

SCORES

Kenneth Wilson, Editor
155 8th Avenue, Anchorage
4-7335

Mountaineering Club of Alaska
Box 2037
Anchorage
July 1962

MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 24

The Mountaineering Club will meet on Tuesday, July 24th at McHugh Park at 6 p.m. for a picnic. McHugh Park is a Campground approximately 15-17 miles south of Anchorage on the Seward Highway. Each is responsible for his own supper, service and beverage.

CLIMBING SCHEDULE:

- July 21-22 Exploration of Eklutna Glacier & Climb of Peak in Area
Leader: Rod Wilson - BR 4-7833
- August 4-5 Climb of most promising peak found during exploration of Eagle River & Eklutna areas
Leader: G. Erickson - BR 4-2234
- August 18-19 Rock climb in Talkeetnas (possibly Granite Peak)
Leader: B. Davis - FE 3-4002
- September 1-2-3 Open for Major Climb

HIKING SCHEDULE:

Anybody to lead or participate in a Hike any Saturday or Sunday, or weekend type if at least 3 others are interested. Call Marguerite St. Palley, SK 3-2330 evenings 6-7:30; 10-11 p.m. Let's get the hikers back into action!

August 4-5: Hartmut Pluntke would like to walk over the pass above Independence Mine and into Willow.

Like other babies without crampons or a rucksack, Michael Peter, son of Helga and Peter Berg at 1:46 a.m. on July 5th.

Marathon by Scott Hamilton

("This race is nothing but 'instant mountaineering'" - Howard A. Schuck)
The marathon is divided into three parts, as every school boy knows, but we didn't know Mount Marathon was divided into four, requiring postures of a Caribou, Chimpanzee, Mountain Goat, and a swivel-hipped Olympic walker. A mechanical analogy might be First, Second, Third, and Reverse-drive, with Reverse or Neutral unthinkable and un-MCA. "Aw schucks, there's nothing to it", said Howard A. Schuck, and we took his word when we flung down the challenge to the Olympic Biathlon boys while they were far far away in Scandinavia trying to whip the skis off the backs of the Europeans. In instigating a team competition for the first time since 1915, we excluded a 5-man alpinist team to fade into a rainbow of Biathlon, Army, Navy, Air Force, Harvard University, and other teams. On the appointed day, besides individual entries, there was on one hand a long line of 12 Olympic Biathlon boys in yellow shirts beneath "USA" blue parka suits, trained by Sven Johansson daily for two weeks on the mountain, and there were Charles Garringer, Clifford Ellis, Scott Hamilton, Vin Hoeman and Hartmund Pluntke wearing MCA colors (these shirts hand-sewn by the Club's Betsy Ross, Lois Willard). Among the heroes of the Club were Helga Bading (who held off her arriving baby until after the race was over), and Gwynn Wilson who served as an official in the review stand replacing the acting Dean Mr. Davis, who was acting elsewhere.

As July 4th approached, it was with the greatest difficulty that there was any team at all, let alone one properly trained in condition, and it was like shifting sands. With Billman disqualified (age), Dick Mize displaced (Colorado), and other prospects disqualified (out of condition), we were in trouble. Charles Garringer of the Fire Control Department, drafted and in a crash program of daily training lost 15 lbs. and whipped into shape on the cross-country courses. Hartmund Pluntke, the "lion of Garmisch", recovered from his illness in time to compete on the team. Clifford Ellis, who had interrupted his training to acquire a beautiful wife and three handsome little boys a month before the race, was not able to handle the mountain too. John Vincent Hoeman, our spartan connoisseur of fireweed sprouts, was the "white hope" to beat Sven Johansson, 6-time winner and record holder. He didn't want to miss a single weekend of climbing training and even spent a night on the summit for luck. Yours truly, came back two days before the race from Texas' Modern Pentathlon Center feeling "tres ancien" after a 3-day 3-night Greyhound Bus ride from San Antonio to Seattle. We had expected a pre-race snack of fireweed sprouts, but the cats were served to us dark horses at the home of Eldon Jergens.

At the pistol shot, Yours truly had no difficulty being the second runner to reach the top of the mountain, but then the gruelling second phase began. The sound of shifting rocks was deafening as human beings were on all fours on the forested slope, grasping for roots, grass, or limb (human or otherwise) in the fight upwards through tall grass on a 45-degree slope. A "Missing Link" would have out-paced us all on this tiny trail. At that point the heavily trained yellow-shirts began to move ahead, shouting "Track" (athletic slang for "let me pass you, slow-poke"). One-third up the mountain, a pair of hands clasped at my waist, and I was gently moved to one side as Sven Johansson rushed past. This was the first sunny July 4th in ten years of races, but the heat did not help the speed.

After 30 minutes, I looked behind to see Chuck Garringer right behind further down and shouted epithets to encourage him to move faster. Then, far to the left on a scree slope was a single figure in white. We thought, "that's what Vin might be doing", and it was he, popping like a piston in his new Austrian climbing shoes. Unfortunately, further down, Cliff Ellis and Hartmann had followed this difficult route but without benefit of Vin's leg muscles or shoes. At one point below the summit Hoeman, Hamilton, and Garringer were in direct line, but Vin pulled ahead, and eventually overtook Denver University's star riler, Steve Matthews. Chuck and I reached the summit marker together but did not know where over the precipice to drop and go separated to look, and I went too far to one side, losing precious minutes or so returning. The Biathlon boys specialized in speed work going down, and their two weeks of practice paid off.

On the descent, where one plunges haphazardly down the scree slope, the strain on the knees is great, and several runners fell. Jim Nelson even broke a toe. Along the way Emil Rokita and David DeVoe were seen taking photographs. Down in the gully where one turns right, I went left and had to climb down a 15' cliff the hard way. Cliff Ellis paused in the race to help a lady who lost her balance and was about to fall, as MCA men are always gallant gentlemen, putting sportsmanship before victory. Chuck Garringer rasied a ruckus, however, by disregarding Seward ladies' gardens and going "as the crow flies" through backyards. Upon reaching the flat land again, one finds his legs have turned to rubber, and it is with only the most grotesque of motions that one shifts to "over-drive" for the last 3/4 mile sprint (?) to the tape and the cheering thousands. The police car escort down mainstreet for the final sprint did not alleviate the pain of sand and gravel under the instep in my Finnish marathon shoes. IT WAS A GRIND, whatever else might be said. To paraphrase the Japanese expression about Fujiyama, "He who fails to run Mount Marathon once is a fool, but he who runs it twice is a bigger fool". Yet, some of us will do it again next July 4th (as we matter in Brooklynese, "We wuz robbed. Wait till next year when Billman will be a MAN).

TIRED PROFESSIONAL MEN'S OUTING

by Rod Wilson

The Tired Professional Men's Outing to Carpathian Peak, a 6100 foot mountain near Portage Glacier, occurred July 6-8, 1962. Paul Crews, engineer, Bill Davis, dean, Rod Wilson, physician, and John Dillman, Paul Crews, Jr. and David Crews, porters, comprised the party. We left the car late in the afternoon on July 6 just beyond the turnoff of the Portage Glacier Road from the Seward Highway (mile 63) and walked the railroad tracks toward Seward to mile 60, then plunging off the tracks east into stream beds and brush on the floor of the first valley south of Portage Glacier valley. Carpathian Peak rose at the head of this valley above a small glacier, which John Dillman says is named "Skookum Glacier." The peak had been climbed a few years ago for the first time by Kieth Hart, Mat Mietsch, and a third man, but from the Portage Glacier side.

The valley was rough going, even though a route had been picked (more or less) by Paul from the air that morning. After about 3 miles of brush and water we found ourselves on the glacier moraine and made our only camp on the edge of the ice. The next morning July 7 was cloudy and spitting raindrops, but we set out up the glacier moraine with light packs containing only emergency gear. The glacier was longer than it appeared. After an estimated 4 miles of easy going unroped, we roped up two-by-two to pick and jump our way up the steep ice fall at the head of the glacier, which rose approximately 2000 feet above us to a high pass. We placed trail markers in this area for safety in returning, and made our way up with crampons. This ice fall went very well. At the top a convenient tongue of snow and ice led to the left to the ridge we were seeking which led to the peak, another 1500 feet, estimated, above us.

This ridge proved to be quite an experience for most of us. It was knife-edged, plunging off 1000-3000 feet on either side, and consisted of a series of steep hummocks of soft snow, each hummock seemingly steeper than the last. With Paul leading the way (as usual), up we went. By 6:30 p.m. we still had about 200 feet and 30-40 minutes to go. With lowering skies, diminishing light, fatigue and wet feet upon us, discretion superceded valor, and we turned back, cautiously belaying each other down the snow ridge. We finally used a few rocky portions off to the sides in descending. These pitches went better and should be used in ascending by the next party trying this exciting route. Down we went, easily again, thru the ice fall, arriving on the flatter lower glacier at 11:00 p.m. Then the long slog back to camp, arriving at 1:00 a.m., July 8, after 16 hours on the way, and approximately 5000 feet climbed. We were too tired and wet to eat, but made up for it in the morning with course after course of Star-Lite and other delicacies. We even had a fire on the edge of the glacier, from wood rolling off the nearby mountain side.

In cloudy though drier weather than on our climb day, we picked our way, down the valley using streams for highways much more than brush this time. We made it back to the tracks and to the car in about 4 hours this time.

Two and one-half days is too short a time for this climb. Only one camp is necessary but it should be placed at the foot of the ice-fall, which is about 2500 foot elevation and about 10 miles from the Seward Highway.

GUNSIGHT MTN. 6450' May 26th

by Vin Hoeman

Late the afternoon of Saturday 26 May, I made a speedy ascent of Gunsight Mtn. in perfect weather. I left my car by Glenn Highway at about 2800' elevation and less than two hours later was atop the nearest prong of the "sight", which surprisingly enough is the highest.

used an hour descending, but took my time collecting some specimens. The route up the ridge east of Glacial Fan Creek is a very easy one, and this mountain is the highest anywhere near Anchorage that can be climbed so easily and in so short a time. Still it does not seem to have been climbed much, if at all, since a survey crew put a flag standard on a subsummit 100 feet south of the top several years ago.

SUICIDE PEAKS 5065 and 5005 May 30th by Vin Hoeman

Impossible! I'll bet you can't do it." was what Helga Bading said at the last MCA meeting when I mentioned the possibility of climbing Suicide Peak in a 'long evening' to avoid missing a day of work or wasting a weekend on such an easy climb. Besides being a challenge, it made me wary, so when Memorial Day came along I got Scott Hamilton to go with me to see what kind of time we could make up the Suicides. We started from Turnagain Arm at Falls Creek at 0635, but Scott wasn't feeling very well and soon decided to go back and wait for me. I made my way through the rest of the brush to the ridge west of Falls Peak, and on one of the summits along this ridge, 3960 I believe, I found an ancient moose antler propped up in a small cairn. A few days later I talked to Dave DeVoe, who says he was to that summit in 1955 and the antler was there then. I could have made South Suicide Peak in under 4 hours because I was nearly on top at 1030, but the ridge leading away to the pass between the peaks took off there so I went down it to climb the higher North Suicide Peak first arriving on top at 1210. I left a C-ration can register there and recrossed the pass to hit the top of South Suicide at 1330 hours, then I slipped off along the ridge separating Rainbow Creek from Rabbit and McHugh Creeks to point 435 and on down Rainbow to the Seward Highway from there. I took my time on this descent and walking back to the car observed wildlife, thus the trip was not complete till 1630 hours, a rather 'long evening'.

GRAND MTN. ON KODIAK 2420' June 3 by Vin Hoeman

Using the opportunity of a long weekend to go to Kodiak, I spent part of one day climbing a mountain, the most spectacular looking one in the Chiniak Bay area of the northeastern corner of the island. Not very much of a hill, you will say looking at the 2420' summit elevation, but it's the conditions of the ascent that make a mountain easy or difficult. Hitchhiked all the way around this one to the end of the road on Anton Larson Bay and walked from there climbing up the north ridge of Pyramid. The brush was almost entirely almonberry, whose thickets of dead stems made the way nearly impenetrable some places, but was less thick above 1000' elevation. In the snow beneath the final summit block I found fresh tracks of the largest carnivore on earth, the Kodiak brown bear, and I hoped I wasn't looking for "carne". The summit was unmarked save for letters in pebbles spelling "KODIAK CHRISTIAN CENTER". The only other Kodiak mountaineering I heard about was my wife's friend, Mairiis Kilcher's ascent of Mt. Barometer, 2506' on 31 May. I traversed right across Pyramid down the south ridge.

EYERS PEAK 6119' June 24th by Vin Hoeman

The mountains hid their tops in the clouds this weekend, but Sunday I decided to have a look at this high peak just north of the Knik River overlooking Palmer anyway. Half a mile from the Lazy Mtn. Rd. I took a right and drove 1.8 miles more to park on the side of Lazy Mtn. at about 650' elevation. A trail through the tall grass lead steeply up the ridge and in an hour and a quarter I was atop 3720' Lazy Mtn. There are many humps and drops on the ridge from there to Eyers Peak, but it is nowhere difficult. The last 1400' or so is fairly steep granitic talus, and the top is a pleasing one marked by a small cairn and evidence of at least four previous ascents by Palmer people, the earliest dated one by Dick Miller on 17, 1959, the most recent May 5 of this year. I put all these together in a bottle which I left on the cairn. It had taken me 3 hours to cross from Lazy Mtn. to Eyers Peak and it took me nearly as long to return. I saw a little bear and a big bear up a Sitka spruce tree, but was more interested in half a dozen wheatears, an uncommon robin-like bird that migrated from India to Alaska each year.

TRIP TO GIRDWOOD MINE June 24 by Marguerite St. Palley

Today, June 24, Betty Clement, Hank Thielsen, Ed Curtis and the writer set off to explore the mining area at Girdwood. At one time it was possible to go right up to the old mining area, but there are now places where the road has been washed out, landslides and mudslides, which makes it impossible to drive. However, it is a pleasant walk of about 3 miles. The trail is an uphill grade, not too steep, and in places snow had drifted across the road. The scenery is impressive. Ed had considerable knowledge of the area and the early mining days which added a great deal of interest to our trip. According to Ed, there is still a lot of good mining ore, particularly silver, for those willing to put in the time, effort and expense. However, it was certainly amazing what people went through to create a mining community, with all the equipment necessary to draw the ore from the rock, without the elaborate machinery we have today. Those oldtimers must have been a rugged group. We lunched at the old mine and then some of us continued on up the Old Mail Trail which is still in good condition. At Jewel Lake, which was still partially frozen over, we could see Crow where the Trail goes on toward Eagle River. In this area, the MCA cabin is located but we didn't see it.