



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA      BOX 2037      ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

June 1978

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JUNE MEETING

June 24, Saturday, SUPER GALA 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ON FLATTOP with an honest to goodness real German Polka band! Leave with a group from Fred Myer's parking lot Saturday afternoon or come up any time you please. Dancing from 7PM untill 10. Bring two logs - we will have a fire permit. Guests of honor will be charter members Paul Crews, Rod and Gwynneth Wilson, Tony Bockstahler, Norm Pichler and any others we can round up. If it rains we will put up a canopy for the band, but the dancers are on their own. Bring tent, food and drink for the MCA's Big Twenty Celebration.

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MINUTES OF MAY GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Wednesday, May 17, 1978, Pioneer School House, Anchorage

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM by Vice-President LARUE. Since the Presiden and Treasurer were out of town, there was no Treasurer's report. Since the previous monthly meeting in April was devoted entirely to an equipment swap, no minutes were necessary.

The hiking chairman, DONA AGOSTI, gave a report on the schedule of future hikes, primarily in May and June.

VALERIE LARUE presented a mini-slide show of the Mint Glacier overnight to repair the MCA hut on March 31- April 2, 1978. Nearby mountains were enjoyed along with rare portraits of the participants.

It was announced that the MCA Climbing Class would meet on Sunday, May 21, for a practice climb, instead of May 20th as previously announced in Scree.

After the intermission for refreshments, DON ANDERSON presented a slide show on a climb of Mt. Spurr.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM.

E. Allen Robinson, Secretary

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A CLIMB ON KOROHUSK  
by Steve Markiewicz

Saturday found Tom Smayda, John Van Alphen and I heading up the Eagle River valley, following the river trail a few miles before bushwacking up the northern side. Arms got scratched as we worked our way up to a large snow-filled basin that was once a glacier. En route Tom and I climbed around on a "frozen-snow" covered waterfall, which reminded us of New England ice climbing late in the season.

We set up John's Mountain Dome in the basin below the south face of Korohusk, 7030'. Soon we filled up on Tuna Helper and Swiss Miss. Not used to all this Alaskan night light, Tom and I sat around outside for a few hours befor retiring.

Next morning we headed towards the head of the basin and climbed up towards

(continued)

the east ridge. We climbed up steep snow gullies separated by some rotten rock traverses. A larger rock whizzing past my leg kept things interesting. On the knife edged ridge we poked our axes through overhanging cornices and played "enemy spy", though rock and snow was all to be seen. Some light flurries and wind accompanied us on and off; and the clouds were all around, but it was still very nice weather and views for us. Next climb I'll remember to bring a pencil so as to write us into posterity on the summit.

The descent was down the south face. We followed a long snow gully till it ended; then traversed west over two rock ribs and followed another snow gully till that ended. Traversing east we found our final snow gully and happily glissaded down to the basin. We ate our Mac and Cheese, broke camp and headed back down. A cold beer at Paradise Lodge and a bit later, a pork chop dinner, courtesy of John's wife, Gail, ended a fine trip, and my super guides are finally broken in nice.

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ALPINE ALASKA  
Peter Sennhauser

#### North Triple Peak/Kichatna Mtns.

April 28 was a fine day, sunny and calm, just as can be expected of the first day of summer - no, this is not a mix-up with dates - after spending a dark and cool winter working in Fairbanks, the day after quitting your job can easily be the first day of summer. It was spent packing, getting ready for the seasons first climb and to have Pizza and beer with the roomies.

A flat tire didn't help my four hour delay the following day, and when I finally arrived at Dick Ellsworth's place near McKinley Park, I found a note saying, "Will be back in 30 min.", - thirty minutes from when? Well, believe it or not, thirty minutes it was! - All Dick had to do now, was to pack his gear. A flight to the Cathedral Spires on this day was a definite no-no but we did make it all the way to Talkeetna, despite the spare tires threat to blow up - it showed it's inner tube through an A-1 crack every time we checked on it.

Talk-etna looked relaxed that evening, the hamburgers at the "Rainbow" must have had a rough winter, lost a lot of weight and juice since last year, but the folkband at "Evil Alice's" was tops. Slowly that place began to look familiar - rangers Nick and Dave and Doug the pilot, et al were holding up the bar and were eager to talk about things passed and things to come.

A clear night invited to sleeping out in the open. Morning left us puzzled - it was perfectly clear! Departure days are always cloudy if not rainy in Talkeetna and to prove that it's so, we fiddled around taking forever on everything, even ate a large breakfast at the "Roadhouse," where we ran into Allan Bard, Ned Gillette and our friend Gunner from Anchorage, he

had just returned from Mt. Hunter. Despite of all that, it remained flying weather and we finally left for the Kichatna's, where Jim Sharp landed us on Tatina Glacier. The rest of the day was spent moving gear to the 5600' level and setting up camp.

The next day, May 1, was to be climbing day - our objective, the NW couloir on North Triple Peak looked steep and cold. We prepared for two days, the summit-ridge was to be our bivvy spot, we should reach it in time, if we left camp at 4 AM, but that hour saw us sound asleep. I awoke, but felt a little tired yet, besides my warm and cozy down bag just wouldn't let me get out. I gave up, turned over and went back to sleep. Eight o'clock; sleeping back still cozy, conscience guilty, stomach complaining, Dick still sleeping - time to get up. At the crack of ten we ski around the ice fall, stop at the pass to gaze at the incredible west face of Middle Triple and finally ski up higher and ever closer to the schrand which guards the couloir.

After finding a flat area to park our skis and packs we went to work digging a comfortable snow cave - after a late start and a close look at the gully that day, we decided we had the know-how and stamina to climb the whole thing in just one day - and that day was going to be tomorrow. The evening of this day though we spent eating, drinking and sitting in the sun.

May 2, 4 AM: We're out of the sack, pack our one rucksack, melt snow, cook breakfast etc., etc. Finally at seven we're on the way. Dick punches steps, I follow with the pack, Dick uses ice axe and hand tool to cross the schrund, I use ice axe and tension. 3-400' of snow steepens into the late 40's and early 50's before reaching blue ice, where Dick waits for me, hauling in the line, finally we're back together, the pack feels heavy and I demand to be clipped - in. Into what? all the ice screws are in the pack! Good grief! Bend forward so I can get the pack! Where are they? Right on top! Bull! Well, keep digging! How'd they get down that far? Finally, the belay is in, the pack is off. Time to relax, Dick's out climbing away. Soon I follow up-what ice, everything cracks and splinters. Leading feels good, no pack to carry, no big hassles, the ice is a little tricky, sure, but not all that steep, somewhere in the mid 50's.

The couloir splits some 2-3 pitches below the ridge and we decide to stay on the left, but discover as we gain height, that yet another deep groove leads still further left and bypasses another gendarm, Dick has doubts though, we'll see when we get closer. Getting closer is getting into it, though, looks attractive, snow plastered all over, must be a witch on a windy day! We hope to find relief in there someplace on a stamped-out snow patch, and a break for food and drink. No such luck! The snow is too soft, miraculously clinging to steep rock, the ice itself narrows to near nothing and is covered with snow and ever steepening. Frontpoints lose their edge due to too many blows against rock hidden beneath snow. Finally - the ridge is within reach and so is lunch time. Two wart hogs somewhat apart and another thirty feet and there you are - you think! Ever chimmed on

on vertical snowwalls??

Dick gets anxious, doesn't like all that snow coming down at him. I'm getting tired digging snow out of my way. You want to do it? Sure, go right ahead! I return to the warthog and Dick heads up for the cornice, trying to tunnel through and eventually makes it. I follow with that darn pack, what's in there anyway?

7 PM, break time, we're looking at Middle Triple and compare heights. You mean we have to go that many more feet? It'll take us hours, and a bivvy we don't have any bivvy-gear, remember! We agree to go higher for a better look. My lead, easy rock, up comes Dick and together we wander up on snow. He wants a belay, as there may be a cornice ahead. You got it, go on up. Well-what's it look like? See the summit anywhere? Fog patches hinder visibility. Dick: "Come on up, I think this is the summit!". Holy cow, you must be kidding, isn't it farther away? I hurry! Fog! We sit and rest as the fog clears and sure enough, we're on the highest bump in this neighborhood. Dick pulls out a couple small bottles of Coco Ribe. Toast, Cheers! A first!

The descent; just another epic!

by Peter Panski

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SNOWLOGGERS ON MT. HUNTER

by Jack Duggan

Undaunted by Jim Hale's hair-raising slide show of his West Ridge attempt (Scree, October 1977) and encouraged by President Dankwalter's scouting report of a "short-cut" to the ridge, intrepid "snowsloggers" Jeff Babcock, Gunnar Naslund and I made a mid-April attempt at ever-elusive Mt. Hunter in the Alaska Range.

After the usual spectacular 50-minute flight from Talkeetna to Kahultna Glacier strip, we were eager to take advantage of one of Mt. Hunter's most attractive features - a short approach march. We first had to stop, however, to chisel away an inch or more of Talkeetna airstrip mud which had frozen cement-hard to our lug-soled boots as soon as we deplaned.

Base camp was set up on the second day at the foot of the ice fall about midway along Mt. Hunter's west ridge. Three days later (including one storm day), we had carried two loads apiece to our first camp on the mountain. The route Z'ed through a series of crevasses and up a sixty degree snow slope for several hundred feet before traversing diagonally across steeper snow to a short pitch of vertical ice topped by a wide snow-filled crevass. We crossed on a sunken snowbridge and climbed up more firm snow for several hours to an overhanging crevass where we dug out a

platform for our tent.

Camp 2 went up on a level snow shelf above the crux gully. Piton anchors in the granite gully walls were reassuring on these pitches as was the thousand feet of fixed line we placed to secure much of the steep snow gully traverse from Camp 1. Down to a single carry at last, we pushed straight up quickly to the ice notch bisecting the corniced ridge. Nicknamed "Babcock Notch" after Jeff's curious spread-eagled move, leading the blue ice crack, this narrow gap provided perfect access to the broad central section of the west ridge. We moved on steadily and put our high camp in just after shuffling below an enormous wind-curved snow and ice cornice. Jeff and I each fell into crevasses at either end of this section and were equally relieved to have it behind us.

The next day, the ninth of our climb, was spent digging a snow cave and fixing our remaining five hundred feet of line on the last major obstacle of the ridge - a 700-foot ice wall topped by an exposed scalloped ridge.

Our initial summit bid the following day was thwarted at the top of the ice wall, when winds, snow and whiteout turned us back. A weather front was moving in and we spent the following three days waiting for a break. Down to food for only one day after lugging six days' worth to our high camp, we started up again about 2:30 a.m. on the 16th day of our climb. The wind picked up as we scrambled up the ice wall and the low clouds over the glacier rose steadily to surround us. As soon as we reached the end of the exposed ice ridge, each of us knew, without having to mention it, that we weren't going to the top in these high winds and blowing snow; it was time to go down. Concentration quickly replaced disappointment as we wobbled back down the exposed ridge into wind gusts of 50 to 60 miles an hour and blowing bits of hard-packed snow. After considerable struggling, we were able to make it back along the ridge, rappel to our fixed line, descend and trudge back to camp.

Thirty inches of snow fell that night, and we each took a turn digging the tent out from under the five-foot snow drift that formed around it. Characteristically, the weather cleared the next morning, but being almost out of food, we started down. After wallowing through waist-deep snow on the sheltered ridge sections, our pace finally quickened when we got to the steep snowslopes below the ice notch that we had gotten on to the ridge from. Our descent was punctuated by Gunnar's kicking off at least three snow avalanches; each of which thundered over the large ice fall immediately below us. Character building! We found our cached snowshoes at dusk, and backtracked our wended route through the crevassed lower section of the icefall and on to base camp.

Whiteout and snow the next morning delayed the two-hour hike back to Kahiltna strip until late in the afternoon.

After a relaxed night on the glacier, things picked up the following morning, our eighteenth of the trip, when Ned Gillette's four-man group skied into camp. Having just completed a nineteen day ski tour, circumnavigating

Mt. McKinley, he and Galen Rowell (who was doing an National Geographic article on the trip), decided to try for the summit in one day from Kahiltna Pass. One of them had slipped on his skis while negotiating icy Windy Corner, (see Galen Rowell's guest opinion in Sierra, Nov./Dec. 1977, "On Safety and Wilderness"), and Galen had lost several teeth and was sporting a wide gash, splitting his lip from nose to chin.

The group had just skied back down after some quick first-aid and bandaging, hoping to make contact with a plane to fly Galen off. Not much later, Jim Sharp arrived and flew Galen, Jeff and I off so he could get medical treatment in Anchorage - but that's another story. His, not mine.

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bits and pieces

Tom Hotchkiss and I hiked up Ptarmigan Peak on May 20th to find the registers there in a shambles. The West Summit had a large plastic container without a lid with the only contents being several scraps of paper from recent climbs. On the ground were water-soaked pieces of paper that must have been the remains of the old official register since the typewritten name of Mark Rainery were still visible.

On the East Summit we could find no trace at all of a register. We left a brand new tablet register and container on the West Summit consisting of 2 inch diameter ABS piping with a cast iron head fitting for weight. What we could salvage of the water-soaked papers we packed out for drying. In the future another copy of the original entries needs to be carried up to both peaks in addition to a new register and container for the East Summit.

Greg Higgins

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INDIANHOUSE 25 JUNE 1978

Dan Hourihan and I started the Notch Gully route at 4AM (early for better snow conditions and less rockfall). Drive up Indian Road, park any logical spot and duck quickly into poplar stand with ice axe at ready for dogs. Traverse to the north and cross one gully into stand of large spruce. Continue traversing until you hit the second gully. This is it. Scramble up the scree until you hit the snow then fly. This is a fast route to the summit given the right snow conditions. It took us 5 hours. In the winter this gully is a great place to view an avalanche panoramically. The best time to do this route is late May, early June while there is still snow in the lower portions of the gully. At the notch there is a short jog to the summit over loose rock. Total time : 7 hours, angle of gully : 45-65\*. Special equipment: ice axe, crampons and a rope. Wildlife: Spruce Hen, eagles.

Ours was the thirteenth recorded ascent, second by the Notch Gully route. The first was in June 1959 by Norm and Joe Pichler, Joe Hill and Hansel Metz.

Garnet Roehm

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

My term as president is not over until this fall; however, I am resigning as of this date (June 11, 1978).

There are many reasons, most of them are personal, and therefore I do not wish to discuss them now or in the future. I have thought it over carefully and talked to some friends - all who told me not to resign!- and will not withdraw my resignation.

I do realize that this will throw the Club into confusion, but only for a short time. I will no longer be typing SCREE. Earl Redman has offered but has been sent out of town for the summer. Someone is needed quickly. The next issue of SCREE is to be sent out by about July 12th.

Also, Vice-President LARUE may not be able to take over as president. Someone is needed. The Gala 20th Anniversary picnic on Flattop will not miss an official president, but someone will be needed, especially for the July General Meeting. Anyone interested should contact Valerie LARUE, Dona AGOSTI, or perhaps another officer of the Club.

Paul Denkewalter

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tid bits

Dona Agosti needs people, especially strong climbers, who are willing to carry up the band's equipment for the 20th Anniversary Celebration. Without someone's the instruments will not get up to the top. Please meet at the Ecumenical Center at the corner of O'Malley Road and Hillside Drive, on the way to Flattop at 3 PM Saturday, June 24th.