



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

AUGUST 1974

VOL. 17 No. 8

AUGUST MEETING.....Wednesday, August 21, 8:00 PM...Pioneer Schoolhouse.....3rd & Eagle St....MINI SHOW: Surprise!  
MAXISLIDE PRESENTATION: John Pinamont and Scott Mueller will give a presentation on their Peril Peak Climb.  
BOARD MEETING: September 4, 1974, 7:30 PM at Dona Agosti's, 2324 Loussac Dr., Anchorage.

#### CLIMBING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY SEPT. 14, YISBO, Leader John Pinamont, 279-7862. Located in upper Fern Mine Valley. About 6500'. Rock climb by the North Face. Leave Valu Mart at 8:00 am.

SATURDAY SEPT. 28, MT. SIGNIFICANT, Leader John Pinamont, 279-7862. Climb from Eagle River Valley. Leave Valu Mart at 8:00 am.

#### HIKING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY SUNDAY AUGUST 17-18, BOLD PEAK (Skutumpah area), Leader Bill Stivers, 277-2369. Camp at cirque...those wishing to climb Bold Peak may do so. Meet at Valu Mart Parking Lot at 7:30 am.

SUNDAY AUGUST 25, McHUGH PEAK HIKE, Leader Tom Meacham, 277-2129. Leave Valu Mart Parking Lot at 7:30 am.

SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY AUG. 31-SEPT. 2, LOST LAKE-COPPER LAKE TRAIL-UPPER RUSSIAN, Leaders Bill Barnes, Sr. and Bill Barnes, Jr., Leave Valu Mart Parking Lot 8:00 am. Telephones: 333-9218 and 272-2205.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY SEPT. 7-8, HICKS CREEK, MONARCH PEAK, Leader Bob Spurr, 333-7157. Some may wish to camp on the Hicks Creek plateau, others may want to go on and climb Monarch Peak. Meet Valu Mart at 6:00 am.

SUNDAY SEPT. 15, PETERS CREEK HIKE, Leaders Gayle & Helen Nienhueser or Dona Agosti, 279-2901. Meet Valu Mart at 8:00 am.

Notes from Hiking Chairman: We are starting to formulate next year's hiking schedule and would like to hear from any of you who have ideas for new and interesting hikes. Leaders are needed also. Next year's big hike will be in the Katmai Monument. We also have the Chickaloon

Congratulations once more to Mel Langdon for her excellent showing in the Resurrection Trail Marathon.

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**NORTH RIDGE ATTEMPT  
MT. SARGEANT ROBINSON**

July 8-13, 1974

8. of 11  
Glacier Creek is the first valley west of  
It provided a relatively easy and direct route the  
style (steep, exposed and rotten) North Ridge of Mt. Sargeant  
son (10,6000).  
Larry Tedrick and I wandered out of the Matanuska Glacier parking lot  
around noon on the 8th of July. The 6 miles of gravel-barred creek-  
bed was a welcome change from bush climbing of which we had surpris-  
ingly little. Evening camp was at the 2500' level near the frozen and  
liquid headwaters of Glacier Creek. Our thoughts drifted off to the  
accompaniment of a roaring river and the gentle pitter-patter of often  
obnoxious raindrops on nylon. Another half day of hiking brought us  
over the 5 miles of heavily morained glacier to a Y-shaped junction  
(4600') formed by two 400' icefalls flowing around each side of the  
6000' North Ridge. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, the ever  
threatening drizzle clouds obscured the upper reaches of Sgt. Rob-  
inson. On level ice we slept comfortably under our nylon in the even-  
ing rain.  
Extra food, gas and miscellaneous equipment were cached before our  
ridge climbing commenced. We were pleased to find the first 1500'  
or so fairly enjoyable 3rd class climbing with belaying on some short  
steeper pitches. We weren't overjoyed on quick glances into the cloud  
shrouded upper parts at seeing the ridge steepen, become narrower  
and more exposed. It was rapidly becoming more evident that the hard-  
ness (directly proportional to feelings of security) of this loess,  
broken, rotten rock was very low. As we continued our scramble, 3rd  
class climbing merged often into 4th class climbing. The view looking  
downward and upward was reminiscent of the spectacular Hornli Ridge on  
the Matterhorn. After approximately another 1500' of spider (lightly-  
over-the-rock) climbing, steep glacial snow shouldered the ridge and  
provided us with an alternative to the ever steepening and crumbling  
stone. A series of 100 to 300 foot high angle snow covered ice cliffs  
reach to a high shoulder (8770') on the ridge. After cramponing up  
soft, often shallow snow Larry and I reached the 8400' level where we  
realized the daily afternoon whiteout was rapidly swirling in around  
our glacial-encrusted alpine scenery. There seemed to be one good(?)  
flat spot 150 feet back down the ridge. This quick common decision  
narrowly saved our bodies from the mountain gods 24 hours later. After  
a tent platform was stomped down we carried on with the ritual of a  
snow-storm forced hibernation. Our false sense of well-being faded as  
the soft snow fell and tremendous-sounding avalanches were triggered at  
regular intervals on each flank of our increasingly unfriendly ridge.  
Sleep that night was a bit erratic because of occasional high decible  
sounding avalanches which put fear in us of the 500 feet of snow ridge  
above and thousands of feet of cliff below. July 11 was spent in the

tent in the storm. That afternoon our anxieties peaked; the ridge above camp for 450 feet finally broke loose and swept down, surprisingly splitting 20 feet from us and continued into the depths on each side of the ridge. (Expletive deleted.) I can not adequately express our feelings and thoughts on this close call but it was no fun and no joke. We were saddened by the mountain but at least we would survive, holed up in the tent, until more snow built up on the ridge. The morning of July 12 finally cleared, ending our 40 hour "rest" and 8" of new snow. The 877 foot shoulder was close and would provide us with a view for the first time of the remaining 2000 feet of ridge. We ascended over our avalanche tracks of a previous day and shortly were standing at 8770 feet gazing at the head of Sgt. Robinson. It was truly beautiful to look upon but the thought of climbing it was gross. The remaining ridge started out from us as narrow to knife-edged snow occasional cornices all on top of rotten rock with a layer of fresh snow. Once past this 1200 foot section of treacherous looking ridge the route lessens in steepness and the ridge widens to a more comfortable width. Larry and I had had more than enough. To justify our efforts we could call this a reconnaissance trip and return to civilization happy with the fact that we were still alive. The weather obviously wasn't going to clear completely so without regrets we postholed back down to camp and packed up. The upper part of our 4000 foot descent provided some fine high exposure and psychologically anchored belays. Lower down the rock was still proving sharp by cutting our hands, pants and sheath on the perlon but we didn't care. We got down anyway just in time to set up the tent before the evening low-altitude drizzle.

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#### CROW PASS TO BIRD CREEK/GLEN ALPS July 4-7, 1974

On Thursday, July 4th, Bill Barnes, Sr., Tom Breeze, Bob Cadieux, Larry Crawford, Chuck Evans, Ron and Rod Francisco, John Nevin, Danny and Shawn Oxford, Bill Stivers and Twain Tipton departed the parking lot below Crow Pass. There was an overcast sky, and the group began penetrating the clouds at the base of the switchback above the old mine. A compass course was followed through the pass to the rock ridge above Raven Glacier.

Upon our reaching the rock ridge, the cloud cover began breaking and the west slopes above Raven Creek were partially exposed and irradiated spots of sunlight. To the northeast, Raven Glacier rose above the mist and sparkled under the sunlight. As we traversed the west slope, gradually climbing to the entrance of Clear Glacier Cirque, the sky became clear revealing the panoramic beauty of the rock, waterfalls, glaciers and vegetation of the Raven Creek Valley.

Clear Glacier Creek was crossed low in the cirque, and a gradual climbing traverse was made into the unnamed cirque to the north. A sheep trail, which was intercepted before entering the cirque, provided easy walking. Sheep had, perhaps, used this trail for thousands of years.

35 sheep, in large and small bands, were spotted in the cirque as we climbed to the terminus of a small glacier. From that point we scrambled west up a rock slope to the pass overlooking North Fork Ship Creek and Camp Creek valleys. (NOTE: The climb to pass should not begin until reaching the terminus of glacier. Five of us climbed the ridge too soon and had to traverse a few hundred yards of precipitous ridge before a safe descent could be made.)

Sitting glissades were made down a snow covered, moderately steep slope to a bowl containing a dying glacier. Another mile of snowfields, rock and tundra led to our campsite in the upper Camp Creek drainage.

Friday morning the group split to follow different routes to Bird Creek Pass. Tom Breeze, Larry Crawford, Chuck Evans and Bill Stivers, accompanied by Bill Barnes' dog, Freya, climbed to west slope above Camp Creek to enter the first valley north of Camp Creek Pass. Bill Barnes led the others through Camp Creek Pass into the North Fork valley.

The valley above Camp Creek was scenically impressive, having numerous streams and basins. Flowers and other tundra vegetation were plentiful in the basins and on some slopes. Many sheep were sighted as we climbed to a large basin partly surrounded by precipitous walls just below a glacier. Upon reaching this basin it was decided that the intended route had been bypassed, therefore, a short eastward descent was made to a lake which lay in the gully of the correct route. Following lunch on the stream above the lake, a climb over snow and rock led to a pass into the valley descending southward to just below the waterfall from the North Fork Ship Creek Lake. The initial descent was across snow, scree, and rock, avoiding the areas of steep terrain.

While we were still high on a rocky slope above a large basin containing numerous streams and lakes, four ewes and one lamb bounded into view on the opposite side. As cameras waited, the sheep trotted across the green meadow below and began walking up the rock directly toward the cameras. Bill's dog, Freya, was tired, and, being pacified by petting, lay still and quiet as the sheep approached. The sheep's hooves pounded rhythmically on the rocks while the shutters were clicking. Suddenly, at about 100 feet from the cameras, the lead ewe jerked to a stop. She froze her position for a few seconds, then bounded sideways about three times downhill. The sheep then made the usual dash uphill, occasionally stopping to glance back at the intruders.

The upper basin was traversed and descent made to a similar basin below before finally dropping into the North Fork valley floor. Several miles downstream the two groups rendezvoused and set up camp at a lake near entrance to Bird Creek Pass.

Saturday, the group split again, Chuck Evans and Bill Stivers following the North Fork down to the confluence, then up Ship Creek to the lake, over the pass and to Glen Alps via South Fork Campbell Creek drainage. They camped near the confluence Saturday, where Chuck caught about six small Dolly Varden to throw into the pot. Bill Barnes led the others out to Bird Creek Saturday afternoon.

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#### CHILKOOT TRAIL

July 19-28, 1974

Dona Agosti

(Skagway, Dyea, Lake Bennett)

After six months of planning, it was a real pleasure to get the show on the road at 6 AM July 19th. Five cars departed Valu-Mart with the following intrepid passengers: Leo Hannan and daughters Sarah and Jane and passengers, Mike Brodie and Dave Kampfer; Dona Agosti and Tam, Jon, and Tim; Kay Bielawski and daughter Patty; Greg Wolf; Mr. and Mrs. Piakowski, and Beth and their two passengers, Debbie Burns and Donetta Bratcher; Brian McDonald and his two passengers, John Nevins and Terry Rees; Norma Childs, Roseann Stauffer and Eileen Gustin—twenty one in all (not including the Piaskowski parents who were just providing transportation to Whitehorse.) All had been checked and rechecked with respect to equipment, etc., so it was therefore rather embarrassing to this leader when a fellow motorist pulled up beside me at Mile 89 and informed me that my camping trailer was burning up. I sent word ahead to the other cars to go on as scheduled, then set about repairing burnt-



out bearings and finally arrived at our first night destination at 3AM only to learn that the others had gone on to Snag Junction. The leader finally caught up with the leadees at Robert Service Campground at 10 PM Saturday night. We departed for Skagway next morning at 8:30 and were flattered to find that the White Pass & Yukon Railroad had set aside an entire coach for us, complete with MCA signs on the outside. Lunch was an all-you-can-eat hot meal event in the dining hall at Lake Bennett, after which we reboarded the train for the most thrilling part of the ride--the descent along mountain cliffs and parallel to the old White Pass goldrush trail into Skagway. Another of the leader's slipups became apparent when we learned we had to go through Immigration and most of us had left our ID in Whitehorse, but we fast-talked our way through and ended up at Fraser's Visitor's Bureau. Mr. Fraser kindly let us leave our backpacks with him while we sight-saw and then Father Melbourne from the Catholic Church not only let us use the old Catholic Mission for sleeping quarters, but transported our crowd in his panel truck. We arranged for taxi service to Dyea at bargain prices--two large busses for \$30.00, substantially less than the usual \$4.00 per head. It was drizzling as we started the steep climb on the east bank of the Taiya River, but the heavy forest provided so much protection that we all shed our raincoats within minutes. Even though Canyon City was only 7.5 miles along the trail, the large, spacious cabin was a welcome destination for the night. After short rests, everyone was off to the Canyon City ruins at Mile 8.15. It is reached via a suspension bridge across the Taiya River. The most interesting artifact for me here was the remnants of the huge boiler which powered the tram which carried freight to the summit. Even in this day of expeditious helicoptering of freight, it is difficult to figure out how this heavy equipment was carried on foot and how an enterprise of this type ever got off the ground. The next morning, we left around 8:30 and as usual, had another steep climb before the trail leveled off. The faster hikers arrived at Sheep Camp by noon, and the remainder by 1:00 PM. The sun peaked out long enough for the tenters to get their shelters up, and explorers to plot their courses. When Greg Wolf and entourage failed to show up after an absence of several hours, we began to worry, but when they returned with the information that they had managed to bridge the raging Taiya River, the entire MCA crowd, plus a few more, took off like a herd of elephants to explore the old city across the river. The crossing on a single log was exciting and well worth the squeamies because we were able to browse through ruins not usually on the tourist agenda. Sheep Camp was once a "city" of log structures--some 15 hotels including the Palmer House, bars, restaurants, and other shops. An old iron stove lays close by the present Sheep Camp shelter.

Reveille at 5:30 AM the next morning did not enhance the popularity of the leader, but it was SUMMIT DAY and the most difficult part of the trip. True to form, we climbed steeply once more, finally levelling near the scales at Mile 16. We regrouped here with Greg Wolf in the lead, Leo Hannon sweeping the trail and Dona Agosti centerfield. We climbed our first snowfield to just below the summit--and believe it or not, despite all our preparatory map reading and checking, we were uncertain of our route until someone spotted orange tape on several rocks above. The trail ascends the left pass, then cuts over about half way up to the center, or Chilkoot Pass. (Petterson Route is to the right of Chilkoot or seemingly straight ahead when one reaches the base of the summit.) We slowly picked our way up over boulders, then kickstepped over a snowfield to a very narrow cleft between rock walls, past a "whim" which was used to power the tramway and on to the flat area of the summit. Leo Hannon got out his

Alaska Flag and we posed for pictures, and read the historical signs. The American-Canadian border is indicated by an iron rod projecting from rocks. Because it was drizzling and cloudy, we descended to a rock crib to eat lunch. Four miles of snow later, a wet, cold crowd pitched a mighty fast camp and disappeared into warm tents and bags. That is all except those in the party tent. Happy Camp really isn't, because there are only a few flat spots among the willows and alder for camping and the wind blows off the snowfields hellbent for misery. It is quite easy to experience historical flavor during this segment of the trip. Lindeman was a different story. One of the two cabins was vacant and you never saw so many wet sleeping bags get hung up faster. Some hikers in the cabin never saw each other until we packed up next day. But the blazing stove soon had everyone dried out and raring to explore. By really wandering through the woods, one can find hundreds of mementos of that once-thriving tent city. Having done one's homework, the ghosts of the past truly speak up. Entertainment for the evening was provided by John Nevin who assisted Rosie Stauffer in the preparation of a thesis paper.

Again at an ungodly hour, in order to catch the 2:05 train, we set off for Lake Bennett, seven miles away. The book says "an easy two hour walk" and even the fireeaters among us whooped at that. It is an energetic up hill hike to Bennett taking at least four hours for fast hikers. There is not one mile marker or identifying feature on this trail until Joes Creek, at which point a small notice tells you "Bennett 3/4 mile". Evidently Maloney's Camp site at Mile 29.5 as shown on page 34 of the hike book no longer exists—at least we were still looking for it when we walked into Bennett. One clue—when you reach sandy beaches ON TOP OF A HILL— you're about two miles from destination. Don't ask us how the beach sand got up there— John Nevin, limping along with his hiking staff, said he felt like Moses in the desert, but he'd lost all his people.

After a windy, cold wait for the train, we really enjoyed the hot meal in Bennett. Not so enjoyable was the hassle of getting 21 packs into an already full baggage car, then discovering that the car reserved for our return was half-filled with tourists. The crowd in the first section of the train had already warned the conductor that he better watch out for the mad lady ahead—so he entered our car, took one look at the fire in my eyes and boomed, "I guess you must be the lady I'm suppose to kiss."

As Greg Wolf so aptly put it in his Times article, the real end of the trail came at the hot springs near Whitehorse that night. It was a difficult and memorable hike, but most of all, a great group.  
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#### PETERS HILLS

Talkeetna C-2, Long Peak (3929)

August 3-4, 1974

John Nevin

7:20 AM found eleven optimistic backpackers heading out for Peters Hills and the cloud covered Alaska Range. A slight delay for equipment working on the Petersville road created a need for thirst quenching at Peters Creek Lodge. Here we were assured the road to the mine was passable for all vehicles. So with 5:30, Dona (Mrs. Agosti of Chilkoot fame), Rob and Ron Francisco, and limping John leading, the rest of the caravan including Libby Hatton and nephew David, Wes Howe, Sue Zinbrick, Elden Johnson, and the Nienhuesers drove on to the trail head. The trail was found in spite of the landmark cabin having disappeared. The trail is exactly one mile past the mine buildings.

Donning rain gear, we started up the old cat trail about 12:30, gradually ascending over one rolling hill after another. Going was rather slow due to profuse availability of blue berries and crow berries. Rain gear was shed as the light rain subsided and glimpses of the Alaska Range peeked through. Hiking was relatively easy on the soft tundra with occasional swampy areas fostering lush ferns, lillies, flowers and alder. Camp was finally made at a small lake since no water was available from here to Long Peak, the highest hill.

Supper preparations came to a stirring halt (by most) when David announced a grizzly bear was across the small valley. At the vantage point only a large, tawny animal was seen, barking incessantly. This he did for some time, periodically moving a short distance only to sit facing us again. Fortunately, some had even brought cameras and binoculars with them! After deciding it must be a wolf slightly misguided in wolf behavior, two of our members held a half hour training program whereby the wolf was to be taught to howl. The solos and duets that followed would have stirred the hearts of the most fanatic wild life enthusiast. The wolf either never caught on or was very polite for he just sat and listened. Finally curiosity overcame politeness and he trotted to within 150 yards of us, presumably to get our scent. Satisfied we were the misguided ones, he retreated back up the hill into the advancing mist and resumed barking.

That night, right after retiring, John heard splashing in the lake and was fortunate to see two large moose. They swam to the lake end and disappeared over a ridge. The next morning after producing some moose tracks to authenticate his "story", John was allowed to rejoin the rest of the group.

The tents had been set up facing Mt. McKinley should it be visible in the morning. And it was! In all its splendor. Mist from the valley hid it again until we reached the high place and then a fantastic panorama of the whole range. This coupled with a sunny, warm day dispersed thoughts of hiking out. After a long, drawnout lunch of eating food and drinking in the view, the libbers proclaimed, "Ladies day in the lake", and of that there was not a thread of doubt!

We returned to the cars at a berry picking pace, arriving about 6 PM. A relaxed visit at the lodge prefaced the long trip home. Aside from seeing two bull moose and stopping several times to give Wes our "biologically questionable" drinking water for his thirsty jeep, the trip home produced only sleepiness and pleasant memories of a great hike.

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For Sale: Jansport Wedge tent, hardly used, \$90.00. Contact Shawn Oxford at 279-3283.

For Sale: A pair of Galviv Super RD boots, size 10, \$60.00. Contact Bill Barnes, Jr. at 272-2205.