

SCENE

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MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT: As you should know, the June meeting of the MCA will be held at the head of Rabbit Creek. Plans call for the meeting itself to start at 8 p.m. on Saturday, June 29 at a suitable campsite near the tarn lake feeding the creek. Drive to the end of C'Valley Road, turn right and follow the MCA signs to the jumping off point. Land Rover ferry-service will be available from 12 noon on. Hike from this point over gently rising Alpine meadows with no brush (1). Youngsters 10 years and older should be able to negotiate this with ease. Bring along your summer camping gear (tents, sleeping bags, stove, if you have, and food). This is an extremely beautiful spot in real wilderness, so bring your camera. There are countless hikes and climbs in the immediate area varying in difficulty from berry-picking walks to class six. For more information call me evenings at BR 4-2234.

Keeping me very busy this month has been the MCA climbing school and I would estimate so far some 200 man/hours have gone into conducting and preparing for the 3 classes held thus far. With a turnout of about 35 very serious students, we have as many as we can handle and I would say that all effort has been worthwhile.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNALS years 1932 to 39 and 1941 to 1962 are now available at the Alaska Methodist University Library. Hours are 8:30 to 5 o'clock Monday through Sat.

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT belonging to the Club is now being stored at the home of Dave DeVoe, 311 S. Park St., Anchorage. Phone FE3-1492.

MT. ROBINSON RACE This is a big event not only for Seward, but also for the MCA with no less than seven members participating. Currently to be seen racing about city streets and Chugach foothills are: Vin Hoeman, Dave Johnston, Scott Hamilton, Cliff Ellis, Bob Layman, Jim Nelson and Steiner Hanson. Lets try to have the MCA represented among the spectators also to give our stalwart racers a moral boost. See you on July 4 in Seward.

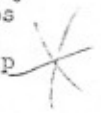
Jim Messick is going to make a big jump on June 30th when he and Helen Dooies will be married. They plan a honeymoon in and around the Canadian Rockies. Congratulations Jim and Helen!

BIG TRAP IC (JAM?) ON DEWALL : The East Buttress has been conquered for the first time by three of the six man Teton-Alaskan Expedition that started the climb way back in April. A fine feat. Hans Zogg and his party from Seattle reached the summit via West Buttress on May 29. Still struggling among crevasses on that route are: Dick McGowan and his commercially guided party, a Canadian Alpine Club party, a 4-man party from Seattle. Meanwhile Hans Gnosser is reported to be over the 'hump' on Wickersham Wall while a Harvard Mountaineering Club party is just starting up a different, very technical part of that Wall. A. J. Carter and party are being flown to the foot of Foraker this week.

FIRST WINTER ASCENT OF MT. ROBSON - CANADA, 12,972' by Vin Hoeman

Returning back home through the Canadian Rockies in April, I had with me in my old pickup truck two Colorado State University students, now members of MCA, who came up to prepare for a climb of McKinley with me. They are David Perry Johnston of Plainfield, N.J. and Peter Harlow Robinson of Boston. We wanted to climb something en route and decided on the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies. We could find no record of previous ascents outside the months of July and August. We camped where snowdrifts stopped us about 2800' elev., and snowshoed to Berg Lake, 16 miles in at 5400' elev., the next day finding the Alpine Club of Canada cabin only a mile farther. Next morning we again shouldered our 45 to 50 pound packs and snowshoed up the Robson Glacier six miles to a steeply sloping shelf where we left our webs and put on crampons. It was 1400 hours before we finally made our way out on the Dome at 10,098', having kick-stepped up long slopes of fresh snow, crossed the bergschrund, and hurried beneath ice cliffs of abanging glacier. We pitched our tent on the Dome (middle of photo opposite p. 243 in Mountaineering the Freedom of the Hills) exposed, but safe from avalanches.

After a night of buffetting (3 in a 2-man tent), we started for the summit the morning of the 26th with the weather so foggy and snowy we couldn't see 100 yards. Perhaps we were lucky not to see the exposure as we climbed the headwall to the summit ridge, avoiding cornices, and made our way up the steep pitches of the summit tower. On only one pitch did we have to cut steps in ice. Finally, about 1130 hours, the snow humps and ridges of the summit were reached, and since we couldn't see which was highest, we traversed them all. It was 14 deg.F. on top, but 25 deg. when we reached our camp on the Dome at 1430. We decided to proceed on down, fearing a melt that would make all the new snow dangerous for descent.



-2-

Melting it was when we reached Robson Glacier and the hard going, coupled with missing the route through the icefall, made it after 2200 hours before we wearily dragged into the A.C.C. cabin. Our efforts paid off, though, as the next day was warm and all day we recuperated in comfort while avalanches thundered continuously off Rearguard and the slopes we'd so recently fled. The morning of the 28th the snow was frozen hard enough to snowshoe out and we enjoyed views of Robson in its entirety for the first time. The Cochranes at Mt. Robson Ranch were very helpful with maps and photos before our climb, and keep accounts of all climbs and attempts.

PIONEER PEAK - see NIATANUSKA GLACIER - see W. TRIP TRIP - May 19 by John Bousman

Sometime Saturday afternoon the Pioneer Peak trip died of its own inertia (12 people more or less started to go), being reborn in a trip to recon Niatanuska Glacier. But an instantaneous and drastic navigational error occurred, causing us to miss the Palmer Highway in favor of the abominable road into Eklutna, from which we set out to climb West Trin. Need I add that we got off at the late hour of 0830 - there is enough daylight now to allow laziness in the time - and we thought the trip was going to be short anyhow. With me were John Unger and Bob Nixon.

At about 2:30 we found ourselves on some rock ribs below the south face with a nasty scree slope (for uphill oriented climbers) leading to the ridge, which soon succumbed to our valiant and violent exertions. For the next four hours we attempted all sorts of horrible snow cracks and rock faces between them. Unfortunately we had prepared for Niatanuska Glacier and had no rock pitons, so based all rock climbing on ice axe belays with no intermediate protection, which caused a certain amount of a prehension in leading, especially when the belayer was a rope-length below. Eventually we turned out into the south face, finding snow cracks which led to the summit. 6:30 p.m. found us on top, quite convinced it was enough for the day. Going down, the pedagogue in me felt satisfied and, 30 ft. above my belayer, in a lovely 55 deg. snow crack, a rapid and fine glissade was indulged in -- to test the belay. Some apprehension was felt as I shot by John who wailed "slow down", but caught me in truly superb fashion even unto strangulation. Two lovely 3/4 curl runs were spotted at short range and suitably photogenic had. They seemed oblivious to exposure, being within 50 ft. of the summit .. and still wrapped.

DIG BAD WOLF PEAK May 20 by Vin Hoeman

Two years ago Easter I first admired this sharp peak of the Kenai Mountains from Ptarmigan Lake on its glaciated north side, and again from the same place a year ago. When I looked it over pretty well from Wolcott Mt. last July I decided that the west ridge would 'go'. Finally, the opportunity to tackle this peak came when five of us made a trip to Seward for an early preview of Mt. Marathon. Arriving there the night of Friday, May 17, Cliff Ellis, Scott Hamilton, Dave Johnston, Pete Robinson and I picked up our sixth climber, Sewardite Don Stockard, and returned 18 miles up the Seward Highway to Victor Creek. There we camped at about 500' elevation near Kenai Lake.

Morning of the 18th brought another of those fair days that are so rare on spring weekends, and we left the remains of our breakfast fire at 0545 to take advantage of it. Victor Creek Trail provides good brushless access to the mountain, if followed for a whole mile to where it leaves the hemlock-spruce forest and a sidecreek adaves a path through the alders to the north. However, we did not discover this till our descent and claimed our share of alder and devils club on the way up. Above the last alders the way up to the main ridge was easy, but Scott's breakfast of C-rations disagreed with him, forcing him to wait for us there. By 0830 we reached the 5750' western highpoint on the ridge and could see our objective only a mile away. In between the ridge was set with huge gendarmes that were apparently concealed by clouds when our map was made. Don had had no climbing experience, so he was roped in with Dave for the traverse of this ridge, and we arrived on the summit from 1130 to 1230. Because it is so near Mother Goose Glacier, at the head of Victor Creek, we decided to name it "Dig Bad Wolf Peak" and so stated in the register bottle left at the summit. We feel sure ours was the first ascent.

The snow softened to avalanche conditions by the time we left the summit, so that we had to return with extra caution and did not all reach the base till after 1000 hours. Wildlife seen included 3 mountain goats, a small bear, 2 porcupines (one procured for meat), golden eagles, 2 species of ptarmigan, and many small birds.

THE CONQUEST OF DOUGLASS CANYON by Marge Prescott

A class one hike - straight up! A scouting party of DeVoes set out an hour ahead of scheduled departure time, with the rear guard of Carrie Lewis, Rachel Harris, Marguerite St. Palley and yours truly arriving some time later on the scene. Packs were shouldered, route picked, and the assault on the summit began. There are two classical routes, steep - and steeper plus thorns. We chose steep minus thorns. With such huffing, puffing, grunting and groaning, the rear party conquered the summit

and were greeted 'with bread and wine' by Don, David, Carol, Greg and Sharon DeVoe. The day was pleasant and the view of surrounding mountains very rewarding.

TRIP TO KENAI LAKE May 31 to June 2 by Carol DeVoe

The family camping outing to Kenai Lake included Harge Prescott, Carrie Lewis, and the six DeVoes, Don, Dave, Carol, and Sharon; Greg, Greg; 3, and Jeanie; 15 mos. Friday night we made camp at Kenai Lake. While Don and Dave improvised stakes for the DeVoe tent, there was considerable commotion over the setting up of Harge's man mountain tent. Even more commotion was heard when the two girls began to stuff themselves in for the night.

Saturday, after breakfast, we prepared a sack lunch and left for the Lower Russian trail. Sharon and Greg eagerly ran off for a head start on the hike, Don following closely to keep them in line. The rest of us carried packs, mine being Jeanie, who rode piggy back in a Gerry kiddie carrier. The trail, with easy slopes from the Kenai River, was good with a few wet spots on the gently rolling path. We passed several groups of fishermen on their way out. They couldn't understand why anyone would hike all the distance just for the walk!

It was too early in the year to see wildflowers in bloom, but one porcupine was spotted in a tree and near the stream guard station we found a very young moose calf, apparently abandoned by its mother. After lunch, and a nap for the kids, it was time to start back. Back in camp we filled up with stew, tossed salad and Greg's birthday cake, and then had songs around the campfire.

Saturday night it clouded over and some showers fell, but the weather next morning nicely allowed us time to break camp before it began to rain. It was great fun, though, and we hope more families will join in similar club outings scheduled for future summer weekends.

SCOUT GROUP PRACTISE May 26th by Bill Davis

A successful rock evacuation practise was held on Sunday afternoon, May 26. A willing 'victim' positioned himself on a shelf near the 'rocks' on the Seward Highway. Two rescuers were dispatched in advance of the main group to assess the 'victim's' injuries and administer first aid. The rest of the group followed, pausing on the way to ponder various problems of field leadership, and to practise bush-whacking with the litter.

Arriving at the scene of the 'accident', the litter was assembled, rope crews organized, and a lift set up. The 'injured' was raised from his shelf to a wider area and then the litter was packed out to the assembly area. It was a smooth operation and enough members were present to make the practise effective. After returning from the cliffs, a double rope descent was rigged up and the litter, with 'victim', was lowered a couple of times. Thus practise at both raising and lowering the litter with full weight was accomplished. Careful review of each step in the rescue procedure was emphasized. A lot of time was spent talking about various problems a field leader is faced with and alternatives were explored. Practise at making these kinds of decisions is as valuable as the actual setting up of rescue mechanics.

The Rescue Group hopes to organize another practise - this time on snow and ice - in the near future. WATCH FOR THIS EXCITING CO. HIKING EVENT!