

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Willow Park Recreation Hall, 9th and Fairbanks, 8:00 p.m., Monday, September 20. The program will be a slide presentation by several club members showing their personal climbing experiences.

ALYESKA TRAVERSE

July 25, 1965

Dale Hagen

I took advantage of the good weather and set out to traverse Alyeska from the chair lift to the highway. I wanted to survey the route before the scheduled club climb. (Ed. note: this climb did not take place as no one called Dale.) Solo climbing is bad for safety but good for the soul. I went solo. Wishing to make the ascent no harder than necessary, I waited for the chair lift to start up at 12 o'clock.

Leaving the chair lift and the Round House my route was up the medial ridge and into the clouds. Through the clouds the sun filtered as a flat disk, but then sometimes bright and warm. This ridge is marvelous hiking. At the top of it I uncoiled my new 9mm perlon rope, draped it around a substantial rock projection, and rappelled down the other side to the snow which still filled the Virgin Creek bowl. I gave one end of the rope a pull to start coiling it up again, but the rock had hold of it and wouldn't let go. I climbed back up, draped the rope around a smaller, more cooperative looking rock, and rappelled down again. Another tug of war and again the rock won. This time, muttering, I climbed up, used a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch sling, said, "you can have that one, grabby", and rappelled down again.

With the rope finally coiled and gear appropriately arranged, I sat down, rump poised on the snow edge, ice axe ready to stab in, gave a little forward lurch, and shot off in a fast sitz-schuss into the Virgin Creek Bowl. Wet Pants. A walk across the bowl in warm sunshine brought me to another, but much steeper, medial ridge. My route was up this ridge, sometimes on the rock which was torn apart from the earthquake, and sometimes kicking steps in the snow. The top of this ridge was as far as Teresa Overfield and I had climbed in March.

From here the traverse to the main peak was a down-to-the-saddle-and-up hike. There were ptarmigan around the rocks and a hawk circling overhead. Lynx appeared to be after the ptarmigan too; their toiletry was conspicuous in confined areas on the cornices (once a year flush). The main peak (4,435') swept free of clouds at 5:30 p.m. when I arrived there. I could see the Double Lusk and the Tigers Den so I hollered for a beer, but nobody rushed out with one that I could see. Lousy service. The register contained two names from May 30, 1959: Keith Hart, ICA, and Arion Fiebig. They had ascended by way of Kern Mountain, and this was my route down after taking a few photos. A couple of miles of hiking the undulations of the ridge brought me to the top of the avalanche area where the highway is being re-routed. The descent here took two hours. I used my crampons on the steep slippery slope, and I would say it was fairly unpleasant.

The traverse took ten hours in all which is a long day for a Monday-to-Friday swivel chair operator; however, I do recommend it for the average and in-condition climber. The peculiar way Girdwood folks name mountains makes it a four mountain trip. If you go up via Max's Mountain, you could make it five mountains in one day. The middle two are the highest of the five and unnamed; I hereby name these East Berg and West Berg. If you don't like these two clever names or this method of naming mountains, perhaps we can agree that anything climbable in one day is one mountain, if that. In this case, the whole thing would be Alyeska Mountain. Well, my day was not quite over; I still had a walk to the Double Lusk to get that beer:

LECHUGH PEAK AREA

August 1, 1965

Sally Hague

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, one of those nearly perfect Alaska days with wispy clouds and intermittent sunshine. Nine of us--Carol DeVoe, Fred Flanders, Larry Sanders, Rick Edmonds, Lee Chandler, a friend of Lee's, Pete Aude (a neighbor of our's), my husband Bill, and I--left the Safeway parking lot bound for the Lechugh Peak area.

All three cars (including Fred's low slung Porsche) made it up Rabbit Creek Road and Golden View Drive to Ivan and Ora Stewart's poppyfield and homestead where we took off on foot. We decided to head for the highest point of the Lechugh Peak ridge and so continued via the drive up to the ridge separating Potter Creek Valley from Little Rabbit Creek Valley and headed up the ridge. Our lovely tundra walk led us

up the gentle slope to a steeper area and finally to the rocky summit of "4301", two peaks back from what the Geological Survey map calls McHugh Peak. Here we truly had "a lun ch with a view"--distant Anchorage and Cook Inlet showing faintly beyond the valleys and peaks before us, the impressive Suicide Peaks with a tiny lake at their feet from which McHugh Creek winds its way to Turnagain Arm, and the Arm with the Kenai peaks misty in the distance.

Deciding to explore a little farther, we followed a high narrow plateau eastward to "4298" which provided another nice view of the Suicides. From there we descended to Little Rabbit Creek Valley and followed the stream out, enjoying the myriad of forget-me-nots, monkshood, dwarf dogwood, etc. After climbing back up and crossing the rocky side slope of the ridge we'd originally ascended in the morning, we reached the road again and our cars.

Looking back at the peaks bathed in late afternoon sunshine, we agreed that this had been a most rewarding hike. It could easily be done in a morning or afternoon and affords some lovely views of the surrounding area.

EKLUTNA CABIN - PROGRESS REPORT

August 21-22

Dave DeVoe

Four climbers managed to transport the materials and install windows in the A-frame over the weekend of August 21-22.

Steve Herrero, a visiting Sierra Clubber, and Dave DeVoe constructed the first window, a trapezoidal sheet of Iylar (a non-stretching plastic) on Saturday. Having exhausted their carpentry skills, Steve and Dave went climbing the next day, leaving the second window to be installed by Larry Sanders and Bernie Kazmierczak. The latter is a deluxe job, having two layers of Iylar.

The cabin is in good shape, considering its environment. It does need further caulking and a paint job. The furniture built by the first 1965 visitors is very convenient. Next major improvement---installation of a new stove, which was donated for the cabin by grateful visitors who waited out a blizzard in the A-frame early this year. Anyone planning a trip up that way is invited to pick up the stove (it breaks down into at least two pieces, we're told) at Paul Crews' house.

PELLET PEAK (5,665')-- FIRST HUMAN ASCENT

August 22

Dave DeVoe

The first ascender to leave his mark on this peak was an owl (according to Steve) WHO happened to regurgitate his indigestibles precisely on the summit. The large white pellet is preserved in a plastic bag along with the register under a cairn.

Steve Herrero, a member of the Sierra Club in Berkeley, and I left the Eklutna A-frame after breakfast on Sunday, August 22. We had no particular objective, but the day was too good (too good to be true, almost!) not to attempt something as ambitious as we had time for.

By 7:30 a.m. we were at the point up-glacier where the cabin disappears from sight beneath the hump of the ice where the large crevasses meet the side of White Lick Mountain. From there on it was a long snow-slog; we were roped and probing the obvious splits in the snow, which was quite hard and not bad for making fairly fast tracks.

As we walked, we had several rope-length conferences as to what looked both worthy and within reach. The peak we finally headed for is the southern culmination of the ridge that rims the eastern side of the snow bowl between Peril Peak (as seen from the cabin) and White Lick Mountain. Pellet Peak lies at the head of a valley that drains due south into the Last Fork of Eklutna River.

The climb was entirely on snow, with some corniced drifts to skirt, up to within a couple of hundred feet of the top. Then the rock summit was straight up on razor sharp crumbly stuff. I called it a "friction pitch" for the lack of friction. Gravity was the only dependable part of that slope. We found a more interesting way down---along the ridge, exposed, but solid enough, then switching back on what might have been a goat trail to the snow. (We'd seen some goat tracks along the highest snow ridge above the valley.)

It was a perfect day---calm, 50 plus at the warmest, and clear. Even the Californian had to admit it was at least as good as the Sierras, and certainly different.

SNOWBIRD LINE CABIN

September 4,5,6

Helen Wolfe

This was an unofficial trip made by several ICA members over the Labor Day weekend: Gayle Weinhauser, Bill and Sally Hague, John and Helen Wolfe (plus Johnny and David), and Jim Krob (who is planning to be a member). We are submitting this account because we thought there might be some interest in a current report on the cabin. We were delighted with the area and the many possibilities it offers for hiking, goldpanning, blueberrying, and some quite respectable climbing. This is a great place to have a cabin, and we only hope we can continue to have it.

The road to the cabin is quite driveable to within about a mile of the cabin. At that point Gayle parked his Chevy II, but the rest of us drove on over a badly washed out stretch. This included not only two four-wheel-drive vehicles but also the Hague's Microbus. That doesn't necessarily mean that every owner of Microbus or similar vehicle would want to drive all the way!

The cabin is no longer in very good condition. All of the windows are shot out as is the door latch. The roof badly needs repair; after a few hours of rain water begins to come through the ceiling in a few places. But the cabin is still very useable, and because of it we had an enjoyable weekend despite continual rain. The stove works, and there is a good supply of wood available from the old mine buildings. There is coal, too, but whether that is left from years past or belongs to the new owners we don't know.

Which brings up the subject of the new owners. Evidently a C. Rasmussen and one or two partners purchased the mine equipment and buildings this summer. As far as they know this includes our cabin. Rasmussen has posted a no trespassing sign on the cabin, but our sign is still inside. Art Davidson reports that he met one of the partners a couple of weeks ago at the mine; he said that they owned the cabin and were using it while they moved equipment out, but that we were welcome to use it when they were not. Fortunately we saw no one Labor Day weekend. Since the weekend we have been trying to track down our rights to the cabin but to date have not gotten very far. One theory is that we were supposed to move the cabin, another that we were supposed to file something with the BLM but didn't. We have not yet exhausted our resources, but meanwhile if anyone can give us any information on ICA's rights to the cabin, please call John Wolfe at 272-7587 weekdays.

GIRDWOOD TO EAGLE RIVER

May 29,30,31

John Wolfe 1st 2/3's
Helen Wolfe last 1/3

This three day trek through the Chugach behind Anchorage proved very successful despite overcast skies, dampness, and strong winds at higher altitudes. Although we saw lots of game, we encountered no bears. The trip is not a difficult one. There seems no question, however, that the trip should always be made in this direction; most of the distance is downhill and the route around most of the alder is visible ahead. We detoured from the final two miles of lower Raven Creek to avoid the deep gorge and alder tangles which plagued an ICA winter trip a few years ago, and I strongly recommend this route to others. I also recommend descending the right hand side of both Raven Creek and Eagle River. Crossing both is simple enough if done right near the shallow headwaters.

Hiking began Saturday morning at 8:30 just short of the broken bridge across Crow Creek above Girdwood. Nine made the trip. Six are ICA members: Bill and Sally Hague, John and Helen Wolfe, Leo Hannan, and Gayle Weinhauser. Also with us were three guests: Elga Dixon (now a member), Jim Krob, and Bob Ornerod.

Beyond the second bridge, the going was almost entirely on snow up through Crow Pass and into Raven Creek valley. As far as the old mine we were on steep side slope drifts which completely covered the roadway. We never did resort to a rope, but some of the group found it a bit unnerving to look straight down the snow slope to the floor of the deep gully below. A trail remained from a reconnaissance trip the prior weekend, and the snow was soft enough to make steps easily where there were none. The entire trip was afoot--no need for skis or snowshoes--in fact, they would have been a distinct hindrance by the end of the trip. In the early afternoon, after a lunch stop at the old mine ruins, and some tiring treadmill work up some mixed scree and snow to the high road, we went through Crow Pass. For some reason, we had held hopes that the pass might be reasonably free of snow by this time of year, but the view that greeted us as we topped the last rise was, at best, dismal. There appeared to be miles of flat, uninterrupted snowfield ahead. For a few minutes all of us "took refuge" on a big rock, the only patch of bare ground to be seen. (Current summer reports say the rock stands about ten feet high from the ground.) That was too small for the nine of us to camp on, and our cars had been driven back to town for us, so we had to mush on across the snows.

The snow was firm enough not to cause undue troubles, but the farther into the pass we went the worse the weather became. The elevation is 3500 feet, and we were just immediately below the cloud cover; the wind was excessive, and there was a mixture of light rain and some blowing snow coming down. Fortunately, the temperature was not low, but the wind was very chilling. We were pleased to find that the Raven Creek end of the pass was free of snow (probably windswept) and that we had a splendid view of Raven Glacier on our right. The lower end was free of snow and far below, and even on this overcast day gave good views of the blue-green coloring merging into a whiteout of snow and low clouds higher up.

The going was slick but relatively easy on the rocky wet lateral moraine, and as we descended to the headwaters of Raven Creek the strong wind eased up considerably. We avoided the glacier and, for the most part, crossed the creek on deep snowfields. The few scraps of running water were narrow enough to just step across. The route quickly changed from moraine and snow to tundra, then grass patches and alder clumps. We set up camp about 6 p.m. when the alder ahead began to appear a bit impenetrable. Most of us had little sleep that night because the roaring wind down through the valley set up a terrific flapping of tents. Two slept quite well: Helen had ear plugs and didn't even know the wind blew; Bob just rolled up in a poncho in the lee of a big boulder and had no flapping.

On Sunday morning we got a very late 9:30 start, and the day was again windy and raw. We later agreed, though, that this was probably the perfect time of year for this trip; the leaves were not yet out on the alder, and the tall elephant grass had not yet come up. The result was that we were able to see ahead quite well and plot our route around the alder thickets. We had some bushwhacking, but it was held to a minimum by following game trails through the alder we couldn't go around. There is only one major side stream to cross on this side of Raven Creek, and we had no real trouble jumping across although we lost Olga for several minutes while she disappeared into the brush upstream to find her own fine crossing on a tundra-covered-rock bridge. Our lunch stop was in a grassy clearing on the side slope where we had good views both upstream towards the pass and down towards the valley of Eagle River and several 7000' peaks on the opposite side.

By this time everyone was trying to palm off his own squirrel food on others. While most of us were busily engaged in this pursuit, British Olga was off in a sheltered nook brewing tea. Suddenly the grass around her was in flames, and much commotion ensued as the fire was stamped out. This was followed by a microscopic examination of the debris for the cap to her fuel tank. The search ended successfully, and eventually we moved on.

Before long there was a cry of "Get out your cameras", and we discovered that we were on a portion of the old mail trail, definitely recognizable because it was a wide level path cut out of the steep side slope. The alders on the upper side drop across it, quite effectively hiding it, but it was a definite improvement over straight bushwhacking.

Along this stretch Raven Creek begins to turn northwest a bit, nearly paralleling Eagle River for its final two miles or so, and runs down to Eagle River in a narrow, brushy canyon. The route of our trip left the old derelict mail trail about here and ascended the ridge which divides the two watercourses. Topping this ridge at about 1600 feet was probably the climax of the trip for most of us. The worst of wind and weather were behind us and the remaining day's work was to be mostly level walking. When we topped this ridge, we looked straight down to the mile-long blue glacial lake at the foot of Eagle Glacier, the blue-green glacier itself, and the spring green growth of the valley. We threaded our way straight down the slope and through a fragrant evergreen rainforest so deep in spongy moss that we couldn't even hear our steps. We dropped out onto the gravel bars of Eagle River and followed the top of an old terminal moraine to the river. Crossing the river was COLD but easy wading because we were early in the season and right at the headwaters. Helen had brought her shorts, but everyone else just rolled their pants above their knees and stayed dry. Those who had brought tennis shoes for wading concluded that it was well worth while.

Now we had easy walking, gravel bars with an occasional sortie through the woods where the main channel cut in close to shore. We were coming out of the woods onto a gravel bar when Gayle and Leo stopped in horror, then tried to restrain Helen from going on. Ahead lay one of the monuments man builds to himself: a garbage dump. Since the beginning of the trip a battle had been raging over trash. A couple of the group had attempted to leave their cans and papers behind at the first lunch stop. First Helen, then Sally, delivered lectures on the subject. The trash was not left behind. But the whole of Eagle River valley is a mess. This particularly large dump, we concluded, could only have been left by the military on official maneuvers. Many civilian hunters have contributed their share in smaller piles the length of the valley.

We camped Sunday night on a partially overgrown gravel bar perhaps a mile downstream from the point at which we had crossed. This left us eight or nine miles to do the following day. Monday morning we continued at a very easy pace. Much concern was manifested that if we started any earlier, walked any faster, or rested any less often the other ICA group coming upstream to meet us would have no hike at all.

By this time most of us carried packs that were somewhat lighter than they had been Saturday morning. Gayle's pack, however, grew steadily heavier. In addition to an interesting assortment of rocks, Elmer had joined us (goat horns). This morning he added his prize which he retrieved and carried out at no little effort--a weather balloon.

Before starting most of us had decided to get our feet wet this last day and cross the smaller channels of the river rather than go around. For most of the morning Elga, whose boots repelled no water at all, held out--but eventually decided this took too much energy and joined us in sloshing along.

We found the other group, headed by Marge Prescott, having lunch along the well marked trail that connects the gravel bars with the homestead road. We ravenously devoured their fresh fruit and canned fruit juice, then all headed back out. Before long there was the welcome sight of the Hague's Microbus and our faithful friend, Marie Lundstrom, sitting in a homestead clearing correcting papers. Marie had also gotten up at 5:30 Saturday morning to drive us to Girdwood. A side trip took us all up to the Wolfe's nearby homestead where everyone relaxed over coffee and compared notes before heading back to the city.

FROM BEELZEBUB TO DIDILKAMA or HOW WE MISSED THE LAST RAISIN AND FOUND THE WOLFE'S HOME INSTEAD August 21 - August 31 Art Davidson

On an improbable day toward the end of August we gathered. There was no premonition of disaster. Cramped into a camper, David Meyers, Nick Parker, like Judd, and Art Davidson went away toward Peril Peak and 7280'.

As we wandered up Eklutna Glacier, David was able to break his ice axe cutting an extraneous step. David proved to be such a boon to us throughout the trip that Nick dubbed him Da vey Boone after those other great mountain men. Henceforth Davey was nicknamed.

Then with some further ado camp was made at the western base of Peril Peak. When morning came we headed toward 7280'. Up the glacier and on to a ne ridge which flattened out into a scrambling face we climbed. Reaching the summit by mid-day, we named it Mount Beelzebub. Because of its central location in the Western Chugach Beelzebub awarded us a magnificent view.

The day was clear and we thought variously of going to Peril now or climb a blackish blob to the east of Beelzebub which we were referring to as "The Last Raisin". We decided instead to descend to a stream running on the glacier below, where a short while later we managed to soak our boots in the icy water.

Lounging in camp, we looked forward to Peril the next day; until late afternoon when Beelzebub sent us Pichler Perchward with a huge black cloud. Down the glacier we went to the cabin area. But as we entered this entresol the sun left us. Our error: we should have left earlier. And ere long the air clouded, and our error ended our errant eyre. Someone must have observed "I see an icy night ahead as in the mist we've missed the cabin. And I think someone missed the sleeping bag he had decided not to bring.

After a night on the glacier we returned to Anchorage for a day of high school registering. A day later our dubious band beat and groped up the East Fork of the Eklutna River toward a group of peaks we never saw.

Up the Eklutna road we went, three in the camper cab, one on the running board. Nick, pundit, observing that Art's camper is really a good ford truck, suggested we by-pass the bridges. And each crossing afforded the man on the running board the opportunity of being doused.

Finally up the trail we went. But in the heat our original plans were further dampened when we came to a tiny lake. The chilly water in the pond was really not suited for swimming, but then neither were we. A half hour later we stood shivering; realizing we weren't real dryads after all. Camp was made about three miles from the road.

Starting again in the morning, it was soon obvious that as we proceeded chance of progress receded. We turned around and, after dropping boots, people, and a little more enthusiasm out of the camper, arrived at the Snowbird cabin that night. The next morning, with boots and enthusiasm gathered, the people scattered again. In beautiful weather we hiked and scrambled around and above the Snowbird line.

David Meyers and Art Davidson climbed peak 6100' and, finding no evidence of a previous ascent, suggested the Tanaina Indian name of Didilkama (ptarmigan) for this peak.

That night we went looking for the next day's mishaps. After brewing dinner in a laundromat, we slept under the watchful eye of Davey Boone in the Eagle River Camp Ground. Next morning we charged up the Eagle River homestead road, and spent a delightful morning opening gates and procrastinating with the wolves. By mid-afternoon John had roused us into making a scrambling climb with him up to the lower summit of Mount Ferine 5690'.

This night it rained, and, heading for the dry roof of Judd's Bird Creek cabin, the camper roof collapsed on Mike's head. The next morning dawned bright and clear, and we eagerly spent it sleeping in the cabin. That afternoon we got to "The Rocks", and managed to cut two hands and become sleepy again.

As we dozed into town, all hoped to avoid such punishment on our next trip.

KOROHUSK 7030' Sept. 1 Art Davidson

On September 1 I traversed Ferine Peak above the Wolfe's homestead at about the brush line. By mid-morning I was on the ridge of 7030', which meanders down into the Eagle River valley. I climbed up the ridge until an increasing number of gendarmes forced me down onto some scree and boulder slopes which eventually led through patches of snow to the summit. Leaving a tiny register, I suggested the name Korohusk for this summit which is really almost a subsidiary summit of 7450'. Korohusk means "come in". I felt this name appropriate because it is an inviting one day climb, and also because it seems to be a feasible approach to 7450'. Incidentally, I favor the name Kiliak (boegyan) for this peak.

HIGHER SPIRE 6135'

Aug. 19

Art Davidson

On Aug. 18 Vin Hoeman and I went to the Snowbird line area in the Talkeetnas. Given a pleasant afternoon we hiked up the enchanting Reed Creek from the club cabin. We slept at 4100'. The next day presented us with solid sun warmed rock. Although we belayed twice, these pitches could be eliminated, or many others could be added. We also climbed and named Liar Spire which is a shaft of rock that appears quite spectacular from the valley. Our choice of this name will be obvious to anyone climbing the Liar Spire. Though unclimbed, we suggest the name of Lower Tower for point 6129' which is only 6' lower than its close neighbor, the Higher Spire.

BALEFUL

7900'

Art Davidson

Watching hopeful skies, Vin Hoeman and I walked into Baleful. We went up the East Fork of the Klutna River to where a slide allowed us to gain brush line on the prominent S. ridge without having to negotiate any alder. We slept the first night at 4000'.

On the morning of the 9th we gained the ridge and began the long and sometimes treacherous climb to the summit. We began to encounter what difficulties as there were above the col at 6000'. Often on incredibly rotten rock, we followed the ridge up and down, over and around gendarmes, onto broken faces, into gentle areas, and onto numerous knife edges. The crumbling rock made climbing not as difficult as dangerous in many places. We climbed unroped, but in retrospect felt that we might have roped up in several places. Though we were benighted on the descent, Baleful can be done in two days if one gets an early start each morning.

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