

the **SCREE**

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

August 2008

Volume 51 Number 8



Itch on purpose,
to be scratched.
~ Samuel Butler

Monthly Meeting
Wed, August 20 @ 7:30 PM
Program: Jeff Babcock, who was
on Denali with an MCA party
during the 1967 Wilcox tragedy

Cantata Peak
50th Anniversary
Mt. Blachnitzky POM

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

"To maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering"

Join us for our club meetings the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9th Avenue and G Streets next to the ConocoPhillips Building (you may use marked parking after hours).

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at www.mcak.org.

Cover photo: Greg Encelewski on Cantata Peak,
Photo by Marcin Ksok.

Article Submission: Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can also attach a word processing document to an email. Due to formatting problems please do not submit material in the body of an email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover, a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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Change to Meeting Time?

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

There are no hikes or climbs scheduled at this time!

The club needs some volunteers to lead some trips!

Ice Festival

Come learn how to climb ice or improve your technique at this instructional weekend. All levels welcome. Equipment not included. Sign-up before 9/24 for \$50. Online registration is available at www.mcak.org, if you are a current MCA member. You must attend a mandatory meeting on 9/24 to participate. For more information contact: mca_icefest@yahoo.com or Jayme Dixon at 907-382-0212.

Editor's Corner and Call for Articles

This is a thin issue. Even though this may set a record for cold, wet summers, we know some of you are out there somewhere. If you are hiking, climbing or engaged in some activity in which the MCA members would be interested, write up a trip report and send it along. Route information is good and pictures are always welcome. Got a good picture but don't want to write a story? Send that in too. We would like to know who is in the picture and where it was taken. OK then, hope to hear from you soon.

We finally have a logo for the Club's 50th Anniversary. It's on the cover and you can wear it if you get one of the zip fleece shirts mentioned in the '50th Anniversary' notes in this issue

Cantata Peak

by Marcin Ksok



Photo by Greg Encelewski

It was 15 degrees F, the middle of a very cold October, and I was putting my leather boots and feet through a test. Greg was working the stove at our camp on the moraine between Eagle and Symphony Lakes. Days of summer long gone, darkness and cold were upon us. There was no snow at our elevation of 3000 feet, but we expected it up higher.

As usual, Greg was up first - 5:00 a.m. At 6:00, after a breakfast of oatmeal, we were heading up the lower hillsides into the massive northwest gully, encountering an increased amount of snow on our way up. The moderate slope angle made ascending easy and in a short time we reached the saddle left of Point 4755. Visibility was fair, which gave us opportunity to examine the route ahead - the Western Ridge. Following the guidebook we rounded Point 4755, reached the ridge and continued onto the increasingly steeper terrain. That is where the scrambling started. One spot got tricky. Greg, being ahead, got onto some steep loose snow covering less than perfect rock, with high exposure and risk in case of a fall. He took some time digging through to decent hand and foot holds, paving the way for me.

After the obstacle we pressed on, reaching the all important "notch." We scrambled down into it and abandoned the ridgeline for the southern face, which we traversed, reaching a wide scree slope, ascending it to a short, easy ridge section and reaching the summit. That is where I realized how cold it was. The thermometer read 0 deg. I was forced to put on the mittens, which does not happen very often. After a quick break, we retraced our route. Just as we were finishing the last of the ridge, while scrambling down a steep section, one of my footholds broke loose. I lost my balance, but thankfully Greg had me on the rope, and in a split second I was securely glued to the crumbly rock. We had roped up for practice, to work on our roped traveling skills, and at that moment I was glad we did. Back at the camp we ate, drank and dreaded the long walk out on the South Fork trail.

I found Cantata to be a fun outing, offering an easy approach, spectacular setting, and some exciting scrambling. The entire route is described in the "50 Hikes in the Alaska's Chugach State Park" guidebook, which made for a straightforward and no-guessing trip.

Peak of the Month: Mount Blachnitzky

by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Coast Mountains; Heritage Range
Borough: City and Borough of Juneau
Drainage: Gilkey Glacier
Latitude/Longitude: 58° 47' 49" North, 134° 23' 46" West
Elevation: 6552 feet
Prominence: 602 feet from Peak 6576 near the Gilkey Glacier
Adjacent Peak: Peak 6576
Distinctness: 602 feet from Peak 6576
USGS Map: Juneau (D-2)
First Recorded Ascent: June 30, 2004, by Charles Daellenbach, Keith Daellenbach, Scott McGee, and Fred Skemp III
Route of First Recorded Ascent: Southwest cirque to the south ridge
Access Point: The 2000-foot level of the Gilkey Glacier

Mount Blachnitzky was named in honor of Klaus P. Blachnitzky, a glaciologist, surveyor, geodesist, researcher, and Juneau Icefield explorer who, on August 15, 1988, fell to his death from a rocky cleaver above the Vaughan Lewis Glacier approximately 4 miles east-northeast of the summit of Mount Blachnitzky. Keith Daellenbach and Scott McGee extracted his body and Keith Daellenbach later proposed the name Mount Blachnitzky. The USGS Board on Geographic Names approved the name in January 2007.

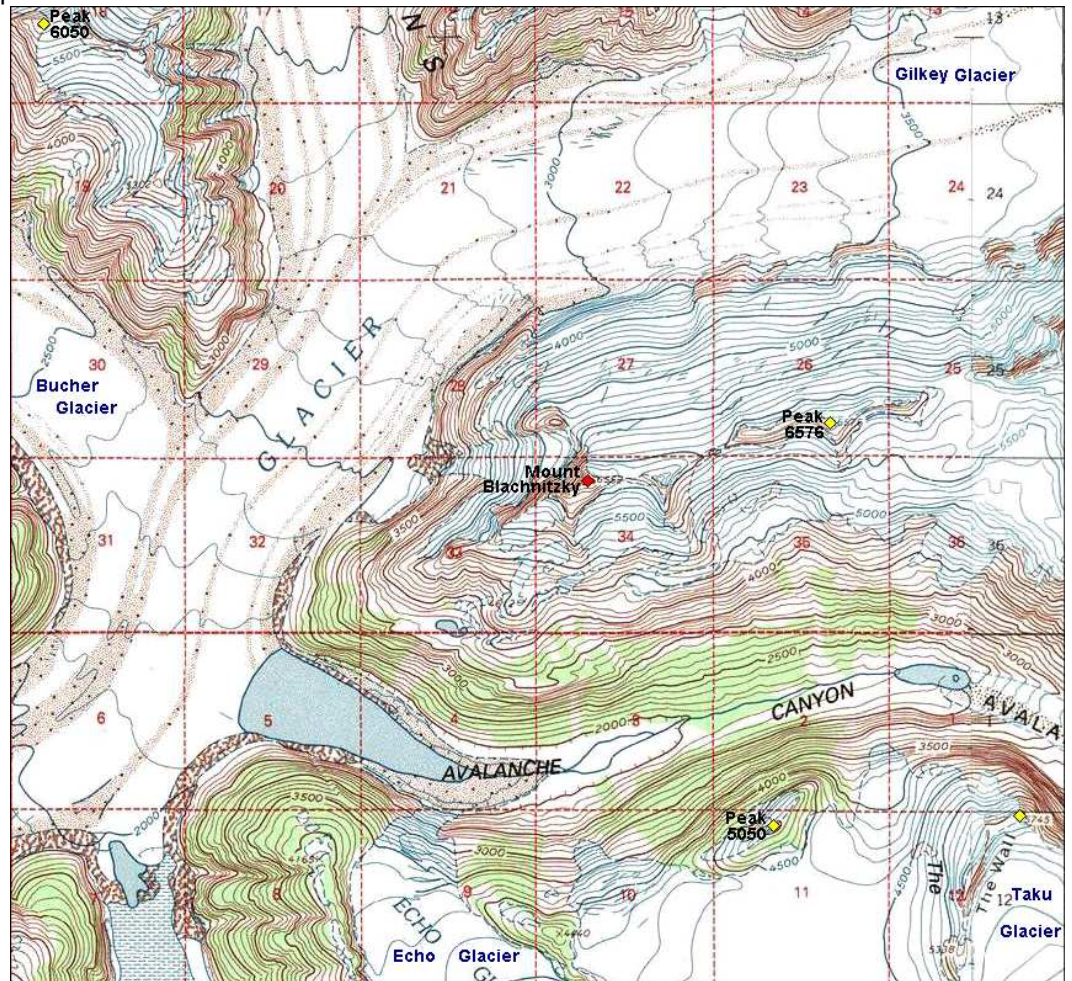
Keith Daellenbach and Scott McGee teamed with Keith's father, Chuck, and friend Fred Skemp III to make the first recorded ascent of Mount Blachnitzky. After being deposited by helicopter at the 2000-foot level of the Gilkey Glacier, the four made a base camp and then climbed a steep and loose slope to reach the vegetation. They then bushwhacked through alders, willows, and hemlock to reach a tarn in a cirque at about 3650 feet. After camping there, they climbed a 600-foot, 45-degree snow gully to a bench. From the bench the party continued northeast until they reached the south ridge. Snow conditions warranted the placement of pickets as they

simulclimbed to the summit. The party descended by the same route to their base camp.

Keith Daellenbach's trip report originally appeared on page 12 of the 2004 *Mazama* and was reprinted in the March 2007 *Scree*. A summary report also appeared on page 200 of the 2005 *American Alpine Journal*.



Gilkey Trench and Mount Blachnitzky (right)



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

Letters to the Editor

Greenland Peak Map Comments

The map published with last month's Greenland Peak article contains a few controversial names or names found only in the Scandinavian Hut log. I will make comments based on my memory of things from a decade or two ago:

Denmark "Peak" as shown is one of the mistakes published on the large scale topo long ago and is a point on the end of the ridge. The true summit is just below ".com/topo" at the bottom, and was climbed by two of us on a hut recce in the late 80s.

Norway "Peak" as shown is a bump on the ridge of Finland, again designated because someone who looked from down on the Matanuska Glacier gave names without any climbing. Later this little point was among the first things climbed here. I have long advocated a campaign to get the geographic names folks to rescind this and use the name for the deserving, equally highest peak, 9405 shown here as Lapland Peak; otherwise we have a ridiculous situation: a Scandinavian Peaks group without a real peak called Norway.

Lapland Peak: this name came about during a traverse of Point 9080 by Willy and me in our attempt to summit

from the long northeast ridge, which encountered many gorges and cliffs.

I made the first recorded ascent of 9405 later, solo from Viking Col, as my partner didn't like the scrambling over gendarmes involved. If it can't be Norway, then Lapland is OK.

Ya Sure (peak): this was a fun name given by Willy and me during our first ascent. As Willy commented, the geographic names people would reject this. I kind of like Viking Peak as an alternative, do you?

Tom Choate

The Exodus

The American Alpine Club website features a trip report by Clint Helander regarding a climb Seth Holden, Steve Sinor, and he made near the Big River Glacier in the Revelation Mountains. After ascending an X-shaped couloir to reach the summit, the three named the 8385-foot peak 'The Exodus.' As far as I know, their climb was the first recorded ascent of the peak.

<http://www.americanalpineclub.org/pages/story/5/108>

Steve Gruhn

MCA 50th Anniversary

Party: September 14, Alpenglow Lodge at Arctic Valley, Time: Noon – 10 pm
Events: Potluck meal, hiking, evening slide show, fun mountaineering games, etc.

MCA 50th anniversary logo long-sleeved zip fleece shirts for sale. Colors available are red, navy, and grey. Sizes available are XS-2XL. Inside is fleecy; the exterior is smooth. The shirts are \$45 and to be paid at time of ordering. Order forms and payment taken at Aug. 20th meeting.



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

MEETING TIME PREFERENCE SURVEY

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska is conducting a survey of its members concerning the starting time of our monthly meetings. Your input is requested.

Currently, the Mountaineering Club of Alaska conducts our monthly meetings, the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church at 725 West Ninth Avenue (corner of Ninth & G Streets, downtown Anchorage).

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska is conducting a survey. We are accepting written comments and votes. Please vote on the following meeting time preference. (1 vote per active membership) The MCA Board will review all written comments and votes. Thank you for your input.

(Please check one)

6:30 pm

7pm

7:30 pm (Current Time)

No Preference; (Please explain why below.)

Membership Name:

Last, First

Additional Comments:

Ballots may be submitted:

In person: at the next monthly meeting.

By Mail: **P.O. Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-2037**

Online: www.mcak.org

MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips. **NON-TECHNICAL:** Following are a few standards used to classify nontechnical trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

CLASS A: Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

CLASS B: Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

CLASS C: Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

CLASS D: Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

CLASS E: Hazardous climbing conditions or stream-crossing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

TECHNICAL: Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.

GLACIER TRAVEL: Trips requiring roped travel over glaciers. Knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. Basic understanding of ice and snow anchors also required.

FIFTH CLASS: Trips which involve fifth class climbing. A Basic Mountaineering course or equivalent is required. Knowledge of belay and rappel techniques and placing anchors is required. Climbing difficulty varies widely with each trip.

TRIP PARTICIPANTS have the obligation to acquaint themselves with the nature of the trip and to verify that it is within their capability and experience. Anyone wishing to participate in any trip above CLASS A must have completed one or more trips of the next lower classification, or the equivalent.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment is available from the trip leader.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. The trip leader can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-prepared (e.g. inappropriate clothing/gear).
4. The leader's suggestions are to be followed. Do not go off alone, return or rush ahead without his (her) permission, and don't ford a stream before the leader assesses the situation. Remember, this is a club trip and the leader must know where all participants are. Anyone separating from the group without the leader's approval is no longer considered a participant the MCA Sanctioned trip.
5. The trip leader has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), dependent upon current conditions. However, he/she must appoint a qualified co-leader to lead the second group using the guidelines specified in the current Trip Leader Responsibilities.
6. Trip participants who, in the leader's opinion, put themselves or other members of the group in danger by disregarding the leader's suggestions, shall be subject to sanction by the club. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand at general meeting, exclusion from future trips, termination of annual membership, or lifetime exclusion from the club.
7. You must sign up on a trip roster (club meetings) or contact the leader, and you must have signed the club waiver to be on a club trip.
8. If you find you cannot participate after signing up on the roster, please let the leader know, both for transportation and gear-planning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.
9. Total number of people on club trips:
Minimum: 4 (for safety reasons)
Maximum: Leader option, depends upon the trail and campsite conditions, but generally limited to 12 in trail-less areas or State/ National Parks
10. Firearms are not encouraged, and please let the leader know if you want to carry one - it will be leader's option. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Sean Bolender 830-5102
Vice-President Annette Iverson 222-0581
Secretary Bridget Paule 230-9903
Treasurer Travis Taylor 382-4823

Board member Don Hansen 243-7184
Board member Andy Rembert 688-3230
Board member Jayme Dixon 382-0212
Board member Steve Parry 248-8710
Board member Tom Devine 529-0618

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the club Treasurer. The Post Office will not forward the newsletter.

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be submitted on the web at www.mcak.org or e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles should be received by the monthly club meeting (third Wednesday of the month) to be in the next month's Scree.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by our monthly meeting to pick it up or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant - 243-1438
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell - 346-4608, Jayme Dixon - 382-0212
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008
Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald - 346-2589
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