

SCREE

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Mountaineering Club of Alaska
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MEETING, TUESDAY, AUGUST 28

The Club will meet at the Willow Park Recreation Hall (9th and Fairbanks) on Tuesday, August 28th at 7:30 p.m. The program will be slides. It is hoped that these will be the combined slides of Bob Goodwin and Jon Gardey from the two Mt. Russell expeditions. Jon Gardey will be the narrator, if this is the program, and the Mountaineers have enjoyed in the past the chronological sequence of the slides and the pertinent and witty comments of Jon.

HIBING AND HIKING SCHEDULE:

Since Labor Day Weekend - September 1-2-3 - is a relatively long span of time, some major endeavor on the part of the Club will be attempted. The details will be available at the August 28th meeting. For hikers, Marguerite St. Palley (SK 3-2330 evenings 6-7:30 p.m. and 10-11 p.m.) will lead a group into the Upper Russian Lakes over this weekend. This is a long drive and a long though not difficult hike. It will probably take the three day weekend to accomplish comfortably. Marguerite welcomes anyone who would like to try it.

MOUNT MARATHON POST-MORTEM

by g.w.

"Mt. Marathon Day", known Outside as Independence Day, was clear and beautiful. For those of us not attempting the scaling of the mount, it was a leisurely morning (frankly there is no choice on the Alaska RR which takes some four hours to travel 113 miles). Upon arrival in Seward, the course was paced by Rod Wilson who walked up in 1 hour and 45 min. and descended in about 40 minutes. The trail was steep and the view on this superb day tremendous according to this first hand report.

At 2 p.m. after numerous preliminaries, the 30 contestants for the race up Mt. Marathon lined up. Off with the shot of a gun, they sped up the street - Vin Hoeman in the lead. An unknown member of the audience in a distinctly feminine voice was heard to shout: "You'd better save some of that for the end." This did not deter the vincible Vin. Quickly the word disappeared around a corner and all settled into suspenseful waitfulness.

After some 20 minutes the more alert and clear-sighted began to point out that the advanced runners were breaking onto the trail visible at the timberline. Subsequently those of us not so sharp-eyed could watch the struggle up a ridge through the scree as the runners wiled to the top. Once up, the descent was marked by great sweeps of dust as the runners leaped down the mountainside.

First to the tape in 52 min. 33.7 sec., escorted as were all the runners by the Seward police car whose flashing red light looked almost attractive under the circumstance, was Earl Hohlin of the Biathlon #2 team. Since the Biathlon boys had been running up and down the mount for the past two weeks, their clean sweep of the first 8 places was not surprising.

When the dust cleared it was noted that Sven Johanson had managed, in such a pungent and well-trained (by him) competition, to take 6th. (59 min. 26 sec.) That the first mountaineer over the line was - guess? - yes! - Vin - 11th - 64:21! Chuck Garinger, Scott Hamilton and Clifford Ellis came in one, two and three - numbers 18 (70:47), 19 (73:08) and 20 (75:04). But as is often the case the race is not won by the swift but by the zest for the event, and there as the train tooted a warning whistle down the street bathed in a cheerful and properly happy smile pounded Hartmut. Having risen from a sick bed to run, his obvious pleasure at finishing a gruelling event made the day.

WEST ASCENT OF WOLCOT MTN., 6250

by Vin Hoeman

Monday July 22nd it was not raining on the eastern part of the Kenai Peninsula, which is a pretty unusual circumstance, especially in view of the fact that at seven in the morning I was setting out to climb one of the mountains of that area. I'd parked at the Snow River bridge at the upper end of Kenai Lake, elevation 450 and about 17 miles by highway from Seward. My objective was Wolcot Mountain, which the map shows as having two points above the 6200 contour, making it the highest named mountain on the Kenai Peninsula, and certainly the highest accessible by road for a one-day climb.

In spite of the mostly clear sky, I got plenty wet as I battled my way up the trail-slope through dew-laden grass taller than my head. The forest with its undergrowth of devil's club was better, and even the alder thickets were preferable to this tall grass. I had to negotiate a lot of the latter anyway before I reached the zone of lower alpine vegetation. On the barren ridge at 4500 feet elevation overlooking a sizeable glacier not shown on the map at the head of a tributary of Victor Creek, I found a tiny well-equipped relay station for Marathon Television Co. of Seward. It would make a good shelter in a storm, but is too small to lie down inside. Above that point I found no sign of man whatsoever. The ridge was long and steep, but presented no real difficulties and none of the subsummits, nor the final highest one showed any sign of having been visited before. I got on top by 11:30, built a cairn and left a registry paper in a honey-jar and C-ration jar. The trip down took three hours. I saw no big game, but there was fresh sheep sign and two kinds of ptarmigan as well as rosy finches and pipits.

KUTNA GLACIER

by Dale Hagen

The military is training mountain troops at a tent camp on the far end of Lake Kutna and has extended the road around the lake and up the valley. This has made Kutna Glacier the most accessible in the area. It is now only a brief walk from the road to the glacial ice and the turbulent stream disgoring from underneath.

Three persons took part in the Eklutna Glacier exploration, which seems a small number for something this interesting. The group was led by Rod Wilson, and included Dave Kimball an experienced climber from Colorado, and Dale Hagen a new member to the Club. Perhaps a lack of equipment limited participation, crampons and ice axes were needed and each climber carried a light pack even though only one day on the glacier was anticipated. It is better to be prepared. Who remembers the Alaska Sportsman article last year concerning the ordeal of two fellows who fell into a crevasse on Mendenhall Glacier?

Eklutna Glacier is an easy grade all the way to the ice field, and although it is deeply fissured as it comes down the canyon, it is possible never-the-less to travel its entire length without getting off of level ice. Glaciers are singularly beautiful, especially this time of year when at the lower altitudes they are mostly free of snow. The surface of the ice is coarsely granular, sparkling in the sunlight, glowing blue in the shadow, and crunching under crampons to afford excellent footing. There are streamlets tumbling down the surface carving swirls and waterfalls and disappearing into crevasses and moulins. The crevasses graduate from pale blue at the top to blue-black down as far as one can see. A connoisseur of free-form sculpture could have a real aesthetic jag.

The three of us walked at a moderate pace approximately four miles to the ice field on top where we could survey the twin peaks which stand out at the head of the valley. Of the sides we could see, none appeared to offer a reasonable route, they were carved too steeply. However, the south side which we did not have time to view, is shown on the map to be part of a longer ridge and may afford easy access. If someone were to try it, and to succeed, I am sure they would have a first.

But never mind the peaks, There is a real magnetism in that ice field. Think ... across that plain of snow over there is Lake George and Knik Glacier, around to the south again is Eagle Glacier. How far would it be to Prince William Sound?

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