



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

AUGUST 1979

AUGUST MEETING

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The meeting will be held Wednesday, August 15th on the top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse at 3rd and Eagle. Steve Markiewicz will present a slide show on his spring trip to the Ruth Glacier and Don Sheldon Amphitheater located in the Alaska Range. Steve and his companions spent nearly a month climbing in this incredible area and managed to complete the first ascent of Explorers Peak.

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MINUTES OF JULY GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA  
Wednesday, July 18, 1979, Pioneer Schoolhouse, Anchorage

The meeting was called to order by President LaRue at 8:10 p.m. She announced that half the receipts from the June 21st slide show lecture by Vera Komarkova were turned over to her for the Women's Expedition to Dhaulagiri in 1980 and the other half to MCA. Dona Agosti, Hiking Committee Chairperson, reported on good attendance on recent hikes and posted on the wall some changes and leaders selected for hikes during the rest of the summer. Tim Heale, Board Member, reported for Dick Thaler on need for repairs on several MCA huts. Lowell Thomas, Jr., has offered to fly his plane to transport materials to repair the Eagle Glacier hut provided a permit can be obtained from the State Park to land on the glacier. MCA will pay for the gas. If any member has suggestions for building another MCA hut somewhere convenient for hiking or climbing, he/she should contact Dick or Tim. No new cabins can be built in Chugach State Park. Letters are needed to be written to the Chugach State Park Superintendent if opening of the Eklutna Lake Road is desired. President LaRue asked if there is interest in reviving the annual MCA Summer Potluck Picnic which has not been held in recent years. It was announced for anyone interested that the MCA's Library is for members only and is kept at Tom Heacham's house, 1410 "H" Street, where he can be reached at 277-2129. Dave Klinger, Board Member, announced that after several delays the MCA patches were scheduled to be mailed this week. After refreshments, Julian Mason gave a maxi-mini slide show of numerous interesting hikes in the vicinity of Anchorage with photos and descriptions in his inimitable brand of humor. The main slide show was presented by Nancy Young of climbs in the Delta Range after going up the Castner Glacier. Her party climbed Mt. Silvertip (9400') the second day, White Princess (9800') the fourth day, and tried for Black Cap the fifth day but was weathered out. Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. E. Allen Robinson

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#### THINK HYPOTHERMIA

A recent close call with hypothermia was a sobering reminder that this condition can be deadly even in mild air temperatures if the symptoms are not recognized and corrective action not taken. The following is presented as a reminder to be

(Think Hypothermia - Continued)

constantly alert against the number one killer of outdoor recreationists. Hypothermia is the progressive mental and physical collapse accompanying the chilling of the inner core of the human body. If appropriate steps are not taken to prevent its progression, the inevitable result is death.

#### Hypothermia Weather:

1. Most hypothermia cases develop in air temperatures between 30° and 55°F.
2. Heat loss in these temperatures is seriously aggravated by wet and wind.

#### Avoid Exposure:

1. Keep clothes dry. Generally, wet clothes retain only about 10% of their dry, insulating value. Wet wool retains more insulation effectiveness than wet cotton, down, or synthetics. Put on raingear BEFORE you get wet.
2. Stay out of the wind. Wind evaporates moisture from wet clothes, refrigerating both clothes and body. A slight breeze causes bare skin to lose heat at a much greater rate than in still air.

#### Terminate Exposure:

1. Stop all thought of continuing your prior activities if you cannot stay dry and warm with the available clothes.
2. Make camp while you still have some energy available. Get out of the wind and rain, build a fire if possible.

#### Hypothermia Symptoms: (don't believe the victim's denial of trouble!)

1. Uncontrollable shivering
2. Vague, slurred speech
3. Incoherence
4. Lapse of memory
5. Loss of control of hands
6. Stumbling, lurching gait
7. Sleepiness (to sleep is to die)
8. Exhaustion
9. Loss of judgement (victim will be unaware of this condition)

#### Hypothermia Treatment

1. Remove victim from wind and rain
2. Take off all wet clothes.
3. Give warm drinks.
4. Put victim in warm sleeping bag with one or two stripped warmth donors for skin to skin contact.
5. Keep victim awake.

Depending on the severity of the condition, victims can require several hours to recover fully. Do not allow the victim to resume prior activities prematurely.

Safe enjoyment of the Alaskan outdoors requires consistent alertness in preventing, detecting and treating hypothermia. **THINK HYPOTHERMIA!**

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HIKING SCHEDULE

- Aug. 18,19      CARIBOU CREEK & SHEEP MOUNTAIN - Leave Friday night. Call re-  
Pat Murray      garding transportation and trip details.  
276-6459  
277-6332
- Aug. 25,26      BYERS LAKE, TROUBLESOME CREEK - Mile 147 Parks Highway  
Emile McIntosh    Leave Friday night from Anchorage - Camp at Mile 147  
337-7418          Call regarding transportation and trip details.  
Dona Agosti  
279-2901
- Sept 1,2,3      LOST LAKE - Long-time vacation favorite beginning at Campground  
Labor Day       near end of Kenai Lake and exiting at Mile 5 near Seward. Valerie  
Val LaRue       will lead a group in a try for Mt. Ascension on Sunday. Others  
333-4982        can loaf and pick plenty of berries that day.

TRIP REPORTSKING MOUNTAIN - July 14,15, 1979

The forecast was for clearing by late afternoon when we left Anchorage early Saturday morning; I wish we had known which afternoon they meant because the continuous rain for the entire two days caused more excitement than we bargained for. Dona Agosti, Marty Bassett, Tony Bochstahler, Gayle and Helen Nienheuser and John Ramey met the Nova Raft People at King Mountain Lodge, Mile 76 Glenn Highway, at 9:00 a.m. We were driven to a put-in point about 1/2 mile up the Chickaloon River. The river was high and the rain fell steadily. We rafted to the Matanuska, then a short distance downstream caught the Caribou Creek eddy and disembarked on a sand bar. Following sketchy directions, we made our way upstream along sand bars until high water forced us into trees along the west side of the river. About 1-1/2 miles upstream the river enters a canyon and it is necessary to ascend a steep ridge. Since our destination was a broad clearing directly behind King Mountain, we worked our way up through grassy and sparsely wooded areas in a southwesterly direction. However, we apparently deferred to ease of climbing more so than compass bearing because we ended up on a knob on the east side of the mountain. Our maps told us there should be a lake somewhere in the fog and sure enough there it was. Because weather conditions were deteriorating, we worked our way down to the east end of the lake, and surprisingly, found ideal ground at water's edge for camping. Thanks to Helen, we hung a tarp from the trees and found respite from the relentless rain. It was our plan to climb the mountain when we could see it....which time never came. There was a lot of reading done in the next 24 hours. About noon we heard a rock slide above us.....an hour later the Rescue Coordination Center helicopter flew over. We packed up and descended about 1 p.m. - this time checking out another route. The terrain is not at all difficult....rather sparsely wooded and with numerous grassy benches. However, we never did find the ridge which we had originally ascended, but worked our way down to a point about 3/4 mile upstream. We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw the Mat. Later we learned it was within 1/2' of 11' flood stage. We began to be concerned about our scheduled Nova pickup when cars (16 to be exact) converged at a pullout across the river. One was a radio car and another served as the local ambulance. Finally we sighted the raft upstream, deftly negotiating the broiling current and six-foot holes. It took two

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(King Mountain Trip - Continued)

men to stop the raft, and after a dramatic trip downstream to the King Mountain Campground, three men had to stop it there. Ours was the fastest disembarkation ever recorded by Nova and this leader is still shaking! But now we know that King Mountain has fantastic hiking potential...in a drier season, that is! Dona Agosti

INDIAN VALLEY - July 21, 22, 1979

Fourteen happy hikers started from Glenn Alps - 2 made it to Indian - 3 spent the night at Sheep Lake - 1 tented under the Ramp. The rest provided an escort back to the parking spot for the frightened victim of early stages of hypothermia. It was a rainy day and one hiker experienced excessive loss of body heat. On-site application of skin to skin heat transfer in a closed tent was performed; after a while the sound of chattering teeth from inside the tent turned to giggles. Conclusion: The rescue was successful. Recommendation: A guideline leaflet on hypothermia to be provided to neophyte hikers. Participants: R. Rhodehamel +2, P. Quering, M. Bassett, S. Jones, T. Reser, P. Murray, B. Barnes, K. DeBow, K. Leary, B. Stivers, J. Mahony, plus one smart furry canine who ran back to his master's car after first drops of rain, but was induced with a leash to enjoy the outing. Gene Klymko.

PORTAGE PASS (750') July 4, 1979

Although only five signed up at the June meeting for this mid-week afternoon hike, the good weather for several days preceding encouraged an eventual turnout of 51 persons. Less than half rode the train from Anchorage, while most drove to Portage and boarded the train there. They had to stand in the three crowded passenger cars and chugged on through the two tunnels. The conductor cooperated by letting us out at the only road crossing, just beyond the second tunnel (Door 1 in AAR lingo) and across from the Army's big tank farm. This was at 2:15 p.m. The mile hike up to the Pass is on a jeep track which the Forest Service has fortunately closed to vehicular traffic by a rock barrier about two-thirds of the way up. The reason for this was the illegal bulldozing last year of a rough road down the far side to Divide Lake. It avoids some bushwhacking for hikers, but the scar on the landscape is ugly. The track will be converted to a hiking trail later. As a gentle rain started, many hiked down for a closer look at the Portage and Burns Glaciers. Visible here are the wrecks of two small planes which didn't make it through the Pass, but several flew by during the hike. A few hikers ventured down near the Portage Glacier and scrambled a few yards up the hillside to look over Portage Lake. Some 30 different shrubs and wild flowers are identified along the hike. Everyone but the leader made it back to the railroad in time to take the shuttle train back to Portage before 6:00 p.m. About a dozen hiked the mile down the gravel road to Whittier for refreshments and protection from the rain before catching the return train to Anchorage. They arrived shortly after 10 p.m. Al Robinson

RUSSIAN LAKES TRAIL (Forest Service Trail #14 - Hike #8 in 55 Ways to Wilderness)  
(USGS Maps Seward B-8/Kenai B-1) Leader: Emile McIntosh

On June 15th under depressing rainy skies and at an even more depressing 6 a.m., fifteen sleepy hikers departed Anchorage for the Snug Harbor Road exit at Mile 47.9

## (Russian Lakes Trail Continued)

on the Sterling Highway. After a 2½ hour drive we met at this point and Tony Bockstahler and Steve Jones drove on to Russian River Campground (Mi 52.7) to leave Tony's VW bus at the trail exit. The rest of us proceeded South on Snug Harbor Road about 11 miles to Russian Lakes Trail Head at Cooper Lake to wait for Tony and Steve. We started on a good, wide trail at about 9:20 a.m., not really sure where we would camp that night. The U.S. Forest Service maintains a cabin on Upper Russian Lake 8 miles from the Cooper Lake entrance and another cabin on Upper Russian River 12 miles in. We weren't able to get reservations for either. Last year the first cabin was a madhouse of campers and floatplanes so we camped at a crowded site ¾ of a mile from there. For a 21 mile trail there are few suitable campsites and I was concerned about the placement of nine tents. I needn't have worried because we met the people who had booked the first cabin. They were on their way out a day early and said we could use it. After listening to their tales of brown bear sightings we were thankful for the cabin as a refuge if need be. I guess because the red salmon run was later than last year, we had the cabin and surrounding area to ourselves. For that matter, we met only 3 people on the first 18 miles of trail. We arrived at the Upper Russian Lake Cabin at various times after 2:00 p.m. so we had plenty of time to pitch tents and explore. Steve Jones, Pierce and I climbed the hill in back of the cabin following an old blazed trail that paralleled a small creek. About ¼ of a mile up through Devil's Club and brush is a beautiful waterfall. I chickened out in the thick alders higher up and we came down without really getting anywhere. Helen Nienhueser, Perry Reeve and Iditarod Husky Denali got a late start and arrived in time for dinner. They had seen a moose and calf and as far as I know, that was the only big animal sighting by our group. Of course it rained during the dinner hour, but I've come to expect that on trips I lead. The next morning my son, Mike, Marty Bassett and Pat Ormiston took the Forest Service skiff out for a ride on the smooth-as-glass lake. There were patches of blue sky at that time and it got bluer and bluer as the day wore on. We left camp at 7:20 a.m. and four miles later stopped at the new "Aspen Flats" cabin just to check it out. It is located on the river ¼ of a mile in from the main trail. There are places to camp around the cabin but the bugs seemed worse than by our site at the lake. From this point on the wildflowers are profuse. Liz Robinson graciously identified and listed for us, 29 flowers and flowering plants. On one hillside there were Lupine, Wild Geranium, Columbine, Forget-me-nots, Chocolate Lily, Wild Rose, Jacob's Ladder, Coastal Paintbrush and probably others I didn't see. The display was truly marvelous. Some of the group stopped to rest and take pictures at Lower Russian Lake (18½ miles from our start). The falls at the end of the lake used to be a good place to watch and photograph the salmon jumping but a fish ladder has changed that. From Lower Russian Lake to our trail exit at Russian River Campground, it is 2.6 miles and on this portion of the trail we met a lot of day hikers. Two fellows remarked they were carrying rifles to hunt people. And we're afraid of brown bears? The entire trail is well maintained with excellent bridge crossings and nice resting spots. Camping, as I said, is somewhat limited so if possible it is nice to reserve a cabin through the Forest Service. Starting at Cooper Lake, the trail is mostly a 21 mile downhill stroll from a 1,168' elevation to 400', making it suitable for just about anybody. Special thanks to Tony Bockstahler for help with car shuttling. Thanks to all the following hikers for making this such a pleasant trip: Marty Bassett, Tony Bockstahler, Pauline Chase, Barb Hamilton, Steve Jones, Mike and Pierce McIntosh, Helen Nienhueser, Pat Ormiston, Perry Reeve, Joan Reser, Liz and Al Robinson, Clay Sayre, Anne and Lynda Wieland.