

SCREE



JUNE 1993

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.
Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Volume 36 Issue 06

JUNE MEETING

Wednesday

June 16, 7:30

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: Jonathan Rose will show slides of traveling through the *French Alps*.

July 10 Mt. Eklutna
Class B. Chugach State Park.
Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069

25 - Aug 8 Hula Hula River
Two-week backbacking trip, with optional non-technical climbing. Brooks Range. Strenuous backpacking with easy rock scrambling on day trips. The route covers

about 90-100 miles from the Peter Schrader Lakes to the Hula Hula to the mouth of Red Sheep Creek on the Chandlar River. Class C. \$750 each from Fairbanks.

Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184

31 - Aug 15 Logan Mountains, NWT, Canada
Backbacking trip to the Vampire Peaks area. *Not to be confused with Mt. Logan.* Charter from Finlayson Lake. \$300 each. Moderate pace for 10 days across alpine terrain and icefields. Will climb several peaks along the route compatible with members' abilities and desires. Class: Glacier Travel. See leader for gear list, etc.
Leader: Dave Logan 243-4887

Sept 11-12 Bird Peak
Class C. Chugach State Park. Third annual attempt to beat the weather.
Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- June 12 Eklutna Lake Bike Trip
Mountain bike along the lake trail.
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184 h
271-6656 w
- 19-20 Flattop Sleepout
Summer solstice tradition. See 55 Ways Trip 31. No leader needed. Class C.
Contact Joel Babb 688-3885.
- 25-26 Williwaw Peak
Hike into Williwaw Lakes Friday, the 25th, camp at the lakes and climb on Saturday. Class C.
Leader: Dennis Morford 522-1179
- 26 Crow Pass - Eagle River
27 miles one way on good trail. Chugach State Park. Class D. Approximately 11 hrs.
Leader: Allan Shayer 344-3280





Schedule Addendum

June 26-27

Alaska Rogaine
Sponsored by the Arctic Orienteering Club. Noon meeting time. Denali Hwy. 30 miles west of Paxson. 12 or 24-hour option. Hayes A-5 Quad. Teams of two. \$40/team (\$65 after June 20). Call Dan Ellsworth 333-5429



TRIP REPORTS



Grand Canyon

by Bill Wakeland

Eight Alaskans and one old desert rat from Arizona did the Royal Arch route in the Grand Canyon, April 20-30, covering 55 miles from 6650 feet to 2100 feet and back to 6650 feet. A couple of days on either end was used to attend to gear, day hikes, doing the tourist thing, and getting to and from Phoenix. It proved to be the toughest of the seven backpacks I've made in the Grand Canyon, and perhaps the most rewarding. The relationships were worth at least as much as the scenery and physical challenge — a really superb bunch of hikers — even if most of us were grossly overloaded. Only the two "mature hikers" had packs anywhere near the proper weight!

Our group included Don Hansen, Fred Kampfer, Bob and Mary Jo Cadieux, Linda White, Sid Moglewer, Jim Sprott, Jim Scherr and me.

On April 20 we drove the 30 miles of jeep trail to the trailhead in our two 4wd vehicles, my Subaru wagon and Sid's VW van. It took 2½ hours and several passenger disembarkations to help push over rocks. From the trailhead we descended 1200 feet to the "Espanade" plateau, all carrying extra water. Some, like Don, Jim Sprott and Fred, carried three to four gallons. I had previously cached three gallons there.

Water proved to be a great unknown and constant problem. The Backcountry Rangers knew of no one who had done this route this year, so we faced two to three days of unknown water supply on the Esplanade before dropping down to known water. We were always thirsty. We needed more than a gallon a day, and it weighs 8.33 pounds per gallon! We found water several times by scouting ahead without packs, but generally we carried a lot more

than proved necessary as a safety measure.

Temperatures ranged from high 20s on the rim to low 90s along the river. Rain is rare, but there are mosquitoes and flies at times. We had four tents and four of us slept in the open or used bivy sacks.

On day 3, after scrambling through a boulder field with no sign of a trail, we descended a beautiful wash of rock carved through millions of years of water wear. We found good water and even took a few soaks in the natural "tubs." Our biggest challenge was ahead.

An impassable "pour-off," or in this case a dry waterfall, stopped us. The poop sheet given to us for this route states: "...a large drop blocks the way. This can be passed on the left side via a trail with some exposed climbing. A belay may be desirable."

Wow, what an understatement! Jim Sprott, our most experienced climber, who carried rope and rigging, went out part way and returned, reporting it was a low 5th class traverse, and that there were no anchor points. He felt he'd be very uneasy doing it with a pack. So, I took a look and was too scared to try it *without* a pack. We decided no way would we expose this group to that risk. It was a long vertical drop below. What a disappointment! We made camp back up the ravine at the last water and were serenaded that night by frogs!

Jim and I spent the rest of that day exploring for an alternate route. We found one, thanks to Jim's perseverance and agility. It was still a tough route, and no more water was found. I agonized over whether to commit to going on, risking more problems, in view of the understated problem traverse, but finally decided we'd go for it.

Next day we got through the alternate route with some short belays and "hand downs" and much scrambling. It proved to be a long, hot day of boulder hopping and pool wading, deep into a descending box canyon of Royal Arch Creek. We had learned to get up at 5:00 a.m. and travel in cooler morning temperatures. This day was long; we didn't stop until close to 5:00 p.m. and several of us were suffering from near heat exhaustion before we found a camping spot, well beyond the last water.

Next day we climbed out onto a plateau and saw the Royal Arch from above, and proceeded to the next known obstacle, a 20-foot rappel. Some precipitous going both above and below was negotiated with some trepidation. And five of us did our first rappel ever! Jim Sprott had all the gear and was assisted by



Fred and Don. He took his time and did a great job instilling confidence in us tyros! Linda was perhaps most reluctant to bail out into space and lean way back to "walk" down the vertical rock wall, but when she hit the ground below, she giggled with joy.

Down at last to the Colorado River, we met our first people, a man and three women, somewhat reluctant to share the only apparent camping place. Jim Sprott and Don scouted up and down the river and found a better place, really neat sandy area with some shade bushes and bathing beach.

Boy how we loved that place, and the first layover day, in spite of being jarred that night by the first of two earthquakes! A short and tough day hike, scrambling down river next day revealed "Elves Chasm," a really gorgeous, green, box canyon with a waterfall. Royal Arch Creek had come alive after we left it. Here there was lots of good, clean water. Some of us didn't even iodine or filter it. The only sour note was when Mary Jo tried to do a good turn and retrieve a piece of clothing from the pool and her camera fell in. But she never lost her good nature.

Jim Scherr, our geologist, amazed Sid, the desert rat, with his knowledge of the canyon; he'd never been there before, but had studied up on it. Sid amazed us all with his sharp looking khaki shirt and pants, sure-footedness, and that damn canteen always dangling from one hand! He and a couple of others didn't use hiking sticks, but most of us found one invaluable. Bob, like Sid, didn't seem to sweat. If near a waterhole, he'd show up with a clean white polo shirt, and even smell good!

The grind up the river to the Bass Trail took two days on the infamous Tonto Plateau, a hot and dry route that even dehydrated Jim Sprott! There was water in only one place, which had fortunately been scouted out in advance by Bob and Jim Scherr.

From a spring low on the Bass Trail, we moved up only a mile or two to another and better spring I'd found, to get in another rest day closer to the rim. Several of us lay low, literally, in the shade of either trees or rock overhangs, "saving up" for the climb on the next day. Fred, Jim Sprott (who did it twice), Don and Linda all hiked down to the river for part of the day (I'd been there years ago), letting the rest of us know what a great place we'd missed.

While holed up, Don spotted a desert ram, and soon there were six, two of which were the most magnificent rams that I have ever seen.

Without much water, we made it up an often very

steep trail to the Esplanade by noon. All of our cached water was still there. We had a last night 1200 feet below the rim, in the junipers, and cool (relatively) night air, with lots of water. Don and I had a last fling, climbing down a wash until we found a bath hole, and Scherr did the same later, only to bang up a knee, our only casualty.

The last day we made it up the rim in a couple of hours, and had lunch at a lodge by noon. We headed for Flagstaff after transferring gear to the rental van and bidding Sid good-bye. Our last evening at Granny's Attic and the Arizona Motel (same place that four of us visited two years ago) was again memorable with drinks, toasts, lots of food and happy memories.

I particularly commend the two lucky ladies for adding so much to this trip, and Jim Sprott for making it work in a couple of places.

New MCA Library Books

- 1) Royal Geographical Society History of World Exploration, Keay.
- 2) Mountain Passages, Bernstein.
- 3) Ascent, Bernstein.
- 4) Life is Meeting, Hunt.
- 5) Feeding the Rat, Alvarez.
- 6) Wierd and Tragic Shores, Loomis.
- 7) Mountains of North America, Beckey.
- 8) The Conquest of Mt. McKinley, Browne.



MINUTES

MAY MEETING

May 19, 1993. Joel Babb called the meeting to order, and had new members introduce themselves.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Money Market - \$4376.01
Checking Acct - 3645.54
Petty Cash - 50.00
Total \$8071.55

Recent expenditures were 121.60 - books, 90.00 - crampons.

COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Several trip leaders described trips they will be leading this summer. See front page Scree.

OLD BUSINESS.

Vin Hoeman Library.

Turn in library books when they are due; many are missing.

Scree.

Paul Berryhill wants help in converting Scree labels to a more modern computer system. He also wants help in doing the mailings.

NEW BUSINESS.

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Old Screens dating back to 1973 were given away to anyone interested. Newly bound issues are in the library.

Information was solicited from Dave Pahlke from anyone who might go from Grizzly Pass to the Glenn Highway via Moose Creek this summer.

Thanks to Tim Kelley for the Yukon Quest slide show.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Hart, Treasurer

MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips.

NON-TECHNICAL: Following are a few standards used to classify non-technical

trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

CLASS A: Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

CLASS B: Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

CLASS C: Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

CLASS D: Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

CLASS E: Hazardous climbing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

TECHNICAL: Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.

GLACIER TRAVEL: Trips requiring roped travel over glaciers. Knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. Basic understanding of ice and snow anchors is also required.

FIFTH CLASS: Trips which involve fifth class climbing. A Basic Mountaineering course or equivalent is required. Knowledge of belay and rappel techniques and placing anchors is required. Climbing difficulty varies widely with each trip.

TRIP PARTICIPANTS have the obligation to acquaint themselves with the nature of the trip and to verify that it is within their capability and experience. Anyone wishing to participate in any trip above CLASS A must have completed one or more trips of the next lower classification, or the equivalent.

Approved by MCA Board, March 1987



Jun 93