

SCREE



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA BOX 2037 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

August 1981

PROGRAM: Gunnar Nosland on his trip to Patagonia from the quest for Volcanoes
Volume 24, Issue #9

AUGUST MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, August 19th, at 8:00 p.m. on the top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle, Anchorage, Alaska. After the business meeting, Jim Eason will present a slide show of his trip to the Connell Glacier in the Black Rapids area near Paxson in the eastern portion of the Alaska Range.

MINUTES OF JULY GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was called to order on July 15, 1981 at 8:00 p.m. Due to the absence of both our President and Vice-President, the meeting was called to order by Board Member and former President Tim Neale. The reading of the minutes of the previous meeting was waived by custom and vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT:
Petty cash \$ 65.70
Money Market 2,830.76
Checking 544.75

New members and guests were introduced. Tim introduced Gunnar Nosland, the person providing the evening's program, who introduced his guest, Sig Alpha, who also presented a program. Tim also urged new members to contact existing members for information about climbs, hikes, and the Club in general.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Equipment at AMH was described for information of new members.
PROGRAM'S: Next meeting's program will be Steve Davis's show of a trip to the St. Elias Range.

The library was briefly discussed as to what it contains and where it is. Trip schedule was discussed: Resurrection Trail July 18-19 was the next hike and 1-day hike to Bold Peak was planned and a sign-up sheet put up front. With regards to the Peters Hills trip, Board Member, John Dillman, brought forth the information that due to heavy rains in the area, there was a good possibility that the bridge at the Forks could be out and the trip leader may want to check on that before departing.

Donna Agost said she had some openings on her Wrangell trip, and also talked about her Skilak Lake Trip.

Tim Neale gave us a progress report on the McKinley attempt by several of the Clubs' members including our President John Lohff, Tom Meacham, Gregg Higgins, Janet Smalley, and George Ferry. At that time they were reported to be out of food and on their way down from 17,000 feet.

OLD BUSINESS: 55 Ways to the Wilderness - a new printing is in process without revision as reported by Al Robinson. Our account at Foster & Marshall had an incorrect address; Mr. Craig Renkert, member and associated with that firm, was asked to make a correction. John Dillman is still attempting to contact our former representative with the Federation of Western Outdoors Clubs.

NEW BUSINESS: An appropriation of funds for materials and helicopter lift into our huts for upgrade and needed repairs were discussed. Volunteers were asked to consult with the Board about going in and working on the huts. A trip to the Mint Glacier hut was formed. Also suggested was the idea of putting up a new hut; anyone with a reasonable site in mind is asked to contact a Board member.

PROGRAM: Gunnar Nosland gave an extremely interesting and informative program on his trip to Patagonia and other areas of South America too numerous to mention. His guest, Sig Alpha, whom he crossed paths with in the same areas of South America at the same time, but never met until their return to Alaska, also gave a presentation of his trip. The two combined to give us all a very entertaining evening and we do appreciate their sharing their experiences with us, as well as some outstanding photography.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Madeline Jones, Secty.

TRIP SCHEDULE

August 23: Rendezvous Peak. A nice hike for beginners and all family members. Round trip $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Good views from the pass up nearly 1,000 feet. Much better views from the peak almost 600 feet more. Return via scenic ridge to ski area. Bring lunch and water. Meet at UAA Sports Complex at 9 a.m. Leader will be Al Robinson 279-8873.

August 29-30: Prospect Heights, Campbell creek traverse. Prospect Heights parking lot (1,000'), cross pass into North Fork valley to west of Wolverine (2,850'), descend into North Fork Valley and follow North Fork to Lake (3,140'), proceed through pass above Williwaw lakes and Mid Fork (3,700'), return to Prospect Heights via Mid Fork, 20 miles. Some high grass and alder to west of Wolverine. Knee-high brush and some irregular, wet terrain in lower Mid Fork. Meet at Bill Stivers' (277-2869), 4107 North Star St. at 7:00 a.m. Aug. 29th.

September 5-7: Crow Pass to Camp Creek, out Bird Creek. For very experienced backpackers. Meet at UAA Sports Center parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Sept. 5th. Leader Bill Barnes (333-9218 home) (279-7458 work).

September 12-13: Skilak Lake to Cottonwood Creek. Meet at Skilak Lake Campground Boat Ramp on Sept 12 at 8:00 a.m. A boat will be provided to take you across the lake where the hike begins. The first 3 miles is a steep upgrade to above timberline, then 3-4 miles more to Keng County Lake to camp for the night and back out the next day. Leader Dona Agosti (248-0089)

ICE CLIMBING CLASS

An ice climbing class is scheduled on September 26 and 27 at the Matanuska Glacier. The class leaders will be John Dillman (279-1246) and Peter Senhauser (345-5577). The class will be designed so that the first day's instruction will cover basic glacier travel and rope techniques; and the second day's instruction will cover ice climbing. A sign-up sheet will be available at the next two meetings. There is a limited amount of MCA Club equipment available for this class for MCA members at Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking on Spenard Road. The starting point for the class and time of departure will be announced at the meeting.

NOTICE TO MCA TRIP TAKERS:

The leader of any MCA trip has a right to expect that the people who intend to take the trip have a certain amount of basic gear for their own safety. This basic gear was mentioned in an earlier issue of the SCREE, but will be published again soon. If the people who show up for a trip do not have this gear, the trip leader may ask the person to stay home. If you have any questions about the gear needed for a trip, please call the published trip leader or Lavonia James for further information.

MCA FALL PICNIC PROPOSAL:

A fall MCA picnic is proposed for the weekend of September 19-20 at a site between the Ramp and the Wedge (up the powerline trail from the Glen Alps entrance into Chugach State Park). A sign-up sheet and expression of interest, or horror as the case may be, will be appreciated and sought at the August meeting.

SEPTEMBER MEETING - EQUIPMENT SWAP

The regular, and almost annual Mountaineering Club of Alaska equipment swap is scheduled for the pre-winter time of the September meeting at the Pioneer Schoolhouse. Everyone who has any gear he or she wants to trade or swap or unload should bring it to the September 16, 1981 meeting. The Club itself may have some interest in purchasing used but servicable ice climbing gear for the upcoming ice climbing class.

TRIP REPORTS

Vignettes from the 1981 Churchill Peaks Expedition - Members: John Lohff, Ted Laska, Janet Smalley, George Ferry, Tom Meacham, and Greg Higgins.
Ground support: Nancy Blunck. Packers: Berl Mercer & MJ.

Training out of Talkeetna to eventually meet at Wonder Lake. Thunderstorms in the afternoon along the river after seeing Ted and George off. Drafted into service to help at the bus accident near Eilsen. Parting goodbyes to Nancy, then off across the frigid river. Visiting with the French while waiting for the pack train to pass through. Camp amongst the Cloudberryes along Cache Creek. Reunion and hot, heavy carries to McGonagall Pass. Slushing up the Muldrow Glacier to Gunsight Pass and the NOLS group. "The gauntlet" beside the lower icefall. Gary Bocard's group passed through. Mind befuddling fog in the upper icefall. John takes a crevass fall while enroute to the Muldrow Apex. A lone cliff swallow visits our storm bound camp at 10,700'. Spectacular icefall avalanches beneath the Harper Glacier. A fortress on Karsten's Ridge with the Traleika below. Visiting with Herbie and Lucy in the snow mansions. Watching virtuosa skiing by a German on the Coxcomb. Heavy nighttime hauls to Browne's Tower. A shaky tent at 14,000' is converted to a snow cave as a storm rolls in. Janet reads "Batard" by candlelight as we wait out the weather. Crevass camp at 16,000'. Hot sun by day, but freezing cold by night on the Harper Glacier. NOLS makes their summit bid while we hole up in a bergschrund snow cave at 17,600'. The storm arrives. Howling wind and white out for seven days. My low back strain while shoveling snow. Our bergschrund drifts shut placing us in unseasonal night. A break in the weather and a moonlight dash for Denali Pass. Whiteout and storm again heading for the West Buttress. George earns his stripes "walking" a heavy sled downhill. Impromptu off-route iceclimbing below the Pass. Dwindling food and fuel. We are found again at 17,200' by a Colorado group as new storms roll through. Nick Parker's welcome cache at the Igloo. Grueling work reopening the route to the headwall. An abandoned "thank God" cache at 16,200'. Sliding down the avalanche-prone headwall to tent city at 14,000'. Whiteout on the

(cont'd)

(Trip reports continued)

Kahiltna. Sharing tea with the Japanese above the NE Fork. Base camp at last; two pints of fuel to spare. Sharing food and visiting with friends while waiting for flying weather. Stomp parties to prepare the runway. The weather eases and K-2 leads the way. Final partying and good byes in Talkeetna. Saddened by the news of the lost Japanese party on the mountain. Plans for next year: "Their energy shall be carried on."Greg Higgins

Bagley Icefield Traverse

Six past and present MCA'ers spent March skiing across the western Chugach and St. Elias mountain ranges. Starting from Miles Lake near Cordova on March 3rd, Gunnar Noslund, Brian Okonek, Steve Hackett, Vern Tejas, Roger Cowles, and Jack Duggan skied up the Miles, Martin River and Stellar Glaciers to gain the Bagley Icefield. A 15 mile side trip onto the Tana Glacier was necessary to pick up a food cache preset by able and trustworthy pilot, Paul Claus, flying from his sheep camp at the headwaters of the Chitina River. Resupplied, the team skied the length of the Bagley Icefield, across the Columbus and Seward Glaciers - passing between Mt. St. Elias and Mt. Logan. before turning south at Water pass to travel down the Hubbard, Art Lewis, West Nanatak and Yakutat Glaciers finally coming out at Harlequin Lake near Yakutat. They concluded this first-ever Cordova to Yakutat ski crossing on April 7th and 8th with a 30-mile hike into town down the world's straightest forest service road (one slight bend in 30 miles). Weather varied throughout the expedition but cooperated at all critical navigation points.Jack Duggan

Mint Glacier Trip

Six people set out Saturday morning, July 25th, for a two-day hike to the Mint Glacier hut. The rain lessened during the day until mid-afternoon when it stopped. Most of the people dropped their packs at the hut and cruised around up to the glacier and small lakes before dinner. Sunday ended up being a beautiful day for the hike back out. The marmots continued to sharpen their teeth on the hut. They had completed their own door in the floor, and have just about finished the window in the front door. Temporary repairs were made. John Dillman will take a work party up later on in the month for permanent repairs. Possibly someone has a good recipe for Marmot Stew they can give the work party. Those six of the 18 that signed up to go along included Reggie Buchanan, Cindy Green, Eric Paerels, Brian Kost-Grant, Anne Leggett and Tim Neale.Tim Neale

MCA DEW MOUND (THE PERCH)

Fourteen MCA members and guests met at Paradise Haven under cloudy skies. The hike, a family trip, was originally scheduled with DewMound as the objective. However, due to lack of a definite trail to Dew Mound and a great deal of heavy brush due to the early breakup, a point a mile beyond their called the Perch was chosen. This probability was a mistake as the additional mile made the round trip 8 meters which proved to be too much for the 4 small children on the trip. However, a pleasant lunch with a view was enjoyed by the group beside Eagle River and 7 members went on to the Perch, which afforded a panoramic view up the valley. Participating were Roger and Jean Kennedy, Al and Liz Robinson, Kim Severn, Dale Bryan and Aaron Trombley, Jack Morris, Mary and Peter Mitchell, Pat Murray and Anita Beeman.Reg Buchanan

(Trip reports - Continued)

Indian Creek Pass, 2350'

Several friends and I enjoyed an overnight in this pass June 27th. The idyllic view, the wildflowers and terrain made me wonder why I had neglected this trip for 10 years. I also wondered why it was one of the less traveled trails in the Chugach during the summer. (Skiers use it often in winter) We started at the pump station off Seward Highway near Indian Creek. The trail is marked with a sign set somewhat in on the trail. About a mile upstream and after passing over corded bogs, is a two-log bridge over Indian Creek. About an hour in, there are two crossings of side streams and from here on the trail deteriorates to game trail status, often overgrown with tall grass. There are four more stream crossings, but if you look up and downstream, you'll find alder limbs or logs on which to cross. At low water there might be rocks visible on which you could cross. At the last crossing of Indian Creek itself (from east to west), (about 4½ miles) you begin a steep ascent on a horse trail. It is only a short climb before you reach the bench from which you have a fine view of Turnagan Arm, Powerline Pass, and Indian Creek Pass. From this point, it is about 1½ miles to the rolling tundra and picturesque streams of the pass itself. A middle fork of Ship Creek starts here also. We observed over 30 varieties of wild flowers enroute. One of our party from Colorado repeatedly exclaimed about the "lush green" of the area. There was no snow in the pass and grass on the lower benches was waist high already. A good side hike would be to the small tarn, the source of one of the Indian Creek forks, or up to the ridge overlooking Ship Lake. I would love to have spent another day exploring in the area.Dona Agosti

HISTORY CORNER

"Where would you find such sights and scenery but in the Himalayas and the Chugach?", wrote Helga Bading about the climb of Marcus Baker in 1959. At this time this majestic mountain had seen only a single ascent by a party that had included Brad Wasburn. That had been in 1938.

Marcus Baker was a cartographer for the USGS in the 1800's. He died in 1903 at the age of 54. The peak was eventually officially given his name in 1924 by another USGS worker, A.H. Brooks. Prior to this it had also been known as Mt. St. Agnes.

The 1959 climb was something of a landmark one because the climbers walked all the way up the Matanuska Glacier from the road to make their attempt without the benefit of air support. This plan was not intentional; their air drops never took place due to poor flying weather. Rather than abandon the climb, everyone repacked their loads to include the material that could not be flown in. In 1938 the climbers had been flown into the glacier by Bob Reeve. After hiking all the way into the North Ridge, Paul Crews, Gregg Erickson, Mans Metz, and Helga made their summit bid in early September in deep snow and blasting winds. They reached the 12,250 ft. North Summit around 3:15 p.m. Three miles away they could see the 13,176 ft. South Peak peeping through the "gray light and drifting clouds." This distant summit was left for other climbers and other days. The group retreated back to camp for a well earned rest. From here they retraced the long route back to the highway. Their round-trip distance overland had been in the range of 80 miles.Greg Higgins

BOOK REVIEWS

Review copies of these books have recently been added to the MCA Library and are available for reading by members.

WELZENBACH'S CLIMBS - Eric Roberts - 272pp - The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1981 \$14.95

This biography of perhaps the outstanding German climber between the two World Wars combines reports of many of his outstanding climbs in the Alps (he was a pioneer "big wall" and ice climber, and applied his engineering expertise in his avocation), and a new account of the celebrated Nanga Parbat tragedy of 1934, in which he lost his life. While climbing the Wetterstein he devised a new scale of technical difficulties which has formed the basis of grading ever since.

Concerning Nanga Parbat, Welzenbach's own diary and correspondence suggest that poor leadership method and failure to take high altitude climbing sufficiently seriously to plan for adequate support at all stages contributed to unnecessary tragedy. Ironically, the author of this study had completed gathering his material before leaving for Annapurna, where he was killed by air blast from a huge avalanche in 1979.

MUDHOLE SMITH - Alaska Flyer - Lone E. Janson - 143 pp paper Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, Anchorage, Ak. 1981 \$6.95

This addition to the growing library of biographies of pioneer Alaska "bush" pilots has a lot of color, and reminds one again of how much Alaskans owe to these skilled and dedicated transport men. There are many good stories in the book, and it is nice to know that a lot of the material came directly to the author from "Mudhole" himself during his lifetime. Incidentally, the name "Mudhole" was bestowed by fellow pilot Bob Reeve after an episode of getting caught in a chuckhole in one of the primitive "bush" air strips, fortunately without any major tragedy.

ALASKA MAMMALS - Alaska Geographic - Vol 8 No 2 184pp Anchorage, Ak. 1981 \$12.95.

This is a superbly illustrated manual of Alaska mammals, produced under the editorship of Jim Reardon, long known in the wildlife management field in the state and now Outdoor Editor of Alaska Magazine. Along with valuable natural history information and distribution maps for each species, from the brown grizzly down to shrews and bats, not forgetting the great whales and other sea mammals, there are a lot of vivid, and sometimes harrowing stories about contact between man and mammal. The book is a valuable addition to any collection of Alaskan, both for its wealth of information for hunter and wildlife lover, and for the excellent color photographs throughout.

Liz Robinson

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

Rigid kayak - 14 1/2 ft - 2 person kayak with life jackets, cushions, and paddles. Call Tony Bockstahler (694-2323)