



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

AUGUST 1992

Volume 35, Issue 08

AUGUST MEETING

August 19 7:30 pm Wednesday, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Sts.,
downtown Anchorage, Alaska.

SLIDE SHOW: Climbs in the northern St. Elias from 35 years ago. Reminisces
and slides by Dr. Bill Davis.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|---|
| August | 15-16 | <p><u>MINT HUT</u>
 Nine-mile hike to the club's hut and then do rock climbs and
 walk-up climbs. Class: FIFTH CLASS or Class E.
 Leader: Tom Choate 333-5309</p> |
| | 22 | <p><u>BLACKTAIL-ROUND TOP</u>
 Class C.
 Leader: Scott Bailey 696-7250</p> |
| | 22 | <p><u>EAST TWIN PASS</u>
 55 Ways trip # 41. Round trip 8 miles. Class C.
 Leader: Marty Bassett 694-3917</p> |
| | 22-23
29-30 | <p><u>RABBIT LAKE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION</u>
 Help reroute the trail to Rabbit Lake. All work will be
 under the direction of Chugach State Park. Since trail is
 near town you can make this a one-day or two-day trip. This
 will be Phase I of the project and will cover two weekends.
 Meet at the Glen Alps parking lot at 10:00 am for a ride to
 Ptarmigan Mt. Tools provided. Bring rain gear, food,
 gloves, etc.
 Call: Willy Hersman 338-5132</p> |
| September | 19-20 | <p><u>SNOWHAWK TRAIL</u>
 Trail work to be done for the trail leading to upper and
 lower Snowhawk cabins. Call leader for details.
 Leader: Joe Kurtak 345-5512</p> |
| | 26-27 | <p><u>ICE-CLIMBING SCHOOL</u>
 Beginning and intermediate ice training. Members only.
 Held at the Matanuska Glacier. Sign-ups begin at the August
 meeting for present members and continue at the September
 meeting for new members. A mandatory organizational meeting
 is held on the Thursday prior, at Pioneer Schoolhouse.
 Organizer: Paul Denkwalter 272-1811, AMH</p> |

TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL

place: Matanuska Glacier
date: September 26-27

fees: \$ 5.00 equipment replacement fee
12.50 access to glacier and camping

meeting: Thursday, September 24, Pioneer Schoolhouse 7:30 pm. This meeting is mandatory, as it is every year, so plan to attend.

The school will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice, such as waterfalls and gullies. We will not be teaching glacier travel techniques.

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED. Sign-ups are at the August meeting for present members and will be at the September meeting for present and new members. If you cannot attend the September meeting you may call Paul at AMH, 272-1811. We will not be signing up students (or new members) at the organization meeting on the 24th. All students should be members by the September MCA general meeting since AMH does not collect dues.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 24th. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons and ice axes for inspection. Club equipment will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) Fees will be collected. Tickets to get in will be handed out. Questions will be answered. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.

The school will begin at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 26th, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 7:00 am or go up Friday night.

PARK WATCH

Park Watch needs volunteers to help nab trailhead vandals and thieves. Program is modeled after Neighborhood Watch. Call Patricia Joyner at Friends of Chugach (338-2128) or Al Meiners at Chugach State Park (345-5014).

EVEREST TREKS

The 1993 American Sagarmatha Expedition will be hosting expedition support treks to Everest Base between February and May. There are five 16-day treks to choose from: "Medical Seminar," for health professionals, "Insights," with an emphasis on Buddhist culture, and "Reality Escape," which includes a non-technical climb to 18,000'.

For details and costs call Dolly Lefever, 243-7027.

TRIP REPORTS

The Seventh Hut

Willy Hersman

The latest MCA climbing hut is in place now. Over the 4th of July weekend ten people participated in putting the puzzle back together. It took only two days, thanks to the direction of John Cafmeyer, much faster than expected. The hut had been put on location in April when there was enough snow to land on the glacier. At that time there was about six feet of snow at the site.

Because of the snow, most of the brush in the area was hiding below us. I had no idea how bad it would be when I arrived to find a virtual jungle of willows. It took a few hours of cutting to be able to move freely enough to start building. It also took longer than expected to move enough rocks to the area to lay a foundation. But we had more than an adequate crew.

Five of the crew were volunteers from the Sixth Infantry Division at Ft. Richardson, led by Lt. Dave Carstens, also an MCA member. They were a big help and I was fortunate that Dave had called me earlier to say they would come out with us. Besides Dave, there was Sgt. Pete Alexakis, Spc. Pete Balfe, Spc. Earnesto Lopez and Spc. Andy Wigglesworth. Other MCAers besides John and me were Dan O'Haire and Tom Shepard.

The location is along a wide bench east of the Matanuska Glacier, about 9 map miles from the terminus of the glacier. I say map miles because unless you know the most direct route (and after five times traveling the route I can't say I do) the ups and downs and zig zags can take about 11 miles or more. Once you reach the bench you can get off the ice and walk more easily and the hut would be hard to miss. But getting to the bench requires good physical condition, a sense of direction, and sharpened crampons.

The hut is to be named for Tony Bockstahler, past MCA Honorary Member. I would like to second the name "Bock's Den," proposed by Dave Staheli. It seems to fit the boxed-in feeling you get at the site and will be easy to remember. Thanks to all those who participated in the many phases of hut construction and transportation over the past year.

Expedition Leadership Class

Chris Tomsen

An outstanding, learning-filled, mostly sunny, multi-glacier summer "excellent ski vacation," courtesy of UAA's Alaska Wilderness Studies program and two instructors from the Wilderness Education Association. Beginning with book learning, then classroom and trust/interpersonal learning activities (Charter North's ropes course included), a "plan it cheap and wholesome" food gathering in the natural foods section of Carrs, and finally the trail in from Eklutna. Todd Miner, masterminder, encouraged students to join the MCA since we planned to camp adjacent/in MCA huts. Students were Martin Beakler, Ray Cammisa, Chris Conyer, Larry Flagg, Ken Kibe, Jackson Fullbright, Chip McMillian, Greg Thaelke, Kristian Sieling and myself; instructors were Todd, Dave Cockrell, and Karen Peitsmeier.

Camp 1 was 3/4 of the way to Pichler's Perch, tents on the snow. Camp 2 at Pichler's with more classes. Next, across Whiteout Pass to Hans' Hut, Camp 3, down across Eagle Glacier to Rosie's Roost, Camp 4, then down the Raven Headwall and out Crow Pass. The 4th of July we had a ptarmigan family parade through camp. I learned most about expedition cooking (but still flunked it, I think) and was only disappointed in our not climbing any peaks (too much class work). My hope is that we students will be out there getting others out and leading/helping trips! Thanks for the weather, mountain gods!

Falls Creek to South Suicide Peak

Don Hansen

Four hearty souls, Bernie Kaye, Marcy Custer, Mark Miraglia and I showed up on a rainy Saturday morning, July 11, for the hike up South Suicide Peak. It looked like it was going to clear up as we drove down Turnagain Arm towards the Falls Creek trailhead. The trip began in low overcast with clouds moving up the Falls Creek valley obscuring the view of the mountains. Openings in the clouds with partial clearing encouraged us up the brushy vegetation which was wet enough to soak all four of us from the waist down. It was too warm and humid to be wearing rain pants.

We stopped for a snack and sat watching six Dall sheep on the opposite slope about half way to the summit. We had temporary views of South Suicide when clouds would move past. On gaining the ridge we came upon about 20 sheep, ewes and lambs on the ridge crest, 100 feet away. We took pictures with the overcast background before they scampered down the other side of the ridge. We stopped for lunch within about 600 feet of the top, waiting for a view. As it cleared, we hiked to the summit but the next batch of clouds got there first and we spent 10-15 minutes in the drizzle taking pictures of each other in the fog and signing the register (the MCA register is missing its cap, so anyone planning a trip up the peak should try to get a replacement).

I got a little sidetracked leading the group down in the fog (down the wrong ridge towards Indian House Mt.) but after a compass check we figured out where we were and descended an easy scree and snow slope back to Falls Creek. The lower trail was as wet coming out as it was going in. Otherwise it was a pleasant trip with very little wind.

Mystery Mountain Scrambles

Tim Kelley

Peak 5505 - headwaters of Four Mile Creek, north of Peters Creek (Anchorage B6, T15N, R1E, Section 35). On May 17th, Greg Jacobson, visiting from Seattle, and I did a ridge-running (post-holing?) loop between Peters Creek and Thunderbird Creek. Starting at the Peters Creek trailhead we ran four miles in on the trail and then took a ridge NE to a point (4855) above the valley. We then followed a corniced ridge to Peak 5505 at the head of the Four Mile drainage.

We didn't find a cairn on top so we built a small one and headed north to subpeak 5335. From there we followed the main ridge heading NW to Peak 4040 and to Mt. Eklutna, from which we descended back to Peters Creek trail. This loop took us 8 1/2 hours. It's a good ridge scrambling route, great views in all directions for most of the trip.

Peak 6385 - between Thunderbird Peak and Benign Peak (Anchorage B6, T14N, R2E, Section 22). On June 7th I mountain-biked to mile 8 of the Eklutna Road. Here I stashed my bike and waded the East and main channels of the Eklutna River. After one mile and 2000 vertical of alder bashing I entered the valley that separates Thunderbird Peak and the north ridge of Benign Peak. I ascended the valley to a rock glacier; a half-mile past the terminus I took the NE ridge of Peak 6385 to the summit. On top I found a cairn with a film canister left on July 15, 1991 by Steve and Barb Johnson. They had ascended from Peters Creek. (Editor's note: first ascent of this peak was a solo by Jim Sayler, June 29, 1986)

There were tracks of a large brown bear that had traversed from Peters Creek, over the col just west of Benign through the valley I traveled. Judging by the freshness of the tracks in the snow, the bear had been through the valley no more than two hours before me. At one point the bear had been crossing a steep snowfield and had apparently lost its footing. It left a 200-foot skid mark and you could see where the bear finally executed a bear claw self-arrest, and then ambled away.

Peak 5705 - west of terminus of Hunter Creek Glacier (Anchorage B5, T15N, R4E, Section 28). Note: this is not the 5705-foot Siwash Peak that was climbed a few years ago by Tom Choate. It is 4 1/2 air miles to the north.

On July 3rd it took a 16-hour day trip and 14000 feet of vertical to climb "The Gatekeeper" of Hunter Creek valley. I chose to start from Eklutna Lake to avoid the legendary devil's club of the lower Hunter Creek valley. From Eklutna Lake I climbed to Hunter Creek Pass, dropped down and then back up the 4105 ridge and then descended to the West Fork of Hunter Creek. At this point you are almost back down to the elevation from where you started at Eklutna Lake.

It took me about a dozen tries to find a safe ford of the creek. A braided glacial stream with submerged boulders on the loose, it's what I call "silt on full tilt!" Once on the other side of the creek I passed through a majestic cottonwood stand and then weaved my way upward through alders. At tundra line I spotted two large brown bears, 1/4 mile away chasing ground squirrels and heading my way. From behind a bush I hollered at them. They stopped, stood on their back legs to see what the commotion was. Finally they got spooked and headed down into the brush, to await my return!

I passed through a col at 4750 feet, crossed through a cirque and climbed to the summit of Peak 5705. On the summit I found no evidence of previous ascents, I built a cairn and left a register. With a panoramic camera I took 300 degrees worth of photos of the Hunter Valley peaks and the north sides of Baleful, Bashful, Boisterous, and Bold. Due to the sun and heat (above 70 F) it was a long grind back to Eklutna Lake; but with a cloudless day in Hunter Creek valley, I sure wasn't complaining!

Wood-Tikchik Kayak and Hike

Bill Wakeland

Wood-Tikchik is the largest state park in the country, and the Wood River drainage offers well over a hundred miles of big lakes and short, connecting rivers. The setting to the east is rather flat, caribou country, but the western portion is spectacular alpa-like terrain with elevations up to 5000'.

Five of us flew to Dillingham on July 2, transferred to a Gruman Goose (Phil Bingman, Fresh Water Ventures) and flew to a spot on the west end of Kulik Lake, the upper lake of the chain of 5 and the connecting "navigable" rivers. One can float and paddle all the way to Dillingham, or catch a ride there from Aleknagik, at the outlet of the last lake.

We put our kayaks together, a two-man Klepper, a two-man Folboat and a one-man Klepper, and set up camp that evening in a setting of lush cover, quiet reflections, sharp peaks and irritated beavers whacking the water to show their displeasure at our intrusion.

Next day we climbed the spire across the lake, and good that we did - the only weather after that for climbing came while we were paddling, or the last day. The alders over there make Chugach alders look like a cake walk, and the grass and weeds are a wet jungle long after the rain quits. But what a reward to get above the stuff, at about 1000' or less.

We kayaked maybe 80-100 miles, and did a lot of fishing, catching the early run of reds at the mouth of Peace River on Lake Beverly. In fact, we caught and ate 5 kinds of fish (throwing a lot more back, and losing a lot), including grayling on flies and pike, which were delicious when prepared right, as Steve Eng proved to us.

Outstanding events included bashing a couple rocks in the Agulipak River, (each time I tried to get pictures of white water and took my eye off the river for a mere second), necessitating some repairs. My 70th birthday with wine, delicacies, salmon and a cheesecake with candles on it, by son Steve. And the final rite of passage, performed on the shore of Lake Nerka, also engineered by son Steve, similar to an event in 1987 when Alex Sisson was my boatmate.

This rite requires cold water and lots of driftwood, plus an adjustment in chronology to the late teens (or some loose marbles). The water in these lakes this time of year varies from 38 to about 50 degrees. The idea is to build a big fire and heat up rocks while constructing an enclosed torture chamber of kayak paddles and tent flies. When the rocks are really hot, we roll and throw water on the rocks. Huddled close, we are soon enveloped in steam, and after much screaming and hollering and moaning in pain we all bolt for the lake and plunge in. In fact, this was so painful, we all did it again, and then stood around the fire stark naked in the rain (by then it was about 1 am). And by then we were all about the same age!

We were picked up at a vacant U of Washington research camp on the west end of Lake Nerka on July 12th. While we saw a few airplanes and fishermen (after all, we were there over the 4th of July weekend), we saw no other boats except some skiffs stashed by fly ins, Ranger Hourihan's jet boat and only one other camp. Even Golden Horn Lodge was closed this season. The upper and more westerly portions in particular, in the mountains, are the least visited.

Our group was my son Steve, Brian Bannon, Steve Eng, Mike Phillips and me.

(Editor's Note: other trip reports received for the August Scree will appear next month, thanks.)

MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING

July 15, 1992

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$4274.48
Checking Acct	-	1143.30
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$5469.88

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing.

Don Hansen outlined several trips. Orienteering Club announced Rogaine trip.

Huts.

Matanuska Hut, "Bock's Den" was erected.

OLD BUSINESS

New library books soon to be available at club library.

Club now has sleds for checkout.

Ron Sullivan presented a map showing the property owner locations on the old Rabbit Creek trail and gave some background on the conflict. Discussion of new trails and buyouts was held.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Park watch training session July 27, REI, 7-9 pm.

Eric Teela is looking for his replacement as treat supplier for meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Berryhill

Climbing Notes

On August 1, Jim Sayler and Willy Hersman made ascents of three peaks above the Troublesome Glacier. Peaks 6750 (Section 19), 6440 (Section 20) and 6070+ (Section 29) were climbed in mostly poor weather. The name Hat Trick Mt. was given to the final peak, celebrating three first ascents in one day. 14 miles were covered and 7200 feet gained before soggy clothes and tired bodies gave in.

President's Notes

We will continue to be "easy pickins" for trailhead outlaws as long as there are no penalties in effect for break-ins and vandalism. After the first time they are caught, the bandits learn that crime really does pay. The guilty ones typically have to make a few visits to their probation officer, and a promise to do restitution and community service. Their promises don't mean much and compliance may be as low as 1 or 2 percent.

The following measures would make these crimes unprofitable:

- 1) Eliminate the secrecy and immunity for the 16 and 17 year olds.
- 2) Confiscate and sell at police auction any guns and vehicles used in the commission of crimes.
- 3) Automate restitution payments via computer from the Alaska Permanent Fund.
- 4) Wiping of the record clean should be contingent upon completion of community service.