted with a stiff wind that reminds us winter is still about up high. Ditching our skis here, we transition to crampons and axes. The sastrugied, extremely-firm snow would not make for a pleasant ski.

The views from the ridge of the many nearby winterized Kenai Mountains are glorious. The Chugach Mountains drape behind to the north. From the top the views are, of course, even better, including many more



From left: Wayne Todd, Dave Hart, and Carrie Wang on the summit of Pastoral Peak with the Kenai Mountains east of the Placer River Valley in the background.

Kenai peaks and way off, even the Tordrillo Mountains. This summit is especially exciting for Carrie and Dave as they have not been here before. And Dave informs us this is a Kenai 2,000-foot-prominence peak. Dave and I first climbed together in 1995, up Mount Marcus Baker, and have been on numerous pleasant and successful trips since then.

We don't loiter as it's quite nippy on top, but take numerous soul-soothing pictures. Slight trepidation abounds as we transition back at the skis, wondering what the ski out will entail. The non-breakable crust sections are handled well by all, but the breakable crust and mixed sections make for rather varied ski styles. We are soon back at the pass, though, fully intact and have our first other human contact. One group is lurching and a couple twosomes are almost to the pass, perhaps headed for Pastoral?

The ski out the valley, still in hard-pack state, does not have movie turns, but it's fast. The lower section isn't as treacherous as expected, but is extra clattery and noisy. I think I even shake some body weight off.

Alas, we're back at the cars saying adieu, but conclude a very wonderful ski-mountaineering day.

The Beak (4730 feet), West Face, Bird Ridge

Text by Mat Brunton



*The west face of The Beak as seen from Short Cut Pass.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Route line on the west face of The Beak.
Photo by Mat Brunton*

On Tuesday, March 24, 2020, Adam Loomis and I completed a direttissima ascent and descent of The Beak's west face via the Indian Valley Trailhead.

Loomis has proven to be a great backcountry partner, especially for proper "character building" missions. On Valentine's Day 2019 he accompanied me on a windy and very cold ascent of South Suicide Peak via its north couloir and northwest face. That was the first time I'd been able to connect the north couloir to the northwest face in ski-able conditions from the summit ridge. We battled very cold and windy conditions, as we struggled to keep frostnip at bay, which greatly added to the intensity of that extremely exposed line.

In fall of 2019, he accompanied me on an ascent of Begich Peak near Portage, during which we scrambled fourth to fifth class, mossy, and wet choss above the railroad tunnel and crawled through the upper elevations in order get as much surface area flotation through deep early-season snow.

Considering the aforementioned, and given that an ascent of The Beak's west face was more about the objective than snow quality, he was the perfect partner (especially considering his fitness, ability to move FAST in the mountains, and solid head game).

I'd been wanting to climb and ski the west face of The Beak since a winter mission to Bird Country when I first attempted Bird Ridge Overlook's north face three years ago (see the trip report from BRO's north face in the June 2019 *Scree*). With good snow coverage at sea level, a relatively healthy (for recent years) snowpack at

Indian Creek Pass, and sufficient avalanche stability, late March 2020 provided the opportunity for which I'd been waiting.

Most of the west face of The Beak had avalanched recently enough that I wasn't concerned about the redevelopment of instabilities. But, considering the line is a huge 2,000-foot avalanche path and it hadn't all been affected by the debris from the aforementioned slide, I dug a pit in an unaffected area to further assess stability as the Western Chugach Mountains have been plagued by VERY persistent weak layers resulting from heavily faceted snow that formed during a very cold and dry January. The pit was reassuring and combined with the still somewhat visible debris (indicating much of the path had slid somewhat recently), we boogie'd up the west face direttissima with our only real concern being warming of this solar aspect.

Based on satellite imagery and prior photo research, I wasn't quite sure how the upper face (the crux) would provide egress to the summit. We were quite pleased to find a (climber's) left-to-right trending ramp on the upper face that brought us directly to the summit. However, it was a real struggle to get through that section.

From satellite imagery and past seasons' photos, I didn't even know that ramp existed (as it must not fill in every season). This spring it was filled in, but only superficially, which resulted in some serious wallowing through more-than-50-degree terrain that consisted of recycled (faceted) powder over basal facets (so heavily

faceted that the chains were some of the most impressive I've ever seen) and very large depth hoar.

Climbing about 100 feet of this very "rotten" snow took about as long as the approximately 1,500 feet below it. In order to avoid more of that, and considering how steep the rotten snow was getting, we opted to scramble up a fourth-to-low-fifth class rock band (complete with a fun, short chimney section) to wind-packed and supportable snow just shy of and directly below the summit.

Since our route up the rocks to the summit wasn't skiable, we climbed the knife-edge ridge from the summit a very short distance to the south to where we could down-climb beneath a cornice and rock outcrop to the top of the aforementioned ramp that was to be our ski descent egress.

The ramp provided decent turns through recycled powder, but the rest of the west face was "slide-for-life" wind-packed snow and melt-freeze/sun crust. Fortunately, none of it was breakable. While the boilerplate wind-packed snow was sastrugi-ed in places, there were smooth (albeit in places very slick) passages to weave our way down the west face. All said, the turns were engaging and "brought the Zen on" more than boring powder.

With plenty of time left in the day, we then climbed and skied the most "reliable" north couloir on Bird Ridge Overlook. A short climb up and over Short Cut Pass between Indian Creek and Bidarka Lake (the eastern headwaters lake of Ship Creek that's north of BRO), and we were ripping back to the trailhead on windboard, "pre-corn," and a very lugged-out Indian Creek Trail.

[Ed. note: To view Brunton's video of this trip, visit <https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/western-chugach/the-beak-west-face/>.]



*Adam Loomis on the exposed, knife-edge ridge just south of the precipitous summit of The Beak.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Adam Loomis about to descend the west face of The Beak.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Looking south at Turnagain Arm (and the Kenai Mountains on the far side of the arm) from the top of a couloir west of the summit of Bird Ridge Overlook.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Mat Brunton descending the west face of The Beak.
Photo by Adam Loomis*

Fugyl Rygg

Text by Wayne Todd

February 2020 with Kärrie Wang



*Wayne Todd on a corniced ridge.
Photo by Kärrie Wang*

Morning sun warms our faces as we hike up from the fjord on a well-established trail. Behind us, many mountains rise up from across the mottled icy bay that comprise a completely different range. We soon pass from tree to montane to alpine. As we gain the upper ridge, snow-covered 1500-meter peaks dominate our views left and right, and ahead even higher peaks punctuate skyward.



*Kärrie Wang on Fugyl Rygg with higher peaks in the background.
Photo by Wayne Todd*

This hike, with stunning mountain and ocean views is only a half-hour drive from this country's major population center. Today is especially gorgeous as much snow drapes our viewscape, unlike the terrain just 30 miles west.

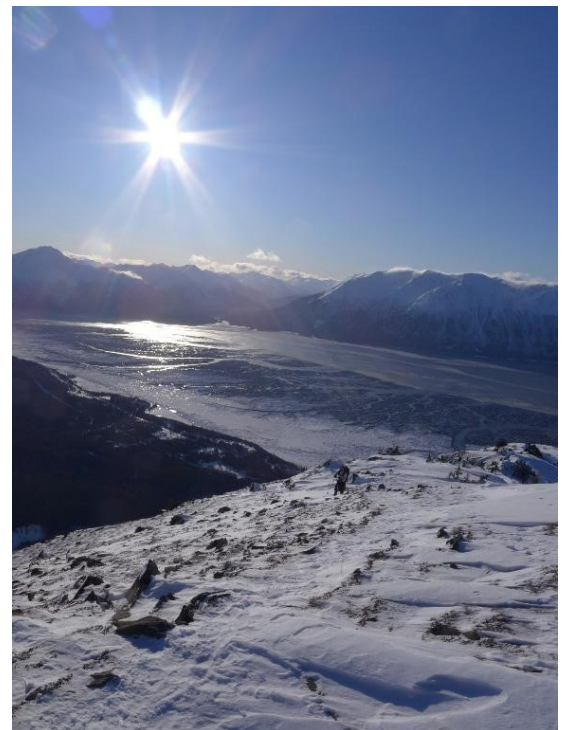
Human tracks abruptly end at a large severed cornice. Did someone take a plunge and snow ride on the mid-angle slopes below? I'm then inspired to break off cornices, but only succeed with barrel-sized.

Shortly after topping out on the ridge the path through thigh-deep snow abates, so we strap on the rarely used trugers, which are fun if used infrequently.

Though fairly easy truger hiking with hiking sticks, we abate our plan of ascending another peak, desiring to descend in daylight, with the brisk north wind to our back.

Many possible libations and eateries await in the nearby city, though oddly void of brightly painted houses.

[*Ed. note: Bird Ridge Point (3505 feet); Bird Ridge*]



*Kärrie Wang ascending Fugyl Rygg.
Photo by Wayne Todd*

Finding Alaska on the Juneau Icefield, Taku Range

Text by Derek Field

By the end of the school year, I found myself craving a mountain expedition and all the good and bad that comes with it. Lecturing at California Lutheran University in Ventura County had given me time to stoke the proverbial fire; among other things, I read a fair deal of books, and in doing so discovered the writing of the highly acclaimed David Roberts. How it took me this long in life to read such classics as Deborah and The Mountain of My Fears, I don't know. Regardless, the prose immediately struck a chord within me and truly reminded me what dragged me to alpine obsession in the first place. The image of Don Jensen gazing wistfully at the aerial photograph of Mount Huntington, I can practically see the neurons within his brain firing as the scheming begins. And so, too, when I first saw Brette Harrington's photo of the magnificent Taku Range, a veritable jaw of granite teeth puncturing the top of the great Juneau Icefield, did the scheming begin for me.

Three others immediately jumped on board, and just like that we had a team of four: me, my wife Giselle, and our two friends Dave Spies and Joey Jarrell. Truth be told, we had already settled on the Juneau Icefield as a location, based on its remarkable accessibility for an economy-level expedition. Although our modest American Alpine Club grant award couldn't make feasible a trip to, say, Mount Deborah or Mount Huntington, we figured out that Alaska wasn't entirely out of the question – for Juneau seemed to offer the accessibility that we so desired. One phone conversation with Brette Harrington and Gabe Hayden confirmed the worthiness of the area. So, on July 12th, 2019, the four of us flew north over the Coast Ranges with faces plastered to windows and landed in the state capital beneath its stereotypical cloud ceiling. The first half-hour of our trip was spent admiring the plethora of bald eagles circling freely around the harbor. Ah ... the Alaska about which we had been told for so long!

On July 14th, after two days watching eagles in Juneau waiting for the clouds to lift, we were flown to the west side of the Taku Range by the exceptional team at Northstar Trekking Helicopters. I had spilled an embarrassing amount of beer on my shirt the night before and the others complained about the sour stench. Our pilot Adam flew us in really low and we hardly saw anything through the fog. After waving goodbye to the helicopter, the four of us dug out a fine base camp in the cirque between the Taku Towers and Emperor Peak (6805 feet), where we spent the following seven days encapsulated inside an omnipresent mist, mostly playing board games, reading books and tending to our ever-melting campsites.

Giselle Field and I ventured out into the fog on July 15th to climb the northernmost and smallest of the three main summits of The Dukes massif. John Kelley made the first ascent of North Duke in

2014, doing so via the north ridge. In a SuperTopo.com report, he referred to an unclimbed peak between Emperor Peak and North Duke. He returned later that season to attempt its north ridge, but bailed due to loose rock and seriousness. As a consolation prize, he climbed the south ridge of North Duke, thus making the second ascent of that peak. In our reconnaissance on July 14th, Giselle and I went to the base of the north ridge of that unclimbed peak and immediately understood why Kelley had bailed. We also went to the base of the north ridge of North Duke and could not understand why he did not bail.

Instead, we chose to ascend a series of corners on the southwest face. Our route, which we called "The Candy Cornwall" (II 5.9, 500 feet, 4 pitches), was very much a geologic puzzle, connecting veins and dikes of solid granite in a sea of metamorphic choss. Blocks and boulders rained down upon the glacier most of the time we were moving. We found no evidence of a prior ascent on the pointy summit, and named it the Duchess (6250 feet as measured by GPS).

Over the next few days, we took advantage of sporadic weather windows to survey the remainder of the range's west side before attempting a few modest lines. On July 19th, Giselle and I completed a full ascent of the west arête of the highest peak between the Taku Towers and Cathedral Peak (6530 feet). During our expedition we referred to it as Humpback Peak as it did not seem have a name on any map or publication. After climbing the lower, steeper part of the arête via four pitches (up to 5.9), we simul-climbed and belayed short pitches (5.6 R) along the upper arête, which was wonderfully narrow and thickly coated in lichen. We called our route "Humpback Arête" (III 5.9, 950 feet, 7 pitches). The peak had a summit elevation of 6350 feet (as measured by GPS).

On July 20th, it rained lightly all day, so Giselle and I chose an easy-looking line and were



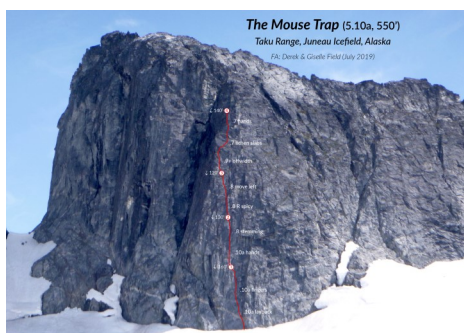
Topo of "The Candy Cornwall" on The Duchess.
Photo by Derek Field



Route line for West Arête on Cathedral Peak.
Photo by Dave Spies; annotations by Derek Field

rewarded with one of the most spectacular scrambles of our lives: the West Arête (III 5.7, 50 degrees, 1,100 feet) of the north summit of Cathedral Peak. The pencil-thin ribbon of gneiss, sculpted perfectly on both sides by the active glacier, led to the peak's dwindling icecap. Easy névé brought us to the north summit (6289 feet as measured by GPS), which had not yet had a recorded ascent, though I imagine the northwest face would be a relatively easy route in winter conditions. That distinct summit was approximately 100 feet lower than the true (south) summit and isolated by a steep notch. There appeared to be several options for reaching the true (south) summit by non-technical mixed routes; we assumed the peak's first recorded ascent (Robert Forbes-Dick Merritt-Maynard Miller-Art Schoeblen, 1949), which made no mention of the route taken, chose one of these easy-looking options.

On July 21st, the last day of our trip, good weather finally arrived. Giselle and I attempted the steep west pillar of the large dome immediately south of South Taku Tower (6605 feet). Two pitches



*Topo of "The Mouse Trap."
Photo by Derek Field*

of splitter cracks (5.10a) abruptly devolved into munge-cracks and runout slabs. We each took a huge lead fall, but saw no reason to retreat, choosing to press onward until at last we dead-ended ourselves 20 feet below the top of the pillar. We cut our losses and rappelled down the route, calling it "The Mouse Trap" (II 5.10a, 550 feet, 4 pitches). In a stroke of bad luck, our ropes got stuck on the rappel and I had to re-lead the scary pitch on which we had both fallen.

When at last we stumbled back to base camp, around midnight with a line of orange light still in the western sky, we learned that Dave and Joey had succeeded on their route "Stoned Virgins" (III 5.10d, 800 feet), which had proven quite a bit of work. Their impressive line tackled thin cracks on the steep wall to the right of "Humpback Arête." The route had 330 feet of independent climbing before merging with "Humpback Arête." They continued along our route to make the second ascent of the peak and recovered a piece of



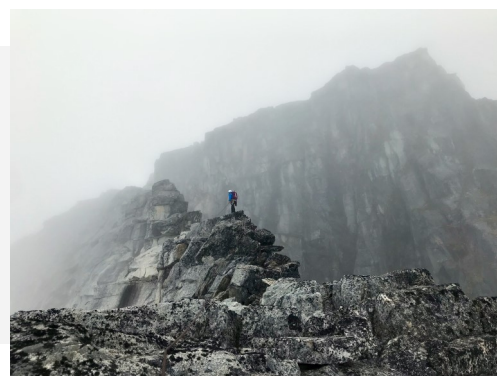
*Topo showing routes of "Humpback Arête" and "Stoned Virgins" on the lower west aspect of Humpback Peak.
Photo by Derek Field*

gear that I had inadvertently dropped. But they didn't tell us about this discovery until two days later in Juneau when they cleverly had our server bring the cheque with my favorite offset cam magically placed inside. Surprise!

Anyway, on July 22nd, the day after our fiasco on "The Mouse Trap," the helicopter came to retrieve us and we touched down in Juneau, feeling content with our expedition. In spite of subpar weather, we managed to have a fun time and walked away with an amazing shared experience. By staying flexible with our expedition goals and lowering our expectations, it seemed that we were able to take advantage of the given conditions while others in the climbing community might have chosen instead to sulk around waiting for the perfect day to do the perfect route.

I'll never forget waking up that last morning on the icefield, when the sun finally decided to show up, and seeing the countless mountain ranges spread across the icefield like pieces on a board game. It seemed we had found the romanticized Alaska we were seeking, and I, for one, can't wait to return. In the meantime, I'll stay wistful and dreaming like Don Jensen. Luckily this trip gave me one or two fresh mountain photographs at which to stare longingly.

*High on the West Arête of Cathedral Peak, Derek Field heads up the spiral staircase into the mist.
Photo by Giselle Field*



*Giselle Field leads the great finger-crack of the first pitch (5.8) of "The Candy Cornwall" on The Duchess.
Photo by Derek Field*

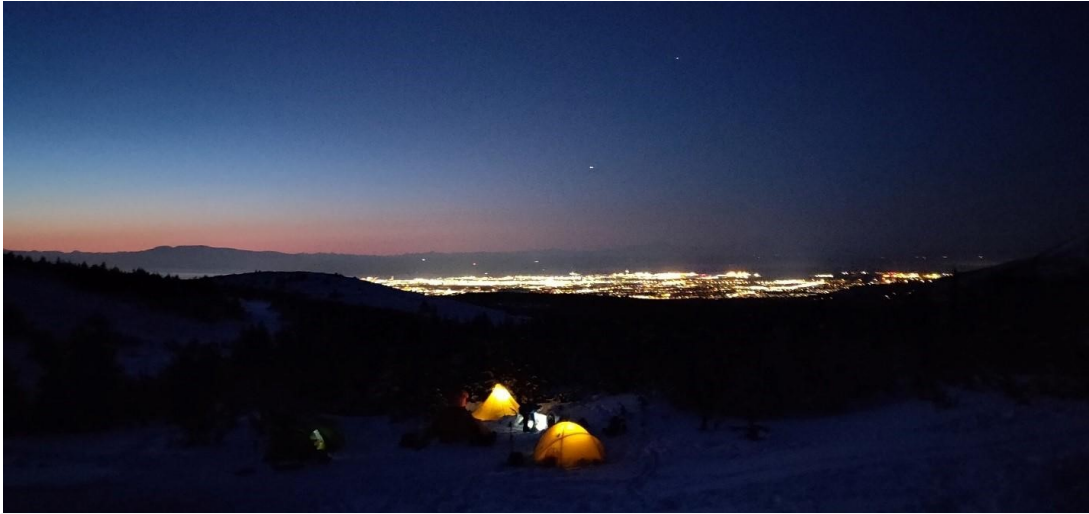


*Giselle Field enjoys the first bluebird day of the group's 10-day trip during an attempt on "The Mouse Trap."
Photo by Derek Field*



2020 Winter Mountaineering School, Western Chugach Mountains

Text by Sam Denison



Campsite overlooking Anchorage.

Photo by Tianyu Qiao

From all walks of life, new and old MCA members met for nine days of fun in the mountains. This year, the winter mountaineering course covered much of the same topics as years prior, including subjects such as trip planning, navigation, glacier travel, crevasse rescue, wilderness medicine, and a variety of different climbing techniques. Although the group was somewhat smaller than past outings with four instructors and four students, it allowed for a quick bond through the enjoyment of being amongst the mountains.

Before we set off on our trip, the group needed to become organized and start training for the possibility of a multi-day hike with heavy packs and loaded sleds. Greg and the team leader set up multiple group meetings and outings, which included training hikes, gear talks, and meal preparation lessons so everyone could get up to speed for the trip. It was interesting to see and be part of the logistical planning for a group of this size that needed to overcome several challenges, which included group injuries, changing weather forecasts, and responsibility changes amongst the group. A special thank you should be said for Rylin McGee who continued being our secretary through a terrible knee injury.

On February 21 the group met at Greg's house to perform a final gear check and last-minute gathering of group gear before we set off to Glen Alps for a camping trip on the north side of Flattop Mountain. Leaving our vehicles, we strapped our snowshoes on and lugged our 70-plus pounds of gear to the campsite to set up camp and have some classes on winter navigation and leave no trace. With spirits high, the group finished the first day with cooked bratwursts and a few inches of snowfall.

The following couple days the group was starting to come together and become livelier during the morning hikes around the bowl area of Flattop Mountain. Those morning hikes not only were a fantastic opportunity to practice navigation, but also to keep warm, as a couple of the mornings reached close to -10° Fahrenheit. During some of the outings we were able to tie in previous class instruction by identifying avalanche hazards and having the opportunity to strap on crampons and front point our way up an easy slope to practice steep snow travel.

As the week progressed onward, the courses became more and more interactive. Avalanche classes became group searches to find beacons and an eventual final scenario, which involved a group search of multiple victims. Navigation became route finding and triangulation during our hikes and the opportunity to have some friendly competition amongst the two teams with compass work. Anchor building turned into glacier travel and soon we were practicing crevasse rescue with multiple teams.

Toward the end of the week, it was an easy transition to some less-intense training that consisted of building and sleeping in snow shelters, signaling, and fire starting in an emergency. That was a nice finishing touch to a wilderness-medicine course where we practiced basic first aid and a practice scenario where we hypothermia wrapped a drunken hiker. The week finished with the group gathering our gear and heading back to Greg's house to practice prusiking and have a relatively quiet evening to prepare for the following two days of ice climbing.

The group met with Richard Rasch, who taught us the basics of ice climbing at The Beer Climbs and on "Mad Dog." It is safe to say,

that was the highlight for most people in the group. For some, that was their first climbing experience and it looked as if it stoked a fire to continue down the path of freedom in the hills. We all left the final day with some exposure to basic ice-climbing techniques, which involved proper climbing methods, ice protection, and abseiling.

The 2020 winter mountaineering class would like to say a very heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers and the MCA for putting on such a wonderful course that allowed beginners to get a feel for mountaineering. That trip was a great introduction to basic survival and technical skills involved in some of the more serious aspects of wilderness travel. In the words of Greg Bragiel, walk worthy and teach others.

Lead instructor: Greg Bragiel

Instructors: Edmund Eilbacher, Hans Schlegel, Richard Rasch



From left to right: Hans Schlegel, Jared Kern, Tianyu Qiao, and Kevin Fox receiving compass instruction from Greg Bragiel (right).



Jared Kern practicing compass skills.



From left to right: Sam Denison, Kevin Fox, Greg Bragiel, and Jared Kern heading back to camp after a hike around Flattop Mountain.



Tianyu Qiao climbing "Mad Dog."

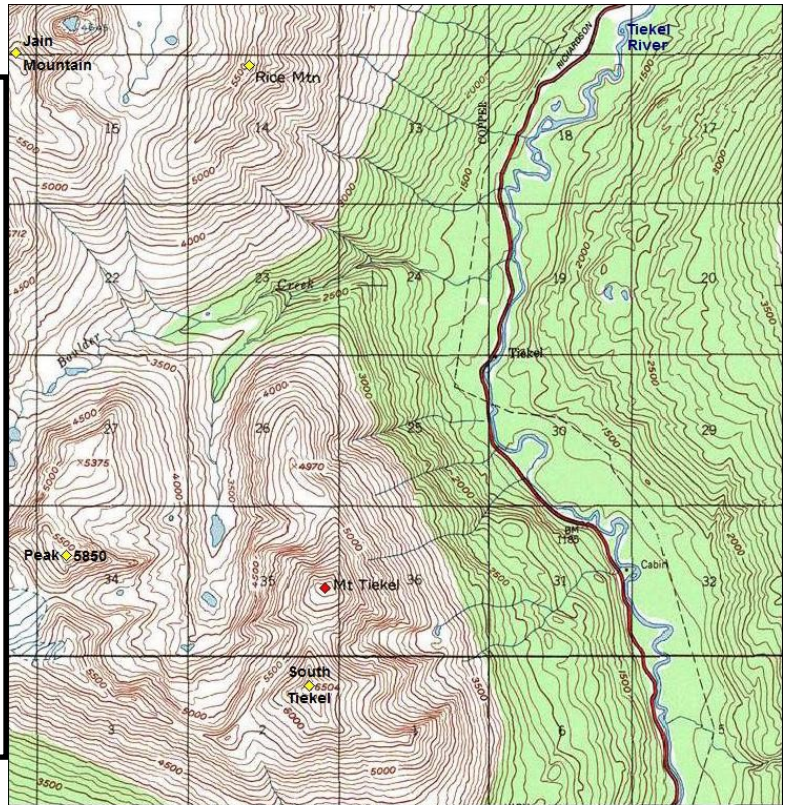
From left to right: Greg Bragiel, Sam Denison, Edmund Eilbacher, Jared Kern, Tianyu Qiao, and Hans Schlegel heading back to camp after a morning hike.



Peak of the Month: Mount Tiekel, Central Chugach Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Central Chugach Mountains; Little Fist Range
Borough: Unorganized Borough
Drainage: Boulder Creek
Latitude/Longitude: 61° 18' 14" North, 145° 20' 36" West
Elevation: 6360 (±40) feet
Adjacent Peak: South Tiekel (6504 feet)
Distinctness: 630 feet from South Tiekel
Prominence: 630 feet from South Tiekel
USGS Maps: 1:63,360: Valdez (B-4), 1:25,000: Valdez B-4 SW
First Recorded Ascent: Unknown
Access Point: Mile 51.5 of the Richardson Highway and Boulder Creek alpine-access trail



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



*North aspect of Mount Tiekel (at left), as seen from Rice Mountain.
Photo by David Hart*

The name Tiekel is derived from a Lower Ahtna word that had originally been applied (with the variant spellings Tiekell, Tiekhell, Teikhell, and Zeikhell) to the Uranatina River. Its recorded use dates to 1885 or earlier. Around 1900, the USGS re-applied the name to what had previously been known as the Konsina (or its variants Konsena and Tsaina) River and is now known as the Tiekel River, a tributary to the Copper River

downstream of the Uranatina River.

The first known use of the name Mount Tiekel was in 1951 when the USGS published the Valdez (B-4), Alaska, map, which included the name Mount Tiekel applied to a summit above the west bank of the Tiekel River south of Boulder Creek.

Due to the presence of the Boulder Creek Placer Mine a couple miles north of Mount Tiekel, it is possible that gold miners explored the upper slopes of Mount Tiekel in the early 1900s. There is also a rumor that the late Andy Embick and the late Norris Nimes might have reached its summit in the 1990s. Embick and Nimes cut a trail from about Mile 51.5 on the Richardson Highway up the south side of Boulder Creek to timberline. Additionally, Danny Gilson, the late Theo Meiners, and Phil Plunkett might also have reached the summit of Mount Tiekel during their numerous hikes in the area. Tory Dugan has climbed Mount Tiekel four times and there have undoubtedly been numerous unreported ascents of the peak. On March 31, 1996, Mount Tiekel was the venue for the second day of the World Extreme Skiing Championships.

In a day trip in the summer of 2004, Matt Kress and Derek Peters hiked up the Boulder Creek trail and ascended the north ridge of Mount Tiekel. They continued on to Peak 6504, which

they called South Tiekel, and descended to Stuart Creek and the private property of the Gilson family.

On June 26, 2019, Mat Brunton set out up the Boulder Creek alpine-access trail on a day trip to climb Mount Tiekel. Upon reaching the alpine country, Brunton proceeded to hike up the north ridge of Mount Tiekel, ascending Point 4970 en route to the summit. Brunton then descended to the south ridge of Mount Tiekel, climbed South Tiekel, and then descended to the eastern fork of Boulder Creek, which he followed to return to the alpine-access trail and the Richardson Highway.

On August 8, 2019, J. Lance Breeding and his family, including his eight-year-old son, followed Kress' and Peters' route while traversing the summit of Mount Tiekel.

The information for this column came from Brunton's trip report titled "Mount Tiekel (6350 feet) and Peak 6504, Central Chugach Mountains," which appeared in the February 2020 *Scree*, and from my correspondence with Breeding, Brunton, David Hart, Ryan Hokanson, and Kress.



*The north face of Mount Tiekel, as viewed from atop Point 4970.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Renee Ernster on the summit of Mount Rice with the north ridge of Mount Tiekel visible in the background at left.
Photo by David Hart*

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2020, at 6:00-8:00 p.m., conducted online via Google Meet

Roll Call

Mike Meyers (President) - Present
Gerrit Verbeek (Vice-President) - Present
Curtis Townsend (Secretary) - Present
Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Present
Tom Meacham (Director) - Present
Jonathan Rupp Strong (Director) - Present
Lila Hobbs (Director) - Present
Andy Kubic (Director) - Present
Heather Johnson (Director) - Present
Nathan Pooler (Director) - Present

Scribe: Curtis Townsend

Committee Reports

President (Mike Meyers)

- Andy and Nathan to research tent/awning for functions. Andy reports they are around \$250.
- Liability Waiver last printed in April 2019 *Scree*. Will not print again. New waiver to be updated on website.
- Chugach State Park – Can't camp out at Rabbit Lake or Flattop Mountain with groups of 12 or more. Eklutna Lake has group campsites, but those are booked out for the future.

Vice-President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- April speaker is postponed due to COVID-19.
- Not going to book May speaker due to COVID-19.
- No speakers June through August.

Secretary (Curtis Townsend)

- Action – Andy has MCA letterhead; Curtis to search for pro deals.
- Curtis reserved the BP Energy Center on November 18th for board meeting.
- Curtis to start reserving the BP Energy Center for 2021 on April 1, 2020.
- Curtis to cancel all meetings at the BP Energy Center until September.

Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- REI has been sent invoice for calendars. REI stores closed due to COVID-19.

Liability Committee (Tom Meacham)

- By-Laws – Tom and Mike to get together for lunch to discuss.

Parks Advisory (Tom Meacham and Ralph Baldwin)

- June 13, 50th anniversary Alaska State Parks celebration at Arctic Valley.

Awards Committee (Tom Meacham, Charlie Sink, Max Neale)

- Meeting to be called in March for award nominees.

Trips Committee (Needs chair)

- Trip leader training
- Mary Vavrik to lead a hike up Mount Eklutna and has been sent the information to get started.
- May 9 – MCA R.A.C.E [Recreational Alpine Cooperative Event].
 - Contact Alaska State Parks for Special-Use Permit because Alaska Division of Mining, Land, and Water is good with event (permit not needed through them)
 - Two groups: Capped at 20 teams of two.
 - ◆ Beginner – race to Mint Hut
 - ◆ Advanced – race to Mint Hut, then to Bomber Hut
 - Are we charging a fee?
 - We need to develop a plan to reduce liability.
 - ◆ Safety plan, forecast plan, volunteers with radios and first-aid kit, etc.
 - ◆ Mandatory to have a partner, helmet, micro-spikes or crampons, rope, harness, two prusiks, ice screw, mountain axe, avalanche gear?
- June 19 – MCA Annual Summer Solstice Campout on Flattop Mountain.
- July 10 – Rabbit Lake hub meet-up camping Friday night. Break into side groups Saturday morning for North and South Suicide Peaks and Ptarmigan Peak – event format over rigid trip format.
- August 7 – Eklutna Lake group site is already booked. Consider another location.
- September – MCA Annual Matanuska Glacier Icefest.
- October –
- November –
- December – MCA Annual Christmas Party.

Training Committee

- No updates

Huts Committee (Jonathan Rupp Strong, Greg Bragiel, Cory Hinds, Vicky Lytle)

- Hut instructional signs with specific warning on fires/lack of oxygen (Chugach State Park meeting). Jonathan and Mike to work on instructional signs.
- Will not publish the budget increase in *the Scree* until we know for certain this project is going to happen this summer.
- Scandinavian Peaks Hut door open.

Mentorship (Lila Hobbs, Katherine Cooper)

- Mentorship is on hold due to COVID-19.

Communications Committee (Lila Hobbs)

- Lila and Jonathan to seek quotes for migrating current website to a new platform due to payment errors.

Scree (Steve Gruhn and Dawn Munroe)

- Monthly submission deadline by the 11th of each month.
- Gerrit to submit board message concerning our position on activity during the virus.

Library (Gwen Higgins)

- No updates.

Date and Location of next Meetings

- General meeting on April 1, 2020, from 6:30-9:00 pm at the BP Energy Center was canceled. Ines Papert was to present at Bear Tooth instead, same date. That presentation was canceled due to COVID-19.
- Next Board meeting on April 29, 2020, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. via internet meeting.

Reasons for Canceling the April General Membership Meeting

Text by Gerrit Verbeek

The reason for the cancellation of the April meeting was that a travel ban from the European Union, where Ines Papert was traveling from, was announced March 12th. Papert and Luka Lindic considered flying to Canada and driving into the U.S., but a 14-day quarantine would have stressed their schedule to be in Anchorage by April 1st. At the same time, the Bear Tooth began receiving lots of requests for cancellations from ticketholders to all their events, and took the precaution of limiting their 400-capacity theater to 200 attendees, in line with recommendations. Because the MCA couldn't guarantee the speakers, the venue, or the audience, and due to concerns that more restrictions might be announced, the event was canceled with mutual agreement from all parties. Papert and Lindic regret the circumstances and are looking forward to rescheduling when this pandemic blows over.

Answer to "What peak is this?" from page 3.
Mount Hunter

MCA LIABILITY RELEASE AGREEMENT

READ THIS LIABILITY RELEASE AGREEMENT CAREFULLY.

THEN SIGN, INITIAL AND DATE IT IN THE BLANKS INDICATED.

Here is the current, approved MCA Liability Release Agreement, adopted in 2019. It supersedes the earlier 2014 release, which is found on the MCA's website, and which will be updated as soon as possible.

I _____ (*print name*) am aware that mountaineering and wilderness activities (including without limitation hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; ski mountaineering; snowshoeing, ice-skating, mountain-biking, using watercraft of all types, access by aircraft, and the use of remote backcountry huts) ARE INHERENTLY HAZARDOUS ACTIVITIES WITH THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE DEATH, BODILY INJURY AND/OR PROPERTY DAMAGE. I wish to participate in and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. (MCA). I RECOGNIZE THAT THESE ACTIVITIES INVOLVE NUMEROUS RISKS, which include, by way of example only, falling while biking, hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; falling into a crevasse or over a cliff; drowning; failure of a belay; being struck by climbing equipment or falling rock, ice or snow; avalanches; lightning; fire; asphyxiation, hypothermia; frostbite; defective or malfunctioning equipment; and attack by insects or animals. I further recognize that the remoteness of these activities may preclude prompt medical care or rescue. I ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT RISKS OF DEATH OR INJURY MAY BE CAUSED OR INCREASED BY MISTAKES, NEGLIGENCE OR RECKLESS CONDUCT on the part of my fellow participants; or by MCA officers, directors, instructors, or trip leaders; or by the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. As used in this Liability Release, "MCA" includes its officers, directors, instructors and trip leaders. I nevertheless agree to accept all risks of injury, death, or property damage that may occur in connection with any MCA activity, including use of MCA-furnished equipment and MCA backcountry huts, and all risks of third-party negligence, in conformity with Alaska Statutes 09.65.290(a) and (d).

_____ (*initial here that you have read and understood this paragraph*)

MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT: I consent to any hospital or medical care that may become necessary as a result of my participation in MCA activities. I agree that I am solely responsible for all charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue costs.

_____ (*initial here that you have read and understood this paragraph*)

GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS: I hereby give up, for myself and for my heirs, dependents, and/or personal representative, all legal rights that I might otherwise claim against MCA, my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage is provided by automobile insurance policies), and against the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. I GIVE UP THESE LEGAL RIGHTS KNOWINGLY, AND REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE DEATH, INJURY OR PROPERTY DAMAGE RESULTED FROM MISTAKES, NEGLIGENCE OR RECKLESS CONDUCT OF MYSELF OR OTHER PERSONS. I understand that this Liability Release agreement shall remain in effect unless I provide to MCA a signed, dated, written notice of my revocation of this Liability Release, concurrent with the mandatory relinquishment of my MCA membership.

_____ (*initial here that you have read and understood this paragraph*)

MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE: I will not sue or otherwise make any claim against the MCA, my fellow participants in MCA activities (except as noted above for automobile accidents), and/or the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, for any death, injury or property damage which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities. The provisions of this release are severable, and if any part is held unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or the validity of this Liability Release shall be filed only in the Alaska Superior Court in Anchorage, Alaska.

_____ (*initial here that you have read and understood this paragraph*)

MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY: I hereby release and discharge the MCA, my fellow participants in MCA activities, and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, from any and all actions, claims, or demands, both for myself and for my heirs, dependents, and/or personal representative, for any death, injury or property damage occurring in the course of my instruction or participation in MCA mountaineering and wilderness activities, and the use of MCA-furnished equipment and backcountry huts.

_____ (*initial here that you have read and understood this paragraph*)

MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY: I will pay all expenses, including attorney fees and court costs, that MCA, my fellow participants in MCA activities, and the State of Alaska and its employees may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of death, injury, or property damage suffered by me in connection with any MCA activity or the use of any MCA-furnished equipment or backcountry huts.

_____ (*initial here that you have read and understood this paragraph*)

I execute this this Liability Release freely and knowingly, and specifically in consideration for my opportunity to participate as an MCA member in MCA-sponsored instruction and activities, and to use MCA-furnished equipment and backcountry huts.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS LIABILITY RELEASE AGREEMENT. I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ITS CONTENTS. I RECOGNIZE THAT THIS LIABILITY RELEASE IS A BINDING LEGAL AGREEMENT.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian of named individual (if between 16 and 18 years of age): _____

Date: _____

(Form Approved 2/27/2019).

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Mike Meyers	mcmeyers24@msn.com	Director 1 (term expires in 2020)	Jonathan Rupp Strong	202-6484
Vice-President	Gerrit Verbeek	903-512-4286	Director 2 (term expires in 2020)	Lila Hobbs	229-3754
Secretary	Curtis Townsend	355-9820	Director 3 (term expires in 2021)	Tom Meacham	346-1077
Treasurer	Katherine Cooper	209-253-8489	Director 4 (term expires in 2021)	Heather Johnson	hjohnson@mdausa.org
			Director 5 (term expires in 2021)	Andy Kubic	andy.kubic@gmail.com
			Director 6 (term expires in 2021)	Nathan Pooler	Nathan.lee.pooler@gmail.com

Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$30

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@mtclubak.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. Material should be submitted by the 11th 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@mtclubak.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: Katherine Cooper or 209-253-8489 or membership@mtclubak.org

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Vacant—training@mtclubak.org

Mentorship: Katherine Cooper and Lila Hobbs—mentorship@mtclubak.org

Huts: Greg Bragiel—350-5146 or huts@mtclubak.org

Calendar: Vicky Ho—512-470-8640 or hovcky@gmail.com

Librarian: Gwendolyn Higgins—library@mtclubak.org

Scree Editor: MCAScree@gmail.com Steve Gruhn assisted by Dawn Munroe (350-5121) dawn.talbott@yahoo.com

Web: www.mtclubak.org

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

Mat Brunton climbing around the icy gendarme on the east aspect of Kinnikinnick Mountain.

Photo by Jess Tran

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