



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

JUNE 1979

JUNE MEETING

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Wednesday, June 20th at 8:00 p.m. in the Pioneer School House, Third & Eagle, Anchorage, Alaska. Dick Thaler and Dave Klinger will present a mini-slide show on upcoming hikes including Temptation Peak, Emerald Lake, Flattop and Ptarmigan Lake. The main program for the evening will be provided by Tim Neale who will present a slide show on his April 1979 trip to the Wrangell Mountains. Tim had particular interest in the Churchill glacier area where he spent virtually the entire month. Come to hear of Tim's experiences and impressions of this fascinating area.

MINUTES OF MAY GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
Wednesday, May 16, 1979, Pioneer School House, Anchorage

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 p.m. by President Valerie LaRue. The Treasurer's report listed the following: Checking account \$390.37; Savings account \$471.38; Undeposited checks \$15.00; Cash \$66.56; TOTAL \$943.31. Dave Klinger announced details of the first backpacking trip scheduled for May 19-20. Dona Agosti Hiking Chairperson, described hikes and trips scheduled for May and June. President LaRue announced vacancies in two key club positions, Scree Editor and Refreshment Chairman. Any person interested in assuming either of these positions should contact President LaRue or any member of the Board of Directors. Also announced was a slide show describing ascent of Annapurna by an all-woman climbing team. The slide show will be presented on June 21, 1979 at a location to be announced. The mini-slide show was presented by Dave Klinger and centered on the Gull Rock and Chickaloon Trail backpacking trips. Steve Hackett presented the main slide show, describing his experiences climbing in South Central Soviet Union during the summer of 1978. Steve has been a member of the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Climbing Team for the past two years. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. Pierce McIntosh, Treas.

SUMMIT ON ANNAPURNA

MCA will be presenting Vera Komarkova of the American Woman's Himalayan Expedition at Wendler Jr. High, 2905 Lake Otis Parkway on Thursday June 21st at 8:00 p.m. Last October Vera and her climbing partner, Irene Miller, succeeded in becoming the first Americans and the first women to reach the summit of Annapurna. Tragedy struck the expedition when two fellow climbers, attempting to follow Vera and Irene to the summit, fell 1500' to their deaths. Despite the tragic setback, the surviving American women climbers emerged from the experience with renewed determination that women climbers will continue to reach the top.

Vera will relate her history-making, two-month Himalayan climb with a series of breathtaking slides and numerous personal experiences.

Admission is \$2.50 (tickets will be sold at REI) at the June 20th MCA meeting and at the door on the night of the show.

This should be an excellent presentation. See you there!

LARRY SWANSON MEMORIAL FUND

MCA members were recently saddened by the news of Larry Swanson's death. Larry was active in MCA affairs and contributed his time and efforts to Club activities. Funds contributed in memory of Larry will be used to repair MCA Eagle Hut located on the Girdwood-to-Eklutna traverse. When repairs are completed, a plaque in memory of Larry will be placed at hut. MCA wishes to thank all those who have contributed and asks that any additional contributions be sent to the following address: Larry Swanson Memorial Fund - c/o Mountaineering Club of Alaska - Box 2037 - Anchorage, Alaska 99510.

CLIMBING COORDINATOR NEEDED!

MCA is currently looking for a volunteer to coordinate climbs for the club. Anyone interested in organizing one or more climbs should contact Valerie LaRue at 277-7074 or Dick Thaler at 243-5241.

HIKING SCHEDULE

- June 23
Valerie
LaRue
277-7074
- FLATTOP SLEEPOUT - An annual tradition for 21 years. Each hiker is asked to bring a log for the fire. President LaRue will obtain a fire permit. If you've never seen this honest-to-goodness Flattop overlooking Anchorage, then this is your chance to be with a lively group. Slightly steep at the end, but within the capabilities of most hikers. There will be no coordinated departure. Just drive up to the Glen Alps parking lot at your leisure anytime Saturday afternoon and plan to stay overnight, or depart at will. The trail is well-defined. However, remember to walk up the road through the Glen Alps homes and then to the left if you want a shorter trip. Others may prefer walking over to South Fork Campbell Creek Valley and then on up. P.S. Be sure to bring your kites for the kite-flying contest!
- June 30 -
July 1
Dave Klinger
862-5170
- EMERALD LAKE (NEAR BASE OF TIKSHLA) Dave plans to depart from the dog trail behind Chugach Foothills, then up via Chester creek to its headwaters. Those who want only a day hike can return from this point; others may wish to camp at this scenic point overlooking the entire Anchorage-Palmer area, as well as the Alaska Range in the background. From here, those who wish can get an early start to Emerald Lake in the Snowhawk Valley drainage, and also try for Temptation Peak at 5350'. There is about an 1800' altitude gain in 2-1/2 miles on the first portion of this trip.

- July 4
Al Robinson
279-8873
- PORTAGE PASS (Trip #21 in "The Book") You can drive to Portage, put your car on the train and get off in Whittier. Or you can go from Anchorage to Whittier on the train. This trail starts in Whittier and meanders through Portage Pass. Return on the Whittier train later in the day. Unfortunately, a glacier prevents our walking all the way back to Portage.
- July 7-8
Dick Thaler
243-5241
- PTARMIGAN LAKE - This is a beautiful lake hike along Ptarmigan Creek (fishermen take note) which departs from Ptarmigan Campground Mile 23 Seward Highway. Dick knows a campsite about midway along the lake. If you don't mind bushwacking, there are lots of possibilities toward the upper end of the lake and elsewhere. You can return via the upper trail for a change of scenery. Good for kids.
- July 14-15
Bill Moss
(Call Dona Agosti
279-2901)
- KING MOUNTAIN TRAIL - Although there is a cable crossing of Matanuska River just behind King Mountain Lodge (Mile 76? Glenn Highway), it requires some do-it-yourself pulling and you might end up in the middle of the river with no strength to get yourself back. So we have planned to cross the river upstream in rafts and walk up to the trail near King Mountain. This is hunter's territory, but few hikers have been into the area. Moderately difficult.
- July 21-22
Gene Klymko
274-6753(h)
- INDIAN VALLEY - Depart Glen Alps, walk up South Fork Valley then to ridge below Ramp overlooking Ship Lake, thence down into Ship Lake and camp via small lake which can be seen near ridge (or near Ship Lake if crowd is tired); exit via Indian Pass and Indian, or if no one wants to leave a car at Indian, back over Powerline Pass and out.
- July 28-
Aug 5
Dick Tero
(Call Dona Agosti
279-2901)
- KODIAK ISLAND - The trip begins about 45 miles out of Kodiak at Saltery Cove - Ugak Bay, proceeds westward to Mount Glotto (4405') (the second highest peak on the island), and ends near Middle Bay. We will have several beach parties and end the tour with a viewing of "Cry of the Wild Ram" on August 4th. Return to Anchorage on August 5th. Wien's charter rate for 10 persons is \$82.06 round trip. We will leave at 9:30 a.m. Saturday morning. This promises to be a fun trip, complete with scenery, King Crab, and good theatre.
- July 28-29
REED LAKES (Trip #44 in "The Book") LEADER NEEDED!
- Aug 4
OPEN (Suggestions Solicited)
- Aug 11-12
PETERS HILLS - LEADER NEEDED!
- Aug 18-19
GUNSIGHT MOUNTAIN, SQUAW CREEK, BELANGER PASS. Jim Nagan 822-5509 (Tentative)
- Aug 25-26
COLORADO CREEK TO RIDGE. Dona Agosti 279-2901
- Sept 1-3
LOST LAKE - Valérie LaRue 277-7074

CHICKALOON TRAIL - May 26-28 (1979)

The old phrase "from seven to seventy" really applied to this Memorial Weekend outing for 44 hikers. The 7 year old was Blaise Fiedler, son of Francoise and Kurt Fiedler (our Prinz Brau friends who, sadly, will soon leave for Brazil). He negotiated the bogs and jogs of the trail with all the ease of youth. But not far behind him even was the almost 70 year old, actually she was only 69, however, I was not able to ask her for her permission to give her name. The reason was because she was way ahead of me on the trail. So you will just have to take my word for it that we did, indeed, have a wide range of participants on this hike. Others ranged from teenagers to twenties to thirties - and the leader. In alphabetical order: Dona and Tim Agosti; Karen, Nancy, and Tina Balog; Marty Bassett; Anita Blair; Albert Chang; Steve Eckert; Blaise, Francoise, and Kurt Fiedler; Peg Faithful; Jack and Tom Hill; Bob Hume; Jill E. Jardine; Steve Jones; Dave Klinger; Pat Klouda; John Mahoney; Emile, Pierce, and Mike McIntosh; Dawn Merrick; Helen Nienhueser; John Ramey; Linda Reser; Joan Reser; Ron, Howard, and Mike Rhodehamel; Augusta Reimer; Al and Liz Robinson; John and Ron Stanek; John Strasenbugh; Jim Waugaman; Dean Webb; and Ron, Bren, Mat and Joe West.

The group met in the usual Fred Meyer parking lot. In order to get things off to a coordinated start, the leader stood on the hood of her car to give a small speech and concluded with "Gentlemen, start your engines". Which the group did. Just to make sure that there were no latecomers, I waited for a few minutes after everyone had left. A police car came roaring up, drove completely around me with a menacing eye, and then stopped and wrote up a report. Can't you just imagine what was going through his head - a bunch of middle-aged hotrodders were plotting a gumball rally. I must write to Mr. Meyer.

We had a bit of a hassle getting cars back to the Mile 79 trail exit from the Mile 89 Trail entrance, but the initial group left immediately and arrived hours earlier than the trailsweeper. We encountered much more snow and even frozen lakes this year - something we have not had in 4 years past. However, Simpson Flats were dry and beautiful as usual and when the tents were spread out in all directions, you could never have guessed there were so many people there. The only visitor we saw all weekend was a Marlboro man with 15 horses which he was taking to pasture at Bruno Creek, three miles up Big Boulder. He wanted to know how to get there. Believe it or not, very few tenters even knew there had been 15 horses around the campfire while they slept.

The second day was free but not inactive. Four climbers made it to the top of Anthracite Ridge Peak (4600'). Dave Klinger came up from the East Boulder side and the three others, whom I can't name because I lost the sign-out sheet, went up frontwise. Helen Nienhueser, et al, made considerable progress up a valley we call Creek #2 because it is one over from Black Shale Creek. They climbed peaks in that area. Others meandered, and sloshed up Boulder Creek Flats. Those crossing the main channel had reason to call the leader a liar, because it was waist-high this year as compared to sissy jumps in prior years. Another change was encountered on the way out. Blame the beavers. Our carefully built bridge across an unnamed creek just south of the flats was gone. In its place was a 200 foot long, yes I said 200 foot, dam built by you-know-who. It caused a big backup and hikers had to wade. However, we couldn't blame the beavers for the numerous snowbanks during the next couple miles. The 12 mile trip down is still as breathtaking to me on the fourth trip as it was the first time. It passes along a high ridge of the Boulder and I swear it is 1000 feet to the bottom. Then through birch tree forests and many-time views of Castle Mountain and King Mountain. Sawmill Creek was not

as wild and raging as years past which is unexplainable in view of the unusual snow conditions above. Out by 4 p.m. and into 14 cars. The group was exceedingly well-disciplined and this leader was grateful for the cooperation. Thanks gang! - Dona Agosti

THE RUTH AMPHITHEATER (Steven Markiewicz)

On Saturday night, April 28th, Tom Smayda, Lou Butera, Charlie Sassara, Tom Moreau and I were finally on our way north to the Alaska Range for nearly a month of climbing in the Ruth Amphitheater. After seeing a car hit a moose and the northern lights playing in the sky, we arrived in Talkeetna. Sunday was nice and sunny so our pilot, Doug Geeting, flew us to our starting point in the Alaska Range. Flying through the Great Gorge of the Ruth Glacier, with its incredible sheer rock walls was worth the plane fare itself. Then we proceeded through the Gateway and into the vast snowy expanse of the Ruth Amphitheater (Don Sheldon Amphitheater) with its many peaks rising from all sides. This area is overwhelming in its rugged beauty. We felt the awesome isolation of these wild mountains. We made base camp under the shadows of Mts. Dickey, Barille, and the Peasse Range, near Don Sheldon's hexagonal Mt. House. The weather was much milder than we had expected, but we were not complaining. Setting up camp was simple except when my VE-24 blew away as I was digging out the platform. We had to ski after it for about a mile as it headed down the glacier like a huge beach ball. After a thorough cussing out, the tent remained faithfully at its appointed location. The next day everyone headed out on a ski tour to see what was around us and get an idea of the nature of this area. We were promptly informed as a multitude of avalanches came down following the sunrise. Slides were coming down from the Pease Ridge, the Rooster Comb, and the Southeast Ridge of McKinley, as well as from Mt. Barille. We skied to Mt. Huntington before turning back. Wherever Charlie and I went, avalanche danger was readily apparent. We tried to climb a steep slope heading up to Barille and Dickey Peaks but a deep, rumbling crack warned us to back off. We then made two attempts to climb Dickey from Pitkin Pass. The first time we climbed up to the final ice fall but bad weather turned us back. The second time we got to a steep snow slope which led to the easy upper snow slope of Dickey. As I got higher up on this slope, it too was making ominous settling sounds so we retreated once again. Charlie made the descent interesting by falling 25 feet into a crevasse. We ate lunch as he struggled out. Then we skied down the Ruth into the Great Gorge to spend some time. We climbed the Japanese Couloir on Mt. Barille, but unfortunately the expected snow traverse that would take us nicely to the summit ridge was not there. Instead were steep, slabby rocks. We headed to the top of the Couloir which provided some fun climbing, however, a large rock buttress, increasing snow, and darkness stopped our progress. The ski back down the glacier was fast and fun. The next day we sunbathed and ran around in just our booties. We then climbed an unnamed peak on the eastern side of the gorge which Gary Bouchardt had climbed for the first time two days before. It was a pleasant snow climb with one easy pitch of rock. The views were great and the glissade down was wild. Lou flew out on the 17th and the rest of us even headed across the amphitheater to climb Explorer's Peak, supposedly yet unclimbed. It turned out to be another pleasant snow climb. The sunrise that morning on the summit was one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. We could see clearly how impassable the great icefalls guarding Mt. Silverthrone's flank were. We had originally hoped to climb it from this direction. Back at basecamp we tried to climb Barille from the northeast ridge. To get there we had to cross an avalanche gully leading down from the large upper icefall. Car-sized ice blocks were falling daily so reluctantly we changed our plans. Another beautiful sunrise brought

a pink glow to McKinley. The steep slopes on the ridge around Mt. House had become hardpack and excellent for skiing as I discovered during the next two exhilarating days. Often we were alone in these mountains but we were visited by a few climbers. We had a good time relating stories, drinking tea and singing anything from rugby songs to the Wizard of Oz. Doug flew us out on the 23rd of May, having been on the glacier about one month. The Alaska Range is a rugged place that does not hesitate to show its teeth; but we would miss the intense sun shining on the never-ending snow, rock and ice; the incredible contrast of sky and mountains. Flying into Talkeetna we were overwhelmed by Spring. The sweet smells of trees, grass, and earth were quite a change and a welcome one.

 A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

SCREE is the Monthly Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. I would like to remind you that all items for publication must be submitted at the monthly meeting or mailed to my home at S.R. Box 9204 - Eagle River, Alaska 99577 no later than the FIRST OF EACH MONTH to be considered for that month's publication. Your cooperation is appreciated. Marty Bassett, Editor.

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