

AUGUST 1998

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Volume 41 Issue 08

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

### AUGUST MEETING

Wednesday

August 19, 7:30 pm

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets

Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: *Mt. Logan's East Ridge*  
will be shown by Dave Hart.

### HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Aug 29 Ptarmigan Peak  
Mountain bike ride up the power line trail from the Glen Alps parking lot. Hike up to the tarn, then up the Rabbit Lakes side to the summit. If it's raining, or if you can't get your bike, we can hike to the base. Come out and enjoy the sunshine in the mountains. Wear your suit for a quick dip in the tarn!  
Leader: Matt Nedom 278-3648

Sep 5-7 Bomber Glacier Traverse  
Class: Glacier Travel. Visit two of the MCA's huts and view the remains of an Air Force bomber plane that crashed on the glacier. This is not a training class. Participants must be experienced with glacier travel.  
Leader: Gary Runa 275-3613

### TRIP REPORTS

#### Organ Mountain, A Long Traverse

by John Mitchell



On July 18, Shawn O'Fallon, Charlie Sassara, Bill Spencer and I, departed the South Fork of Eagle River trailhead bound for Girdwood. The primary goal being a one day ascent of Organ Mountain, we made an alpine start at 11:30 AM to catch the north east

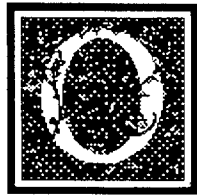
face in optimal conditions, at night. We traversed around Eagle Lake and up valley, to Flute Glacier, then over the pass north of point 5860, on to Organ Glacier. Our troop then circled Organ's north ridge to the north east face. To our knowledge the north east face has been climbed at least three times previously. We stopped to eat, make soup, debate route options and ponder what mental instabilities brought us here.

Bill tested the snow bridge over the 'schrund and we were off and step kicking to the col. With

heavy clouds moving in and the sky spitting snow, we dropped packs and scrambled up the ridge. At 11:00 PM we were on top. A quick scamper brought us back to the col where we ate again, drained our liquid stocks, cast plaintive glances across Camp Creek valley toward Crow Pass, and again wondered what cerebral incapacity would bring us here, at midnight. We quickly descended a scree gully into the Ship Creek headwaters and then not so quickly ascended a ridge that brought us into the Camp Creek drainage. Near the foot of a remnant glacier, Charlie made soup again, and we napped. It wasn't a long nap, to save weight we had left out luxuries like tents, sleeping bags and bivi sacks. Charlie made sugar water, Oh I meant tea, and we were off. We cruised down through beautiful green alpine valleys, on major sheep highways, to Camp Creek. We then had the opportunity to regain all that lost altitude on our climb up to Paradise Pass. From there we were able to contour along on sheep trails high above Raven Creek, cross Clear Creek, and finally gain the Crow Pass trail for the last ascent of the trip. We reached Shawn's Subaru at the Crow Pass trailhead at 1:00 PM, twenty-five and a half hours after starting.

## Chilkoot Trail

by Diane Sallee



On June 29 to July 4, our group of eight people followed in the footsteps of the Klondike Gold Rush stampeder over the Chilkoot Trail from Dyea to Bennett. During 1897-98, over 20,000 people from all parts of the globe came to seek their fortune

after gold was discovered in the Klondike. Today, hikers from all over the world come to experience the history and grandeur of the Chilkoot Trail.

Our first day on the trail brought us 8 miles to the campground at Canyon City. By May 1898, Canyon City was a prosperous village of over 1,500 people. Two freight companies constructed tramway powerhouses here to carry supplies over the Chilkoot Pass for those stampeder who could afford this service. Today, Canyon City is a peaceful campground nestled in a temperate rainforest of spruce and hemlock trees at the mouth of the Taiya River Canyon.

On day two, we backpacked 5 miles along the Taiya River through spruce-hemlock forests interspersed with tall cottonwood stands to reach Sheep Camp. Originally, this was a base camp for sheep hunters. Its population grew to over 6,000 when

winter storms halted or slowed stampeder traffic over the Chilkoot Pass. Today, the National Park Service has a post here, and a park ranger gives campers an evening talk on the history of the Chilkoot Trail.

Our third day on the trail was 8 miles and was the longest day. We passed through an ever-shorter spruce-hemlock forest, over countless rocky streams, up the boulder-filled slope to the Chilkoot Pass. The last half-mile to the Pass is a 45 degree climb known as the "Golden Stairs." The image of a moving line of stampeder packing their supplies up the Golden Stairs has become immortalized in historic photographs and on the new Alaska license plates.

Once at the Pass, we were in British Columbia. A Canadian Park warden served us tea as we celebrated Canada Day on July 1. Then we headed down the mountain valley another 4 miles to reach Happy Camp. Snowfields gave way to heather-filled meadows as we walked along beautiful blue Crater Lake. The scenic vistas of the lake, waterfalls, streams, mountains, glaciers, and flower-filled meadows made this place seem like paradise.

On day four, we traveled 5 miles to reach Lindeman Lake. Along the way, one beautiful landscape followed another. Our hike led us across the blossoming alpine tundra, beside the blue waters of Long Lake and Deep Lake, above the rapid-filled canyon, and into the boreal forest of aspen, shore pines and subalpine fir trees around Lindeman Lake.

In the spring of 1898, thousands of tents clustered on the lakeshore as 4,000 stampeder built barges to carry freight across the turquoise waters of Lindeman Lake. Many makeshift boats crashed in the boulder-filled rapids between Lindeman Lake and Bennett Lake. Today, the area is rich in relics, and the Canadian Park Service has a tented interpretive display here.

Our fifth day led us 7 miles to the end of the Chilkoot Trail at Bennett Lake. In 1898, the town of Bennett swelled to 20,000 as the stampeder waited for the ice to break so they could sail Bennett Lake and the Yukon River to Dawson City, the fabled "City of Gold." Some made a fortune, but many found all the good claims had already been staked. They sold their supplies and returned home. Backpackers of today, like the stampeder of 1897-98, go home richer for having experienced the spectacular Chilkoot Trail.



## The Claw

by Steve Gruhn



Saturday July 11, dawned rainy and dreary. Jeff Jablonski and I had previously arranged to go for a hike up the South Fork of Eagle River, but due to the pouring rain and a poor night's sleep, I called him to cancel. There was no answer. I figured he might be sleeping, but a few minutes later there was a soft knock on my door. It still looked dreary, but Jeff had driven all the way from Girdwood, so I thought we should at least make a go of it. I am glad we did.

The rain stopped shortly after we hopped in the car. The hike to Eagle and Symphony Lakes was uneventful, except for a meeting a group of poorly outfitted teenagers on their way out. A party was camped on the roof of the hexagonal shelter cabin between the two lakes, but the real evidence of a party was a quarter mile to the east.

Here Jeff and I encountered trash, empty beer cans, half-eaten hot dogs and sausage, a comforter, a pillow, a hatchet, freshly chopped willows, a fire pit on the tundra, cigarette butts, empty bottles and jars, dirty clothes, a towel, and other debris. I have never encountered such a mess so far from the road. We both were appalled. Slob campers ruin the wilderness experience for the rest of us and, by leaving meat stored improperly, could quite possibly expose other campers to danger from bears.

Jeff and I continued east around Eagle Lake, up the braided river valley, and up the southwest side of a waterfall. The water was higher than I had seen it in my three previous forays into the valley. Jeff opted to take off his boots to wade the knee-deep water. I tried jumping and, at one point, found myself prone in the river. So much for trying to stay dry. We continued up to the base of Flute Glacier where we crossed the stream and proceeded up a steep pile of loose moraine to the east. Once on top of the moraine pile, we followed a sheep trail to the southeast and east until we easily achieved the summit of The Claw (Elev. 5660, T12N, R1E, Sec. 3) where we found both a cairn and a register.

The first recorded climb of The Claw was in 1964 by Hans van der Laan and others. The 1964 party did not mention a name in the register they left. Mark Fouts and Brian Okonek subsequently climbed this point in 1973 and named it The Claw in reference to its proximity to Eagle Peak. However, Mark did

not leave an entry in the register. Richard Baranow and Wendy Sanem climbed this point in 1996 and, not knowing of Mark's ascent, called it Adante Point (perhaps a misspelling of andante, in line with the music theme of other peaks of the area). Ours was the fourth known ascent, but this easily-climbed point may have a history of unrecorded ascents by other hikers or hunters. I am using the name The Claw for this point (not a true peak) because that was the first recorded name for the feature.

The register left by Richard and Wendy called the peaks in the area the Staccato Peaks and mentioned the names of two other nearby points (Acapella Point [perhaps another misspelling, Elev. 5650 +/- 50, T12N, R1E, Sec. 9] and Allegro [Elev. 5860, T12N, R1E, Sec. 9]). From the summit views of other nearby peaks and glaciers whetted our appetite for future climbs. The hour grew late, though, so we headed down, despite being seriously tempted by Acapella Point.

We retraced our route down to Eagle Lake where Jeff and I put as much trash from the messy campsite into our packs and hauled it out, more than doubling the weight of our packs. Sadly, though, we could not fit the pillow or comforter into our day packs.

Near the lower bridge over the South Fork, we passed Dara Lively and some friends on their way in to attempt the northwest face of Calliope Mountain. I mentioned that Bill Romberg's pack might still remain near the lake between Cantata Peak and Triangle Peak after an accident in June. Anyone locating or retrieving his pack should notify Bill or any of the club officers listed on the back of the Scree. The remainder of the hike out was uneventful and, by day's end, we had completed our rain-free hike.

## Delgga Mountain and Paradise Peak

by Steve Gruhn



On Saturday, July 18, after a late start, Jeff Jablonski and I set out from the Crow Pass trailhead. Finding plenty of snow remaining at Crystal Lake, we continued under sunny skies through Crow Pass. After dropping down on the north side of the pass, we cut over

to the Clear Creek drainage, crossing Clear Creek above the gorge. The water level was much lower than when I was in the valley last September. I was

able to jump across the creek. Jeff, having to carry a nervous puppy across her first stream crossing, decided to wade.

Once across the creek, we side-hilled along the slope to the north until we reached the Paradise Creek drainage. Wishing he had brought a camera, Jeff commented that the valley was similar to what one could find in the Talkeetna Mountains. We stopped to eat at a pond on the south side of the creek. Here the puppy provided entertainment by cavorting in the water. Numerous Dall sheep on the north side of the creek kept a wary watch on us, but did not flee.

Continuing up the valley, we found fresh boot tracks heading in the opposite direction. Later we found an old pair of cotton long johns. I was surprised to find such evidence of others in this seldom-visited valley. During my last visit in August 1987, I saw no evidence of other people. We stayed to the north side of the stream, traveling on snow and a moraine ridge until we were below Paradise Pass. Paradise Glacier had receded substantially from when I last viewed it. Jeff and the dog breezed up the scree slope to the pass while I huffed and puffed my way to the top.

Once at the pass, we turned to the north-north-east and started up the ridge. The puppy was having great difficulty on the gendarmes, so Jeff opted to take her down to the moraine below the pass. I continued along the ridge toward Delgga Mountain (Elev. 5510, T12N, R2E, Sec. 31). Once above the first set of gendarmes, I yelled to Jeff that I thought the route was good and that he should meet me at the saddle between Delgga and Paradise Peak (Elev. 5477, T12N, R2E, Sec. 29).

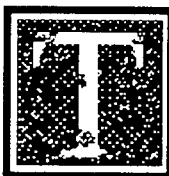
At the summit of Delgga, I found a cairn and register. The register had only one other entry, by Willy Hersman and Jim Saylor on August 21, 1991. However, I suspect that this peak has a history of unrecorded climbs by sheep hunters and hikers. The register stated that Delgga was the Tanaina word for raven. The descent down the northeast ridge was uneventful and I met Jeff and the dog at the saddle. From there it was a relatively easy hike to the summit of Paradise Peak. We found a cairn on the summit, but no register. Jeff and I know of at least two ascents before ours.

The descent down a scree and snow slope to the southeast of the summit was uneventful. Once back at the pond, it was time for more entertainment from that tireless dog. From the pond, Jeff and I split up. He retraced our steps across Clear Creek and to the Crow Pass trail. I opted to drop down to the trail below the mouth of Clear Creek. This route took slightly longer and had more brush, but avoided side-hilling. I waded

Clear Creek just above its confluence with Raven Creek; the bridge that formerly spanned Clear Creek was washed out some time ago. The clouds had moved in and began to spit on us, so, after meeting each other near the pass, Jeff and I continued to the trailhead like horses to the barn, another mountain of memories behind us.

## Huntington Attempt

by Rod Willard



he trip to Anchorage was easy thanks to United Airlines. I had hoped to sleep on the plane, but I was wired and fascinated by watching the 1200 miles of total cloud cover, a testament of the weather rumors we had been hearing before the trip. My partner Brad Grohusky arrived on Delta about an hour after I did and we headed over to pick up his baggage. As the flow of luggage ebbed and finally stopped, we had the disheartening realization that Brad's gear was not there. This was exacerbated for him as he had been fed anything but peanuts the entire trip from Denver to Anchorage. We were informed that the bags would arrive late afternoon the next day and it would be taken to Talkeetna when it arrived. So we crashed in the airport for the few hours left before catching the shuttle to Talkeetna.

Talkeetna Shuttle Service took great care of us, including delivery of fuel cylinders they purchased for us in Anchorage as regulations prevented us from flying them from home. We rolled onto the tarmac at Talkeetna airport and pulled up to the Hudson Air Service hangar. There we were informed that nobody had gotten in or out of the mountains for the last 48 hours and the weather did not look favorable. So the waiting game began. We waited for Brad's gear to arrive. We waited for the weather to stop raining and clear up. We waited at Sparky Burgers, eating the best burger I've ever had. We waited out the nights in The Roadhouse and ate their awesome breakfasts. The walk from one end of town to the other was done several times a day. It was interesting how everyone became an instant expert on Alaskan weather as the time wore on. But we met many fun folks, both locals and those who were also waiting. We got to sit and listen as Alaskan flying legend Cliff Hudson told stories of the old days. I fell in love with Talkeetna.

On the morning of the fourth day we finally



saw the first sign of clearing that I would let myself believe might be real. Late that afternoon we loaded up Jay Hudson's Cessna 206 and finally pulled on our climbing boots. But, another pilot flew by the narrow entrance to the Tokositna glacier and said it was clouded over. So, we unloaded the plane and fell into the first real funk of the trip. So close and yet so far away from our objective. Jay flew empty towards Kahiltna base to bring home a load of climbers. Just some of the 100 plus who were waiting for rides back out to civilization. At least we had all the food we could eat while we waited. While en route to Kahiltna Jay found the Tokositna to be open. In a magnanimous gesture he turned around and came back to get us. Finally at 10:00 pm on the fourth day of waiting we quickly exchanged cotton street clothes for Marmot Power Suits and Gore-Tex and we were airborne. The flight was great; although being lighter than Brad I ended up in the back of the plane and only had side views. We flew over the river cut low lands and finally up over the tongues of the great Alaskan glaciers. Then through a tight gap and into the upper Tokositna Glacier basin. Jay landed us skillfully and taxied right next to a camp that had been deserted the day before. We unloaded quickly, confirmed the return date with Jay and waved goodbye. It is an incredibly intense feeling that overcomes you as the plane flies off, first the sound winding down to silence then finally losing sight of the aircraft completely. Then it is just you (a miniscule speck on the landscape) and the mountain (a huge monolith upon which the landscape hinges). In order to ignore our butterflies we set up camp and sorted gear. Then we sat down and took a long draw on the heady wine of our surroundings. Above us Mt. Huntington reigns king of this cirque, the West Face rising steeply above us, split by several mixed routes that converge on the Harvard Ridge just below the summit slopes. At the other end of the Tokositna is Mt. Hunter, its northeast shoulder facing us. On it was a fracture line visible from our stance several miles away.

The morning saw us brewing up under cloudy skies. We had come hoping to climb one of established alpine routes and then try a first ascent up a virgin rock shield below the French Ridge. The fracture line we'd seen the night before confirmed all we had heard about the snowpack this spring, the avalanche danger was "suicidal." We decided to begin work on the new route and watch the snowpack for signs of improved stability.

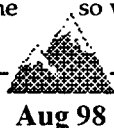
We skinned up to the bergschrund and took a close up look at our objective. There is a relatively continuous crack line that rises vertically then tracks left and tops out just below the French ridge. We choose this line and made our goal the bottom of the

snow slopes on the French ridge, at least until the avalanche hazard decreased.

The bergschrund was crossed with relative ease and the foot of the rock face reached quickly. There we found very compact, solid granite with exfoliating flakes. We hoped that as the wall steepened the surface flakiness would decrease. Brad led up the initial terrain and we grinned like kids in a candy store at being off the ground on never before climbed territory. The rock steepened but still contained many loose flakes. The life threatening ones were trundled when possible, the rest were treated with great respect. Knowing this would be a multi-day climb we fixed our pitches with PMI 8mm low-stretch rope. Once we had used up all the fixed line we'd brought for the day, we fixed our PMI Dynamic lead line and headed down for the night.

The climbing was great and we grinned from a day well lived. We pulled on Marmot Parbat parkas to ward of the midnight chill and scarfed down dinner. Our schedule became rise at 1000 as the sunlight hit our camp. Brew up, cut fixed line off the spool for the day and heft the packs. Then we would skin up to the base of the route before the lower snow slopes caught the sun and became boggy. By the time we had jugged up the fixed lines, the sun was on the face and we would begin climbing. I was on lead for the first roof. The crack line we were following petered out just below the overhang and I hooked and drilled my way up to and over the obstacle. The crack system reappeared as a small right facing corner and I headed for it. The compactness of this wall showed itself in the form of half-driven knife blades for upward movement and bolts for protection when my heart could no longer stand the sight of the long line of tie off loops below my feet. The progress was slow, but upward none the less. We retreated back to camp and fell into the cycle of one person leading all day and the other cooking and melting that night and the next morning. The leader's hands were so swollen and beat from hammering all day that he welcomed the next day of belaying and looking at our surroundings. The belayer's other job was to triage which falling ice was a threat to the leader and which would whistle by harmlessly. This way the leader would screen out the sound of the gravity powered missiles and only needed to shrink up under his Petzl helmet if he heard "Coming!" The leader sent their share of shrapnel off, too. The flakes that we tried to use for cam placements to speed up our progress would typically blow off, resulting in the leader's frustration being bellowed out verbally as "Rock!"

The next morning saw us under a light snow, so we decided to at least haul to our highpoint. By the





time we'd completed that task the sun was out and we continued our ascent. The nailing was so thin that we were ground down to as long as seven hours a pitch. Many of these were short pitches, as we would run out of blades and tie-offs before reaching the end of the 60m PMI Dynamic lead line. Back-cleaning was difficult, as the pieces we stood on did not allow for much movement on them. Entire pitches would go by without a single stopper placement. Stoker bars provided the leader with fast, efficient fuel while on the sharp end during these long days.

Of the 6 days on the Tokositna we climbed on 5. We took a rest day to catch back up with life as we had been on 26-hour days and we were getting out of bed later each day. Our rest day included reorganizing food and gear to be able to move fast the next day. The weather allowed us to hang out in T-shirts. We also ski packed the snow on the runway. The weather forecast from Kahiltna base that night talked of a 3-4 day storm that would arrive in 36-48 hours. The morning sun found us rested and excited to get back to our project. We had decided to keep working on the wall as I had a limited amount of time on the Tokositna and I felt that climbing on new territory would be more rewarding than doing an established route.

As we skinned up the glacier a thin wisp of cirrus clouds floated over. The day was clear, but the frequency of the cirrus clouds began to increase and my barometer began to drop early signs of the predicted storm. As we were winding up the days climbing a familiar plane began to circle overhead, it was Jay Hudson. We pulled the radio out of the haul bag and gave him a call. The storm, he announced, was coming in early. I was scheduled to fly out the next evening, leaving me one more climbing day. I asked if I needed to fly out in the morning to beat the storm. "No," he replied. "how soon can you be ready to go tonight?" He could see the storm advancing from his higher elevation.

So, Brad on the sharp end for the day, fixed the line and we headed down. For me it was the last rappel down the fixed lines and I was bummed to have to do it in a hurry. I would have preferred to take my time and enjoy these last moments on the route. But, my full time job had to take priority and so I headed for camp to pack up.

Jay flew in as graceful as a bird and taxied up next to my pile of gear. An excellent surprise was the second person in the plane. Brad, having the whole summer off work, had another partner coming in to climb for the next 3 weeks. John had arrived in Talkeetna early and bumped into Jay.

By now the storm had made it's appearance and Jay insisted we get going. I said good bye to Brad whom I had shared a great adventure with and wished John good luck on the rest of the route. Jay fired up the turbo charged engine and we were off. Heavy clouds had already obscured most of the area, so once again I did not get great views. But the Alaska Range will be there for a long time to come and I will certainly return there for more views and even more climbing.

I want to thank the following for helping to make this trip possible -

PMI - Petzl  
Marmot Mountain Ltd.  
BTU Stoker  
Gerards Professional Photo Laboratory

## Four Summits on the 4th of July

By Bill Romberg



able to disappear for the whole Fourth of July weekend with the rest of the Anchorage crowds, I suggested to Kirk Towner that he join me on a day trip up Knoya and Tikishla peaks to celebrate the holiday with a little mountain

rambling.

From the blistering pace we set heading up through the brush from Stuckagain Heights, it was obvious that both Kirk and I were disappointed that we didn't have better plans for the holiday weekend. By the time we crested the ridge above treeline, we were drenched in sweat, but enjoying the exercise and the cool breeze that accompanied swirling clouds.

Somewhere along the endless ridge to Knoya as the clouds began to lift, the idea was hatched: "I was thinking that four summits on the 4th might be a cool idea," said Kirk. Eager to pick off several new Chugach peaks, I liked the idea myself. There was one problem, however. I was supposed to meet relatives coming up from Homer that evening and wasn't sure I had the time. "I don't know, Kirk. I need to be back by 5, 6 at the latest. Let's see what time it is when we get to the summit of Knoya."

Two and half hours from the trailhead, we were standing on the summit of Knoya enjoying the



view and some well-needed refreshment. As we rested, the clouds lifted, revealing the deceptively close summit of Kanchee to the west. "How long do you figure it would take, over and back?" I asked Kirk, glancing at my watch. "I'd say 40 minutes, max" Kirk replied. "Ok, let's do it. No packs, no water, just over and back as quick as possible," I said, hoping that we would have enough time (and energy) to do Tikishla and still get back by 5:30.

Running as quickly as the terrain would permit, we raced off the summit of Knoya toward Kanchee. Kirk had forgotten about the 400' elevation drop between the two peaks, but no matter—we were on our way! Thirty minutes later we were snapping a quick picture in the clouds on Kanchee. One spin of the bicycle-pedal "prayer flag" marking the cairn and it was back to Knoya. Sixty-five minutes after we had left, we were back on the summit of Knoya, tanking up on water and grabbing a bite to eat before heading down the ridge toward Tikishla.

The plan was to summit Tikishla, descend to the bottom of the valley, then go up and over Near Point (summit #4), and back to the car via a known, but often hard to find trail that drops straight down to Stuckagain Heights. It was a great circuit that would keep us from having to cross the same ground twice and would probably be faster than going back over Knoya. However, given my time deadline, it would be a challenge.

At 2:50 P.M. we left the summit of Knoya. By 3:40 we were pulling the summit register out of the cairn on Tikishla, surprised to find that we were apparently the first visitors to the summit for 1998. After a fifteen-minute break over summit cookies and water, we were heading down the scree slope of the SW face aiming for a good snow gully below. Several standing glissades later, we were on the valley floor heading for Near Point. Pleasant travelling on the soft tundra turned into long, miserable side-hilling as we angled toward the ridge coming off the east side of Near Point. By 5:25 we had rounded the top of Near Point and stopped to finish off the last of our food and water. Already a little late, we were soon heading down the steep, brushy trail to Stuckagain Heights as fast as possible.

Too tired to do much braking with our legs, but jazzed by a successful day of peak bagging, we literally ran down the trail, emerging at the burned-out restaurant just up the road from the parking area. It was 6:08 P.M. — a little over eight hours since we had left.

I was a little late meeting the relatives, but not for the

burgers and beer which never tasted better! We both agreed that "4 on the 4th" was a superb success. For those looking for another MCA tradition, we're already looking at the map for next year. . .

## Interesting Day on Cantata

Dahr Jamail



According to Webster, the second definition of cantata states: "a sacred or secular choral composition comprising choruses, solos, recitatives, and interludes, usually accompanied by organ, piano, or orchestra, and arranged in a somewhat dramatic manner but not intended to be acted." When Troy Larson, Shawn O'Donnel, Tim Griffin and myself went about climbing the SW Ridge of this peak, perhaps we should have paid heed to the latter portion of this definition. Particularly so, in lieu of Kirk Towner and Bill Romberg's recent event on the same peak. I hadn't intended to submit a trip report, as our mishaps weren't as grim as what happened to Bill here not long ago, but when I mentioned doing a write-up to my partners, it was suggested I submit the story simply as a 'heads up' for other climbers.

On June 28th at 8:45 A.M., we left our camp at the base of Canata and hiked up to the base of the SW ridge under blue skies. The early clouds had burnt off, providing us a beautiful sunny day in which to climb. We made quick time to 4100 feet, where the fun began. We scrambled up the steepening ridge, enjoying the exposure as we gained elevation. At one point Shawn joked, "Whose idea was it to not bring a rope?" as I carefully slid around protruding bolder above an exposed gully. I laughed since the idea was mine, and caught his smile.

We took breaks infrequently, and were enjoying the exposed scrambling, the sun, views, and before we knew it we were at around 6000 feet. As Tim climbed carefully around another large rock that hung over a 10 foot drop which then ran out into a 70 degree gully, he pointed out to me to heed the loose bolder. He carefully touched it to show that it was unstable, then moved on. As I approached the same rock, I pointed out the warning to Troy and Shawn as well, then carefully slid past the potential trundle. As I continued to creep across the small cliff I heard a loud cracking noise as Shawn yelled, "Troy!" in a panic. I turned to see Troy falling, then land on his knee in a scree pile atop the gully. A large (3 X 2 foot) boulder fell through the air with him, and glanced off his thigh

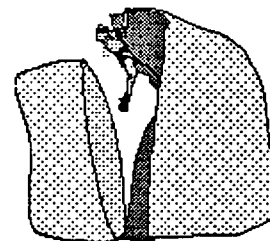
when he landed. The rock drove into the steep slope of the gully, cracking into two, then tumbled lazily down the face, echoing reports all the way down. Troy knelt sullenly on his new perch, stunned. Shawn quickly made his way over to him, and broke out his first aid kit. Being an E.M.T., he immediately went to work, as Troy's thigh was gashed open and bleeding, along with some large abrasions. After clinging to my position for a bit too long due to a case of the jitters, I began to slowly make my way over to Troy and Shawn to help out. Between our two first aid kits, we had everything we needed to get Troy patched up - gauze pads, alcohol wipes, tape, Motrin, etc. After the aid was given, Troy took some time to just sit, breath, and recollect himself. We all took advantage of the break to do the same. It was then that I realized it wasn't even the rock I'd warned them of that had fallen, it was a different boulder. No warning, he was simply using a handhold on what appeared to be a solid rock and the whole thing blew out. Once again, the Chugach Crud lived up to its name. After Troy decided he was OK to continue to the top since we were so close, we proceeded to finish off what we'd begun. Less than an hour after the accident, we sat on top admiring the spectacular views of nearby Calliope, Eagle Peak, Organ and Flute. Up north the big three shone in the sun above the clouds, Denali, Sultana and Begguya. Spurr appeared in the same fashion across the Inlet. We all acknowledged how lucky we were to summit on such a fine day, and praised the state in which we live.

After a couple of more Motrin, Troy was getting along quite well. We descended the scree-encrusted south face, alternating gullies as we found a route down. About 200 feet above the more gentle scree slope which symbolized the beginning of the flatland, Shawn opted on what he thought was a more direct line down, and parted from the group, as it appeared we were home free.

Troy, Tim and I dropped onto the scree, and began traversing across it on a snowfield towards the flats. Shawn appeared above, about 100' off the deck, slowly down-climbing a rather steep portion of the face. As we called up to him, he informed us he'd dropped his pack to get around a particularly exposed section, and now he was retrieving it. We stood quietly as he found his pack, then traversed across the face to a more suitable descent route. Not too long thereafter, all four of us, again a group, proceeded to hike out, happy to be off the tenuous rock, and pleased with the day. While doing so, Shawn informed us of how, while down-climbing, the rock which was holding his feet on one move blew out, and if it weren't for having solid hand-holds, he'd have fallen the rest of the way down. We quickly came upon

two flags, which turned out to be markers of where Bill had fallen through a snow slope and lost his pack, and nearly his life. We eventually ran into Bill and another fellow, who had hiked up in hopes of retrieving his pack, but were unsuccessful. We laughed with them about our recent perils on Cantata, and joked of renaming the peak to something like "WidowMaker."

Driving home from the South Fork trailhead, we discussed how in the past we'd all taken things for granted, like not wearing a helmet, bringing scant first aid supplies (if any at all), and not paying very close attention whilst moving across the 'crud.' Good lessons learned for a small price, during a successful day in the mountains, in more ways than one.



### Climbing Notes

Phil Fortner and Chris Brown made the first ascent of Awful Peak (8170), Chugach Mountains, from their camp in the head waters of Coal Creek. The route was via the south face to a col on the west ridge between Awful and Point 7745, then up the west ridge to the summit. It took 15 hours, and was done largely unprotected, because hey, it was Chugach Crud at its worst and could not be protected. This was on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Jim Sayler, Chris Brown and Willy Hersman added the sixth entry to the summit register on The Mitre on July 25th. This fact in itself is uninteresting perhaps, but what was very significant was this: This was last summit which Jim Sayler needed to climb every peak in Chugach State Park, an accomplishment which began with Flattop in 1975. It was a historic moment, the list being over 120 peaks long (determined by the 500-foot drop criteria). Champagne and cigars were out, but could not be enjoyed in the ensuing snowstorm. The retreat back to camp involved getting benighted in the cliffs above Eklutna River as darkness made an unfamiliar traverse too risky. Seven times the Eklutna Glacier calved as we passed the face, sending large chunks of ice cubes crashing into the river and loud shots reverberating into the heart of the Western Chugach. Whether a celebratory gesture to success or barks of indifference to humans we cannot say.







The Anchorage Museum of History and Art has invited the internationally renowned artist Hamish Fulton to visit Alaska this coming August and September.

Fulton has become well known throughout the international art world as a "Walking Artist." While here, he will undertake a series of walks throughout the state and then create an exhibition at this museum that describes and reflects the experiences of his walks through Alaska. His exhibitions consist of large installations that use vast wall spaces and typical of his work are immense graphic wall panels, some up to 60 feet long and 15 feet high. These large panels use words that have a visual as well as literary meaning. The Zen-like poetry of his graphic walls has made his work extremely popular in Japan, where he has walked and exhibited several times.

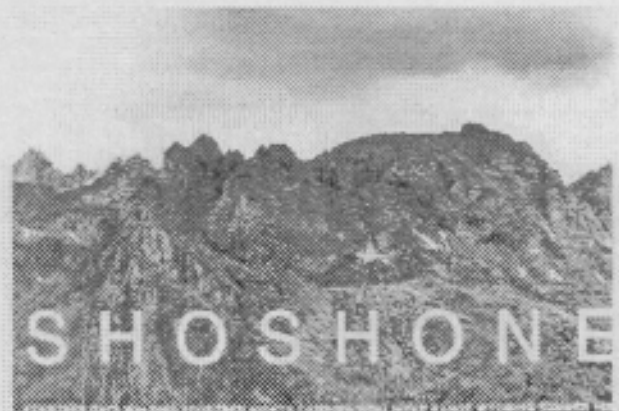
Fulton's work describes his attitude to Nature and perhaps he would be better called a "Nature Artist." He is the second artist of this type who we have asked to visit Alaska, complete a residency and make an exhibition.

Both he and Andy Goldsworthy work and use the natural environment as their medium and subject matter. Goldsworthy physically changes and alters Nature while Fulton's work reflects upon it, it is passive and non-interfering, and it has a "hands-off" approach. Both these British artists are on the "cutting edge" of contemporary art and were invited to the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, to educate and expose our public to new direc-

tions in landscape art. They have taken the traditional mediums of painting, sculpture and photography that are typically associated with landscape art, and used them to create new ways of looking at a familiar subject. Fulton's work is visually and intellectually challenging. It asks questions about the way we usually look at landscape art and nature in general. It asks us to leave our preconceived notions of art at the gallery door, and open ourselves to a new experience.

Fulton will arrive in Anchorage the week of August 23 and has expressed an interest in meeting people who are knowledgeable about different geographic areas within the state. He has yet to decide where to undertake his walks, and would like some advice. If you are interested in meeting Fulton, please call Dave Nichols at 343-6122. He will also give a public slide lecture about his various walks and subsequent exhibitions, from around the world, on Monday evening, 7:00 PM September 21, in the Museum Auditorium.

This lecture is part of a lecture series, organized by the Alaska Design Forum. The lecture will conclude with a reception honoring the artist. The resulting exhibition will open on September 24 and run through November 11, 1998.





## ADZE

### Do you know where these people are?

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Myron Althouse | Chuck Metzger |
| Bill Dawson    | Joe Page      |
| Dan Erikson    | Tom Plumley   |
| Brian Forbes   | Bert Puchtler |
| Jim Johnson    | Bond Taber    |

Rod Wilson, Paul Crews, and Lowell Thomas continue to prepare their book about the Tordrillos and would like to interview them since they have climbed  
Contact Rod 563-7010

### Fund Raising Climb

Looking for people interested in organizing a local peak climb fundraiser for breast cancer, to be scheduled early spring 1999.  
Contact Michelle 272-7208

### American Alpine Club Meeting

The Alaska Section will host a "social" on Monday, Aug 24, 7:00 PM, at the Alaska Rock Gym. Pizza and refreshments will be provided. Visiting Board Member Elena Moran and Swiss Alpine Club representative Andre Rierden will be giving short presentations on what is happening in the international scene. Also there will be updates on the USFS fixed anchor ban and problems with access at the Monolith.

### Looking for Photos

Of the following:

Mt. Alpenglow  
Bashful Peak  
Bird Peak  
Bold Peak  
Byron Peak  
Calliope Mt.  
Carpathian  
Eagle Mt.  
E. Twin  
Goat Mt.  
Granite Peak  
Hunter's Peak  
Hurdy-Gurdy Peak  
Indian House Mt.  
Kick Step  
Montana Peak  
Mt. Rumble  
Mt. Wickersham  
N. face O'Malley  
Peril Peak  
Pinnacle Peak  
Pioneer Peak  
Polar Bear Mt.  
Ptarmigan Peak  
Spearmint Peak  
Mt. Yukla  
Bock's Den  
Bomber Hut  
Dnigi Hut  
Hans' Hut  
Lane Hut  
Mint Hut  
Pichler's Perch  
Rosie's Roost  
Snowbird Hut  
Scandinavian Peaks Hut

Contact Aze 349-2386 266-9249w,  
tazegami@alaska.net

## MINUTES

### BOARD MEETING

June 10, 1998

Meeting was called to order at the Q-Cafe. Members present were: Mark Miraglia, Kirk Towner, Richard Baranow, Brenda Bryan, Matt Nedom, Tom Choate and Dara Lively, Helga Bashor.

### Patches

500 patches are now available, designed and produced by

the Branded Emblem Co., and selling for five dollars each. A purchase of four comes with a free 98 calendar.

### Eklutna Traverse

Due to the glacier retreat, it is becoming more difficult to get off the ice and down to the road. Members will go to check the status of the fixed lines installed two years ago. Also considered was the possibility of placing a cable. There may be a liability question.

### Trip Reports

Since there is no written policy on the length and content of trip reports submitted to Scree, it was decided that there should be a **one-page trip report limit**. If more extended coverage is needed, submissions can be broken down into shorter segments. Board members will ask the editor to give an outline for editorial purposes.

**Trail Signs** Road signs have been priced at \$750, to be placed at 16 locations (7 1/2 by 11 inch each, on 4 by 4 posts). The costs of the signs will be split with the American Alpine Club. Alaska Graphics will be consulted for a price reduction. For sign content, please see Mark Miraglia. He will see if donations for signs can be obtained.

### Club Projects

Should **anchors** be upgraded? No conclusion was reached on the subject, the question of course, as always ... liability.

### Hut Repairs

The 210<sup>th</sup> Air National Guard is willing to take a prefab outhouse to the **Bomber Hut** when their schedule permits. Nick Parker will work with them on another trip to **Pichler's Perch** to make floor repairs. Ralph Baldwin, his daughter Clare and Alex Wheeler made a crude door from available materials at **Bock's Den**.

### Crampons

Tom Choate reported that we have 20 pairs of strap-ons, of which no more than 10 are any good and two need repair. After repairs are made, there will be 9 **workable pairs**. It was decided to donate the repairable crampons to the Boy Scouts. The purchase of new crampons will be decided at a later date.

Submitted by Matt Nedom  
Edited by Mark Miraglia



# Climbing at Risk

By ALISON OSIUS

*Carbondale, Colo.*

When I was in my early 20s, a friend my age was killed in an avalanche while mountaineering in Canada. Though the two had never met, his father wrote to mine, "I hope that after this, you won't try to dissuade your daughter from climbing. I watched climbing bring out the best parts of my son, and I saw the same traits in his climbing friends."

Climbing is a sport and a way of life that teaches us responsibility, to strive for difficult goals and about failure. A good decision and an orderly retreat can create one of a person's greatest days out in the hills. Climbing asks for concentration and some mettle, and may grant insight, humor and trust. But now American climbing, with its decades of rich history and 300,000-plus practitioners, is threatened.

On June 1 the U.S. Forest Service banned fixed anchors on national forest wilderness lands as being incompatible with the Wilderness Act, interpreting the tiny fixtures to be "installations" like dams and roads, even as metal trail signs and hikers' bridges remain perfectly acceptable. The ruling prohibited any pitons or bolts left in the rock, and any slings left around trees or rock horns for rappel anchors. It allowed only for use of "removable anchors," with local managers directed to pull out all fixed anchors "if feasible"—which it isn't.

The Forest Service's policy was based upon a faulty understanding of how climbing safety equipment is used, and has made climbing on these lands either more dangerous or impossible. Suddenly, climbing is kaput on countless routes and peaks in the Washington and Oregon Cascades, in the Sierra of California, in Wyoming's Wind River Range, in the Sawtooths in Idaho and elsewhere.

Climbers use two types of hardware to protect them in case of a fall: removable protection and fixed anchors. In the early days of climbing, pitons—metal pins with circular heads to which a climbing rope can be attached—were hammered into cracks by the lead climber and whacked back out by the last person on the rope. However, several decades ago climbers saw that repeated piton use scarred the rock (more so than leaving an occasional piton in place ready for the next team). They then developed various-sized metal devices that could be slotted into cracks and removed with no effect.

For those climbs that have no cracks, the first ascensionist may drill a hole three-eighths of an inch wide in the rock, insert an expansion bolt and add a walnut-sized metal hanger, to which all subsequent climbers clip. (A popular misconception is that later climbers place bolts anew.) These rock-colored bolts can rarely be seen from a few feet away, let alone from a trail below.

On most climbing routes today, climbers in wilderness areas generally use removable protection to climb a peak, and fixed protection to descend it by rappelling (on ropes doubled through a fixed anchor

and then pulled down). These fixed anchors are very hard to make out. A Forest Service spokesman has been quoted as saying many mountains in the wilderness now contain "a maze of metal fixtures." No way—fixed anchors in these areas are few and far between. Even climbers may not see them until they are under our noses, though a guidebook tells us where they are.

Prohibition of slings seems a final excess. The nylon slings that may be tied around a rock horn to prevent a rope getting stuck, or a tree to prevent its bark being worn through, are merely one inch wide.

Under the new national policy, in theory you couldn't even leave a removable anchor behind in an emergency—say, descending in a storm from halfway up a route, or trying to get an injured partner down—without risking citation or arrest. According to the Access Fund, an advocacy group for climbers, you could conceivably be cited for simply clipping into a rappel anchor on hundreds (if not thousands) of historic wilderness climbs.

American climbers have been using fixed anchors, sparingly, at least since the 1920s. Without them, you can't get down from desert towers or many other climbs. Without them, alpine rescues could turn into nightmares. In its ruling, the Forest Service said that anchors for rescues could be installed after a "documented approval process." The need for rescues, however, arises unpredictably. Why not use whatever we already have as and when we need it?

The anti-anchors mania seems to be spreading through the federal outdoors bureaucracy. The National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management both want to bring restrictions to their vast territories. However, climbers and environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society, believe fixed anchors should be generally allowed, but managed at the local level with guidance from the national government to preserve wilderness values (they agree, for example, that unrestricted bolting is inappropriate in wilderness).

If the Park Service and BLM adopt the hard line taken by the Forest Service, say goodbye to almost all historic rock climbing in this country: the backcountry domes of Tuolumne, the airy granite faces of El Capitan and Half Dome in Yosemite National Park; the boulders of Joshua Tree in California; the big walls of Zion, Utah; the Tetons in Wyoming; the Red Rocks of Nevada; and the North Cascades of Washington.

Climbing is the sort of primitive recreation the Wilderness Act was designed to allow. Climbers have a good environmental record. We even pick up other people's trash. We're not talking about stippling these cliff faces with heavy metal, just being able to get up and back down in one piece.

*Ms. Osius is a senior editor at Climbing magazine and the first woman president of the 95-year-old American Alpine Club.*



A piton

# Deadline: August Meeting

## For the *Second Annual* Mountaineering Club of Alaska

# 1999 Photo Contest

We had so much fun putting together the first MCA Photo Calendar, celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1998, that we just had to do it again. With even more information on local peaks, club events, and the very best of *your* photos, the 1999 MCA Calendar will help you wrap up the millennium in style!

### Photo Contest Rules:

- ◆ Any current (1998) club member is eligible to enter.
- ◆ Photos should be hiking- or climbing-related.
- ◆ A club member may enter **one photo in each of the four categories:**

**Hiking** ~ on-the-trail, off-the-trail, ridge-running, stream-crossing, bushwhacking, or scree-scrambling travel  
**Climbing** ~ your wildest action or most aesthetic scene while climbing on rock, ice, snow, or glacier  
**People** ~ your half-crazed, half-dazed, or half-amazed friends — go ahead and *shoot* your fellow club members!  
**Scenery** ~ your best photo of a choice campsite, stunning sunrise or sunset, or majestic mountain scene

- ◆ You may submit any size print (5 x 7 recommended), but it must be received by the August meeting. Either drop it off at a meeting or mail it to: MCA / PO Box 102037 / Anchorage AK 99510-2037
- ◆ All entries remain the property of the photographer; MCA is authorized to publish the photo for use in the calendar only. After judging, you may pick up your photo entries at any meeting.
- ◆ Attach a note card to the back with the following information:

Your name, address, and telephone  
Category and title of the photograph  
Any interesting details about the photo that might be published in the calendar  
(was it a club trip, local area, club member, when and where was it taken, etc.)

### Judging Procedure:

- ◆ Photographers' names will be kept confidential throughout the judging process, we will cover up the information on the back and issue each photo a sticker with the number, category, and title for judging.
- ◆ If necessary, the Club Officers and Directors will narrow down the entries to the top 10-15 photos in each category. This will only be done if necessary to make the final judging process possible within the September meeting time constraints. Our criteria will be a combination of photo quality, content, scenery, composition, humor, unique situations or events, adventure, being in the right place at the right time, and being just plain 'fun to look at' (not necessarily in that order).
- ◆ Final judging will take place during the September meeting. All members in attendance will be issued a ballot to select their top three choices from each category, plus one "Bonus" selection. Results will be announced in the October Scree. All winning photos will be published in the calendar, along with as many other entries as we can fit in.

### Prizes:

The top photo from each main category will win its owner a **gift certificate from AMH** and a **free calendar**. The second- and third-place photos in each category will win **camping or climbing gear** and other prizes, to be presented at the October meeting.

### Reserve Your Calendar and Save \$\$:

The calendars will be available at the November meeting for \$18 each. A Discount Price of \$16 each is available for members who enter a photo in the contest and pre-pay by the October meeting. Please include \$3 extra if you want your calendar mailed.

### If you can't make the August meeting:

You can still mail in your photos to the club address by August 31<sup>st</sup>! MCA · PO Box 102037 · Anchorage AK 99510-2037