



JUNE 1996

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

Volume 39 Issue 06

### JUNE MEETING

Wednesday

June 19th, 7:30

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets  
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: Northeast Ridge of Mt. Natazhat  
& South Ridge of Mt. Saint Elias, Dave Hart

### HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

June 15

#### Mt. Williwaw

Prospect Heights to Near Point to the Campbell Creek. Climb Williwaw's north ridge and descend its south ridge/west face. Complete the loop back to the car by going out the Middle Fork Campbell Creek. Total distance is roughly 20 miles with about 4000' elevation gain. Ice axe and sturdy boots/gaiters required. This is a non-technical Class D trip. Meet 8am Prospect Heights trailhead.

Leader: Dave Hart 274-4423

22-23

#### Flattop Solstice

No leader designated. Traditional overnight on the summit to watch the days get shorter.

22-23

#### Temptation Peak

Western Chugach. Class D.

Leader: Dennis Morford 522-1179

28-30

#### Resurrection Trail

Class C.

Leader: Kathy-Jo Stevens 373-1257

July 6-7

#### Hike to Cabin Site

Hike near south side of Denali to Life Lake. Families July welcome. Three miles one-way. (6 R.T.) Watch or help cabin-building.

Leader: Julia Moore 348-0598

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#### Homicide Peak

Hike in from Glen Alps, climb peak, and continue on to Indian. 12 miles. 2500-foot elevation gain.

Leader: Peter Clifford 338-1729 564-

5688w

July 20 - Aug 3 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Peter Schrader Lakes to Hula-Hula River. Mostly backpacking, with possible climb of Mt. Chamberlin if enough climber-

Going on a MCA Trip? **BRING YOUR CARD!**

Your MCA card shows you signed the waiver. If you can't find it, or don't have one, remove the back page of Scree and fill out the waiver for the trip leader. Thanks.

types show up. Class C. \$400-450 air charter cost per person. Limit 6 or 9 people.  
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184, 271-6656

July 27-28

Lynx Peak

Talkeetnas. Overnight at Reed Lakes. 2500-foot elevation gain. Class C.  
Leader: Mark Flannum 265-4649

Aug 9-13

Talkeetna Hut and Glacier Traverse

Visit Snowbird, Bomber, Mint, Moose Huts. Loop starts at Archangel, ends at Sutton. Crampons needed on the glaciers. Last day is the only long one. You can arrange to go out earlier. Limit 7. Class D.  
Leader: Willy Hersman 265-6405

17-18

Bird Peak and Penguin Peak

Crampons, ice axe, stream shoes, bear proof food cache needed. May hike in Friday evening.  
Leader: Scott Bailey 696-7250

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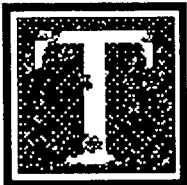
Avalanche and Homicide Peaks

Bike, hike and climb to these Western Chugach peaks from Glen Alps. Class D.  
Leader: Mark Miraglia 338-0705

**TRIP REPORTS**

**Grand Canyon 96**

by Bill Wakeland



This year we tried two shorter hikes, instead of one long one. Hike number one left Lipan Point, on the South Rim some 25 miles east of Grand Canyon Village, on April 22, at about 7400 feet elevation. There were six of us, four old-timers: Don

Hansen, Fred Kampfer, Tisha Roripaugh-Marsh and me, plus two new additions: Doris Curtis and Ed Mulcahy.

It is nine miles to the river on the Tanner trail, with a 4600-foot elevation loss. Being day one with full packs, we elected to carry extra water and camp part way down. A wise choice - it was beautiful up there on the mesa. Darkness fell all at once and then out popped the stars and a quarter moon, with no haze.

Descending to the river next day we noticed a lack of flowers and cactus blooms - not even the ever-present yellow brittle bush, thanks to the dry year. Come to think of it, there had been no snow and ice on the upper trail, as on all the prior hikes.

And the river was blue - it had always been red before, thanks to the muddy water flowing into it upstream from the Little Colorado. Across the river a large survey crew was taking contour measurements of both banks and the river to ascertain the effect of large, pre-planned water releases earlier from Glen Canyon. More sand was evident on some beaches.

That afternoon I rigged up my ancient pack rod and went fishing. Doris went along, since she had never seen a fish caught before! Doris is my witness, I caught and landed a 14-inch rainbow on the very first cast! So we all had fish for dinner.

Next day we moved upstream a few miles to Palisades Creek where we camped for three days in brushy campsites, where it reached 100 degrees by noon. But along the muddy river bank it was 5 to 10 degrees cooler. We had also a pool to swim in. The river (48 degrees) overflowed into it at night, but not in the daytime. We called our retreat "Paradise in Hell."

Our one long day hike was up the Breamer trail some six miles to the Little Colorado. Only Fred, Ed and Doris went all the way. They found the Little Colorado a beautiful turquoise blue, because the water source was apparently springs, not runoff from non-existent rain and snow to the southeast.

After another pleasant day we all returned down river to our "grotto," at the base of the Tanner trail. From there, we took off at 5:00 the next morning for the grueling hike up, carrying enough water to camp out on the mesa. Tisha took off after a few miles to go all the way to her car and head back to her home in California. The rest of us rendezvoused at the mesa site, where we decided to go all the way that day, after dumping some water. Same thing we did last year, only for different reasons!

We hiked up each at his own pace - which left me last, except Ed. When we topped out some ten hours after starting, I was pooped. Don was back in form, the first one out, and naturally elated about his game leg doing so well both down and then up. After showers and a pig-out at Maswik Lodge, we crawled into our "rim" tents and died contentedly.

All of us but Tisha stayed on for hike number two, Havasu Falls, and on April 29th we were joined

by Bob and Mary Jo Cadieux and Margie Schaefer. Next day we took off for Hualapai Hilltop - at the end of the road on the Hualapai Indian Reservation, 185 miles by road west of Grand Canyon Village.

The hike down was 10 miles and 2000 feet elevation loss to the one campground where all hikers must stay - unless they use the lodge in the village. The trail was very popular, with hikers, horses and mules - even a damn helicopter taking photos of one of the pack trains we seemed to stay close to!

Very pretty country again, and quite different. At mile seven we emerged into a larger canyon with turquoise-colored, spring-fed and tree-lined Havasu Creek. At mile eight is the village of Supai, and two miles beyond is Havasu Falls, and the campground.

Boy, what a contrast to the isolation and tight, backcountry control of Grand Canyon National Park! The camp has a reported 400 campsites, most of which were occupied by anything from a single camper to a small mob. It is spread out over a half mile of the creek, on both sides, with a number of outhouses and camp tables, and one busy little pipe spring.

Great weather continued, with a full moon at night - although most of us now had tents for privacy. We took some short hikes, including Havasu, Navajo and Mooney Falls. We also took it easy - several of us were still suffering from the dryness and heat with upper respiratory problems.

I won't try to describe the falls and pools - you must see them - except to note that the water was nice to swim in, and there's a dicey climb down through tunnels, ledges and "stairs" through the limestone to get down Mooney Falls - tends to limit the crowd!

The hike out was downright pleasant for the four of us with daypacks (we hired a mule) and we were all out and on our way to Flagstaff before noon. After the traditional pig-out at Grannies Closet in town, we parted company next morning for our various flight times out of Phoenix and other destinations.

Thanks to a tough bunch of hikers that made the most of some tough situations, we had no serious casualties, and brought back some beautiful photos and tans.

## Dnigi Hut Trip

May 25-27

by Bill Romberg



Despite the short notice, I had as many as eight members interested in an MCA trip to the new Dnigi (Moose) Hut for the Memorial Day weekend. However, the number dwindled daily during the last week due to illness and individual concerns regarding the length/difficulty of the trip. In any case, by the time Saturday rolled around I was down to four participants, which soon became three. The hardy individuals who did show up to partake in the first official MCA trip to the newly installed hut (despite the poor weekend forecast) included the venerable Tom Choate, Dave Storkel and me.

Our plan was to head into the new hut via the Mint Glacier and Grizzly Pass, (a new route for all of us) and we set off in light rain from the Motherlode parking lot around 10 a.m. on Saturday. Six hours later, we arrived at the Mint Hut soaked from the mixture of rain and snow that dogged us all the way in - (climbed the last 700 ft of the chute below the hut in a good blizzard). Given the poor weather and visibility, we decided to spend the evening at the Mint hut, hoping the weather would clear by the next day. Spent the evening drying out gear and selves, learning Storkel's upside-down loft-entry technique, and playing on Staeheli's "mini-roof of terror" with its spinning, forearm pumping, mini-holds - lots of fun, but where's the socket wrench! Just getting ready to turn in around 9:30 when six more wet guests and three wet dogs arrived to liven up the place. Quite a crowd for the night.

Sunday morning dawned beautifully clear and sunny and we were soon heading across the Mint Glacier toward Grizzly Pass (5700'). Picked up Willy Hersman and Neil O'Donnell's tracks along the way (they had gone in the day before) and were glad that we had decided to bring our snowshoes to ply the wet, heavy snow at the upper elevations. Crossed the pass under cloudy skies that spit snow and made our way down the north fork of the small glacier east of the pass - caching ropes, axes, crampons and other heavy gear at the snout to lighten our loads for the descent into Moose Creek valley and the climb up the other side to the hut. The snow became extremely wet and heavy as we descended, and we pushed large volumes of the "wet cement" ahead of us as we slid down some slopes. We notice several recent slab avalanches on the steeper slopes to the south. Down in the valley of Moose Creek hiking was excellent, no



snow, and no head-high vegetation. We found a weather balloon about 2.5 miles from the pass on the NE side of the valley which we left to pick up on our return. Arrived at hut (after some searching) around 4 p.m., six hours and forty minutes after leaving the Mint. Found Willy and Neil as well as Chris Brown and Beth drying out gear at the hut. The second couple had come in from the Motherlode via the pass at the head of Lone Tree gulch in 1.5 days, a route we had contemplated for awhile but decided against for this trip.

According to Dave Storkel, snowmachiners had found the hut late this winter and used it often—a fact that the logbook and a bag of trash confirmed. Judging from the amount of snowmachine tracks, log entries, and the amount of use that occurred in one month of a bad snow winter, persons visiting the hut in winter should expect significant motorized company. Willy and Neil posted some hut rules on the back of the door for future visitors, and we all agreed membership applications were needed to have all users help with maintenance.

Tom, Dave and I spent a few hours resting at the hut, then went out for a short climb of the talus slopes behind the hut—Tom scrambling to the top of a nice pinnacle and Dave and I to a narrow pass overlooking the cirque to the NW of the hut where we found that a wolverine had crossed over and “glissaded” down the 50+ degree slope on the other side. All in all, a nice two-hour round trip scramble under clearing evening skies.

We awoke Monday morning to moderate-heavy snow with several new inches on the ground, said our goodbyes to the others who were heading out via Moose Creek, and left for Grizzly Pass around 9 a.m.. Postholing in the snow-covered boulder field west of the hut was a nightmare and we all banged our shins plunging into concealed holes near rocks. Decided to stay high on the north bench of the valley to make our way back toward the pass, so we left the weather balloon for another trip. Around noon, we had found our cached snowshoes on the moraine 2500' below the pass and were very happy to find the snow in a much firmer state than the previous day. We made quick progress up the snow/glacier slope to the pass despite periods of heavy snow and wind, arriving back at the Mint hut in the same amount of time it took to cross the previous day. Spent an hour refueling and resting our bodies at the hut along with a group of wet teenagers who were totally unprepared for the wintry weather (tennis shoes, cotton shorts and no raingear!). Left the hut around five p.m. to head out to the parking lot and, despite being tired and footsore, made the best of the long hike to the trail-

head arriving around 9:45 p.m.

This particular route to the Dnigi hut would be much more enjoyable as a four-day trip. It would certainly be easier to head out via Moose Creek to the end of Buffalo Mine Rd if one has the time to shuttle a car there—(though later in the summer the valley would be quite brushy and there is no distinct trail). The Grizzly Pass route is certainly more scenic and appealing to the mountaineer, but ultimately, you'll have to decide for yourself. All in all, I wouldn't have changed a thing—thanks Tom and Dave for a great trip!

## Explorer Peak

by Wayne L. Todd



On April 28, Cory and Elena Hinds, and I headed south out of town to find cloudless skies turning to questionable skies. Our trepidation was unfounded as the weather continued to improve as the day progressed. Our destination for the day was Explorer Peak (3,550' Seward D-6, T8N, R3E, S22).

We parked at the trailhead two and a half miles from the Seward Highway on the Portage Glacier Road. We left the car at 10:40 AM and followed the trail west around a marsh. This trail soon intersected the power lines where we forded a moat, then continued east under the power lines until the forest looked thin enough for easy traveling. We headed east into the forest in the direction of Explorer Valley. The lush green moss and other flora growing in the forest was exquisite.

Then we mildly bushwhacked and post-holed for a bit until intersecting the main creek bed. From there we donned skis and continued up the creek gully. The snow was very wet at this elevation and slough avalanches were a concern. We roped up at the toe of the glacier and headed up the right side (west), passing over recent avalanche debris.

Progress was good and steady but I definitely could have done without the ten pound snow blocks that constantly stuck to my skins. Cory and Elena had skin wax, which was effective at keeping the snow from sticking. Even switching leads didn't help and I haven't worked or sweated that hard in a long time (I have since bought skin wax).

As we skied up the glacier we could see the



entire ridge of our ensuing climb. There were numerous incredibly overhung multi-layered monstrous cornices above steep slopes on the ridge. After ascending a steep section below the head of the glacier we took a lunch break. The glacier had a gentle slope from there to the ridge. Skies were near cloudless by then, and we saw a majestic sundog. When looking at the snow field in the direction of the sun, we saw rainbow colored light reflecting in the snow crystals.

We heard some aerial honking and looked up to see a gargantuan flock of Canada Geese flying over one of the huge corniced peaks. Their flight took them directly over us. After skiing across the field, we cached our skis at the base of the ridge. I traveled without skins across the field, but rigorous poling and quick side-stepping was still easier and faster than having snow blocks. Cory and Elena had added sunscreen to the wax on their ski skins which worked even better at keeping snow off.

Cory took the first lead up the ridge, wallowing through the thigh-deep snow. He intentionally pushed a little snow off the south face. We then watched the snow propagate into a very large gray mass which flowed all the way to the bottom of Skookum Valley. The gray flow of the avalanche versus the pristine white of the surrounding snow was quite ominous.

I took the second lead and wallowed onwards until I simultaneously heard a pop and rip sound and felt the snow disappear from under my right foot. An extremely quick jump to the left was a natural reaction. We watched, in awe of nature's power, as the one ton snow block disintegrated down the face. After that, I lead even farther away from the corniced ridge.

There were incredible views of Carpathian, Byron and other peaks around Portage Valley from the ridge. We summited at 5:10 PM into clear skies and no wind, and even more spectacular views. We could see Portage Lake, Prince William Sound, all along Turnagain Arm and an almost infinite number of other peaks begging to be climbed. As an added bonus, we watched a train pass through tunnels far below while we hung out on the summit and enjoyed Czechoslovakian chocolate.

We were relieved that the first peak of the summit ridge was the highest (traveling south to north) as we didn't have much time to go onward. I took an official ABS register but couldn't see the point in leaving it buried in depths of snow where it would probably not be found again. Eventually we had to leave the summit, and had a quick and uneventful jaunt back to the skis with an occasional "Kodak

moment" stop.

We unroped, donned the skis and took off across the field at a fun, quick, but controlled speed. At the steep section of the glacier there was soft powder which made for great skiing (even with my zigzag technique). Once we were on the lower section and in the shade however, the snow was heinous. It was crusty and slick and the small blocks of avalanche debris made it even more difficult to ski. I took endless 'crash and burns' and even the two diehard skiers took some falls. I finally took my skis off and post-holed the last 1000 vertical feet, as I tend to like my knees the way they are. The evening sun cast very pleasant light on the ridge as we descended.

We trekked the creek bed to the power poles and then followed the poles until they intersected the road. From there it was a quick half mile walk down the road back to the car, arriving about 8:30 PM (I would recommend this as an approach route as well, as Elena had suggested from the beginning).

While driving back to Anchorage we continually looked back at our peak on the ridge, of many ridges, of many ranges ... which concluded a very pleasant, exciting and memorable day.

## Journal Entries from the Skinny Hut

by Willy Hersman



Neil O'Donnell and I spent Memorial Day weekend paying a visit to the new hut. As we approached the hut in a wet snowstorm, I could tell it had been visited since construction; the door was open. The snow machine crowd took little time to discover a new destination for their iron pooches. I hope their bag of trash is not typical for us to discover each spring.

Here is a sample of the journal babble from this past winter. Decide for yourself who may be waiting for your ski party when you reach the hut at day's end some winter weekend. If you are hoping to meet a veteran spelling bee champion, forget it.

"Were here snow machining. Engoid the house patality. We were here on a buetfull day. 3 sleds. First people here. Road river from Sutton Alaska. Enjoy this."

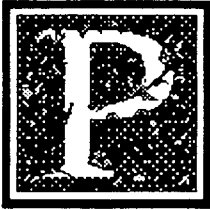
"Rode a wheelie up here on my bravo! Livin the dream! Ride till I die!"

"Bunch of us up here snow machining. Great cabin. It would be nice to see some canned food in here. Maybe next time we head up we could all bring a couple of cans."

"Another beautiful day. Awesome ride. Awesome place. (And I do not use that word lightly)"

## Mt. Natazhat's Northeast Ridge

by Dave Hart



aul, I don't feel so good. I think I'm gonna be sick." The cloudy mountain weather was giving our DeHavilland Beaver a rough ride as we flew over the Nizina River and into the Wrangell Mountains. Frantically, I stripped the zip-lock baggie from our hand-held aviation radio. Just in

time, I positioned the baggie in place as a final wave of nausea surged through my body. Last night's dinner from Chitina's "Burgers and Brew" wasn't quite as I remembered it.

The Wrangell and Saint Elias Mountains of southeast Alaska are two of the most rugged and remote mountain ranges in North America. They lie within America's largest national park, the 13 million acre Wrangell - Saint Elias National Park. Combined with Canada's adjacent Kluane National Park, over 18 million acres of unspoiled mountain wilderness present a lifetime of climbing objectives for both the expedition and alpine mountaineer. Sixteen of Alaska's twenty tallest mountains lie within the Park boundary. In addition, the Saint Elias Mountains are the highest coastal range in the world and have the largest concentration of peaks over 14,500 feet in North America.

Most first-time climbers to the area will attempt one of the Park's larger peaks such as Mounts Saint Elias, Blackburn, Sanford or Bona. These, and some of the ten other peaks over 14,000 feet may see several attempts each summer. However, if solitude is more important than altitude, one can simply choose a smaller peak and enjoy a true wilderness experience. For those interested in the unknown, countless summits below 10,000 feet have yet to see a first ascent. Or for those with loftier goals, moderate to difficult unclimbed lines still remain on the larger peaks, as well.

Our goal was Mt. Natazhat (13,435 feet, 4,095m). First climbed on June 18, 1913, the peak had survived eighty-three years before our second ascent in April 1996.

Canadian surveyor Frederick Lambart, of the joint US - Canada International Boundary Survey, led the first ascent up the gentle southern slopes from the Klutlan Glacier. The 1915 Canadian Alpine Journal, pages 1-10, chronicles their first ascent. From 1907-1913, the Boundary Survey mapped and surveyed the 650 mile Alaska - Canada border from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Alaska. When they began their project, the border existed on paper only, yet it traversed through some of the most rugged wilderness remaining in North America. As the years passed, the border was cleared, surveyed and then marked with permanent monuments every three miles. The exception to this was the heavily glaciated terrain immediately south of Mt. Natazhat and north of Mt. Saint Elias. This uninhabitable 85 mile stretch of mountains and glaciers allowed for only three locations suitable for their permanent boundary markers.

During his successful 1913 ascent of Mt. Natazhat, Lambart was hoping to link the north and south edges of this "no-man's land" using survey equipment he carried to the summit. Unfortunately, poor weather prevented this, and they had to console themselves with the first ascent of Mt. Natazhat. Two miles east of Mt. Natazhat lay Mt. Riggs (11,783'). This peak was named in honor of Lambart's American counterpart, Thomas Riggs, Jr., Chief of the US section of the Boundary Survey from 1907-1913. An engineer by education, he took great pride in having created "the straightest of the world's surveyed lines." Riggs, an honorary member of the American Alpine Club, organized the first recorded attempt to climb Mt. Natazhat in 1909 to aid his surveying efforts. However, in August of that year, his men were turned back from their southern attempt by an early fall storm. Four years later, Lambart's party succeeded in making the prized first ascent. Riggs went on to become Governor of the Alaska Territory from 1918-1921. After its 1913 ascent, Mt. Natazhat's remote location and relatively small stature likely prevented future attempts for the next thirty-eight years.

During the summer of 1951, a Stanford University trio spent five weeks on the 55 mile long Klutlan Glacier making first ascents of Mounts Bear, Churchill and Jordan, and an early ascent of Mt. Bona. Their southern attempt on Mt. Natazhat was thwarted by the loss of their gear sled into a Klutlan Glacier crevasse. The 1952 American Alpine Journal, pages 240-249, summarizes their 53 day wilderness expedition. After this 1951 attempt, Natazhat likely did not see any suitors until 1995, when Anchorage climbers Harry Hunt and Danny Kost were the first to attempt its spectacular Northeast Ridge. Over the years, Danny has spent hundreds of hours researching unclimbed peaks and routes in the Wrangell and Saint Elias Mountains. He knew that Natazhat's Northeast Ridge was a gem. When Harry visited Boston in 1994, Danny suggested that he meet with Bradford Washburn, of the Boston



Museum of Science, to discuss the feasibility of this route. Over the last 60 years, Washburn has photographed and cataloged every major mountain in Alaska. Washburn's extensive library of black and white prints contains a wealth of route information on Alaskan peaks. After Harry returned to Anchorage, he and Danny agreed to try the Northeast Ridge the following summer. They made it to almost 10,000 feet before illness forced them to retreat. Undaunted, they made plans to return the following Spring. Unfortunately, work commitments prevented Danny from rejoining Harry. Instead, Harry recruited fellow Anchorage climbers Paul Barry, Dave Lucey and me to join him for a second attempt at this virgin line in April 1996.

Chitina (pop. 75) is located at the western boundary of the Park, and many trips into the Wrangell - Saint Elias Mountains begin there. Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters has over 18,000 hours of mountain flying time, and is the premier mountain bush pilot of the region. Not long after sunrise on April 6, Claus met the four of us at Chitina's gravel airstrip. Two hours later, we were standing on a glacier amidst a jumble of packs and duffel bags as the distinctive drone of Claus' orange Beaver disappeared behind a ridge. I, for one, was glad to return to solid ground. For the next ten days, the only reminder of the outside world was an occasional jet airliner cruising overhead at 35,000 feet.

On the flight in, we finally caught a glimpse through the clouds of our objective. Natazhat's Northeast Ridge presents a striking knife-edge rising over 7,000 feet from the gentle tundra below. Washburn's black and white print "E. Face of Mt. Natazhat - #554" published in the 1944 AAJ (page 199) highlights this classic snow and ice route in its entirety. Given this photo, it is surprising that Harry and Danny were the first to attempt this impressive line eleven months earlier. Interestingly, this interior region of the Wrangell Mountains receives substantially less snow than the infamous coastal Saint Elias Range, only eighty miles to our south. As a result, and certainly to our benefit, our route would not be plagued by cornices or deep snow. Our base camp was situated on a small pocket glacier at 7,600 feet near the base of the Northeast Ridge.

Between us and the summit lay four and a half miles of narrow and, at times, knife-edged ridge. In addition, points 9150 and 9564 had to be climbed before the final 4,000 foot summit ridge could be attempted. This final one and a half miles was still unknown terrain, as Harry and Danny had turned around just below there. Climbing alpine style, Harry felt that the route could be completed in as little as six days, placing three camps along the ridge. The unknown technical terrain above 10,000 feet encouraged us to carry as little weight as possible. We did resign ourselves, though, to bring 500 feet of fixed line in case the going got tough. "OK. Six days of food and eight of fuel, is that right?" With everyone in agreement,

we loaded our packs and crossed our fingers, hoping the next week would be kind to us. Just before we left, I began having second thoughts. I couldn't bring myself to knowingly begin a climb in unsettled weather without any food reserves, so I tossed in a couple extra food bags and gas canisters. The extra weight was worth the peace of mind I now had.

Within two hours of Claus' departure, we started up the route. An hour of hiking along a snow free ridge provided a good warm-up before we roped up to tackle point 9150. Although not technically difficult, an occasional crevasse warranted this precaution. Relatively straight-forward ridge walking found us up and over point 9150 by early afternoon. An hour later we had traversed some rock gendarmes on their left, and had arrived at our first campsite by 5:00 PM. We placed Camp 1 at 8,800 feet in the saddle between points 9150 and 9564.

"Hey Paul... David... Are you guys awake in there?" Harry shouted from the other tent. It was 1:00 AM, the winds were gusting to about 40 mph and sleeping was difficult, even with earplugs. Last evening, we had neglected to build snow walls around our small bivi tents. Now we were paying for it. Harry and Paul drew the short straws and spent a couple of hours reinforcing our camp by moonlight. Dave and I knew we were on deck for the next midnight storm shift, but to our delight we were never called upon for the duration of the trip! Our second day on the route, Easter Sunday, presented a bit more exposure and technical difficulty. Our ski poles were replaced by two ice axes each. We would now begin climbing with either running or pitched belays protecting the steeper sections. Our gear racks consisted of three pickets, six ice screws and ten runners per rope team. In retrospect, this was adequate, although two fewer screws would have sufficed due to the snowy conditions we encountered.

Through unsettled weather, we climbed over point 9564. A few crevasses required some fancy footwork, and a couple of small snow steps necessitated pickets for protection. The descent to the col on the south side of point 9564 was straightforward with the exception of a few crevasses. Just beyond the col, we reached our site for Camp 2 at 9,300 feet after five hours of climbing. With point 9564 behind us, the following afternoon would find us on virgin terrain and what was to be the crux of the route. An hour beyond our Camp 2 we could see a prominent crevasse splitting the ridge. We were looking forward to reaching this milestone, as this is where Harry and Danny had turned around a year earlier. While Harry and I set up Camp 2, Dave and Paul explored a route to this crevasse to aid our climb the following morning.

"It's gonna be a lot of work. It looks pretty hair-ball," Paul commented after he and Dave returned from their reconnaissance two hours later. I wasn't really sure



what to expect, but I knew that our third day would prove to be exciting. "How's it look outside, Harry?" I asked. "Great. Sunny and clear. If you guys would get out of bed, you could see for yourselves!" Our third morning found the weather finally changing for the better. Night-time lows still hovered around minus 10 F, but the sunshine and calm winds would make for comfortable climbing during the day.

As was becoming our habit, we didn't break camp until 11:00 AM. An hour later, we reached the massive crevasse, beyond which no one had ever climbed. From this point on, we would not benefit from Harry and Danny's prior attempt on the route. Upon reaching the crevasse, we found that it ran perpendicular to the ridge crest, preventing all forward travel. The only safe passage was to down-climb left off the ridge proper along the edge of the crevasse for eighty feet, to a point where a snow bridge spanned the gap. Once across this bridge, an eighty foot climb back up along the opposite edge of the crevasse rejoined our route. For the next five hours, every step was hard earned. We eased our way up the narrow crest, using both running belays and pitched belays as we climbed. One or two ice screws or pickets on each pitch provided relatively secure anchors for this airy climbing.

Draping our fifty meter ropes on alternating sides of the knife edge, where possible, also acted as running belay anchors. Frequently, we would find ourselves traversing on front points on one side of the ridge with our arms draped over the crest, plunging the shafts of our axes into the opposite side as a self belay. The hard snow conditions we experienced made for secure, albeit exposed, climbing. Surprisingly, every time we came to an intimidating section, the solid snow or ice made it easier than expected. Unconsolidated powder would have certainly slowed us down.

To be continued ...

## ADZE



### Lost

Petzl headlamp. At Hans' Hut on May 17. Call Dave 274-4423.

## MINUTES

### MAY MEETING

Three visitors introduced themselves. Total attendance was about 50.

#### TREASURY REPORT

Money Market:	3922.27
Checking:	2775.15
Petty cash:	<u>72.00</u>
Total in treasury:	\$6769.42
Treasurer Report	

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### *Hiking & Climbing.*

Lot of trips planned. Trip leaders described upcoming trips. **James Larabee** announced the May 4-5 Glacier Travel/Rescue was very successful.

##### *History.*

It was announced that the Scree history research project was going very well. Half of the Screes (19 years worth) have been reviewed and rest are expected by the end of May.

##### *Parks Advisory.*

Chair **Scott Bailey** announced there may be an issue with the Eagle River Greenbelt and possible trails. He also announced the club could pursue a \$15,000 grant for trails. This was deferred to the MCA Executive Committee.

##### *Huts.*

Chairperson **Mark Miraglia** requested members visiting huts to take photos showing the condition of the hut. Hut status: Pichler needs minor repairs; Bomber supplies are scheduled to be hauled in; and Mint needs an outhouse.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

MCA President congratulated clear-weather **Dave Hart** — apparently clear weather everyday on the trip! — on summiting **Mt. St. Elias**.

**Karen Cafmeyer** presented a great slide show of a family outing on the Continental Divide in Colorado. Thanks Karen!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mark Fouts