



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA      BOX 2037      ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

September 1983

Volume 26, Issue #9

**SEPTEMBER MEETING**

The meeting will be held Wednesday, September 21st at 7:30 p.m. on the top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Streets, Anchorage, Alaska. Details of the program were not available at press time.

PLEASE NOTE: MEETING TIME HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM 8:00 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.

MINUTES FOR MCA AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

The August meeting of MCA was held on August 17th at the Pioneer School House, third floor, at 3rd and Eagle Streets, Anchorage, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Rick Severn, President. The reading of the July general meeting was approved as published in SCREE. President Rick Severn reported, in Treasurer Reggie Buchanan's absence:

\$ 230.82	- Petty Cash
353.62	- Bank Account
<u>3,670.14</u>	- Money Market Plus Account
\$4,254.58	- Total

To expedite collection of membership dues at the monthly meetings, Reggie has put together "packets" containing dues information in an envelope addressed to the MCA. Individuals interested in joining the club should mail in their dues. Membership cards can then be picked up at the following meeting.

Welcome to all new members and guests.

**I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Hiking: Dona Agosti, 248-0089

Thanks to all leaders who lead hikes this summer.

Hikes still scheduled this summer:

- Aug. 20, 21 - Harding Icefield
- Aug. 27, 28 - Bird Pass
- Sept. 3, 4, 5 (Labor Day) - Curry Ridge
- Sept. 3, 4, 5 (Labor Day) - Lost Lake

Anyone interested in leading a hike in the Chugach this September, contact Dona.

Gates of the Arctic was indeed successful. A slide show will be given of the trip later in the year. A write up will appear in the SCREE.

B. Library: Mike Frank. 243-7645

The Library will soon be moving to its new home at Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking on Spenard Road. As soon as the bookcases are completed, the move will be made. The library will be open during business hours on a regular basis.

Programs: Ernie Borjon, 344-8661

September 1st at 7:30 p.m. on the

There is no program planned for the August meeting. If anyone has something they would like to present, please contact Ernie.

D. Huts: John Dillman, 279-1246

Construction of the proposed hut at the west end of the Bomber Glacier has been delayed for evaluation of the area.

Expansion and repair of the Mint Glacier hut will be started as soon as the weather permits.

September 1st to

E. MCA Equipment at Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking

Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking on Spenard Road has club equipment for use by members upon presentation of a current membership card. There are crampons, helmets, ice-axes, shovels, and pieps. Use is on a first come, first serve basis, although first preference for shovels and pieps goes to those involved in any club trips.

F. Executive Report

September 1st to

1. Mint Hut Expansion.

Expansion of the hut will include a new floor, insulating the entire hut, and adding a new storm porch. An appropriation of \$1,500.00 was made for the repairs and helicopter airtime for the hut. Dave Staeheli and John Dillman will be directing the construction.

2. Proposed Bomber Glacier Hut

The construction of the hut will be delayed one year for re-evaluation of the area for avalanche danger, snow depth, and accessibility.

3. Vin Hoeman Library

An appropriation of \$300.00 was made for building lockable cabinets for the library. Dave Pahlke will be constructing the cabinets. An appraisal for the estimated value of the library will be made.

4. The authors of *55 Ways to the Wilderness* are currently interested in renegotiating their contract with the Mountaineers. The MCA has been receiving some royalties for the book, but have had no input. The Board has decided to no longer receive these royalties for several reasons: a) the club has no input into the publication, and b) the publication needs to be revised and the authors do not want to do the revisions for the money offered.
5. Elections  
Positions for officers to open up for election in October are: two board positions, president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer.

## II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. The annual MCA picnic will be held Saturday, August 27th at Eklutna Lake, Campground "A". Cooking starts at 2 p.m. and will continue until it runs out. Questions should be directed to Bernie Helms, 243-3124 or Eileen Cavanaugh, 337-1394.
- B. Meetings for the MCA will be held at the Pioneer Schoolhouse through November. Any change will be announced in SCREE. If meetings are moved back to Central for the winter, consideration of moving the meeting time to 7:30 p.m., to allow time for slide shows and clean-up before 10:00 p.m. will be in order.

## III. NEW BUSINESS

### A. ELECTIONS

Elections for MCA officers will be coming up in October. Positions opening will be: two board positions, president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer. Any recommendations should be made to the current board or at the next meeting.

### B. ICE-CLIMBING CLASS - September 24 and 25

The annual MCA technical ice climbing school will be held the last weekend in September. The course will consist of one classroom session - which is mandatory - and two days of ice climbing at the Matanuska Glacier. (See following article for additional details.)

### C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. There is now a new log book in the Mint Glacier hut thanks to Dave Staeheli. If anyone knows the whereabouts of the first log put in the hut in the 60s, please let the club know. The copy taken from the hut by Dave will be put into the library.
2. There will be a trail clearing party for East Twin. Those interested should meet in the parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Bring a saw.

3. The American Section of the Alpine Club will be meeting at the Mt. McKinley Village, September 17th, for their annual meeting. There are about 30-40 members in Alaska, and there were about 50 people who showed up at the meeting two years ago. The event will start at 5:00 p.m. with a banquet to be followed by slide presentations: Paul Goodwin, John Waterman, Susan Havens. Dinner will cost about \$20.00. Those interested should contact Steve Davis at the North Pacific Fisheries Council or John Dillman, 279-1246. Non-members are welcome.
4. Thank you, Pauline Dickey, for your work in assembly of the SCREE. Your effort was indeed appreciated.
5. Thank you, Tim Neale and Dave Pahlke, for your slide presentation.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernie Helms

#### TECHNICAL ICE SCHOOL AMH 9

Place: Matanuska Glacier  
Date: September 24, 25 (Saturday and Sunday)  
Fees: \$5.00 class, \$7.50 access to glacier  
Classroom Session: September 22 (time and place to be announced) - This class is MANDATORY! If you cannot attend please do not sign up.  
Class Limit: 44 students - members only

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

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED. Sign ups will be at the August meeting for present members and at the September meeting for present and new members. We will not be signing up students (or new members) at the class room session. All students should be members by the September club meeting. If members cannot attend the meeting in September they may register by calling Terry Becker at AMH, 272-1811. Remember, last chance to sign up is the September club meeting. If more than 44 students sign up a system of alternates will be used.

This annual extravaganza will begin September 22, with an indoor session. This class will include lectures, equipment displays, and a short slide program. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons, and ice axes for inspection. Rental equipment will be handed out. (Please try to buy or borrow equipment as the club has limited supplies.) Groups will be assigned. Fees will be collected. (Please try to have exact change - \$12.50.) ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND!

The outdoor session will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 24, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 6:30 a.m. or go up Friday night. This is an overnight car camping trip, so weight

won't be a problem. Bring tent and stoves, or charcoal or logs, lawn chairs, etc. Don't forget beer, wine, and good food. The lodge will be open for those who don't want to cook out.

Prior experience would be helpful but is not absolutely necessary. It is suggested that those of you who are not in good climbing shape do some pre-class conditioning (upper body strength should be emphasized). Another hint - get a hammer and some 16 penny nails and drive the nails into 2x4s or other scrap lumber

Remember, this class is not for glacier walking, and as per club policy, please leave your dogs at home.

If anyone has any questions please call me at AMH, 272-0811.

Terry Becker

#### ICE CLIMBING CLASS EQUIPMENT LIST

(Everyone must have all equipment.)

Ice axe - 70 cm or shorter, curved pick with a web sling

Crampons - 12 points, hinged or rigid

Helmet

Harness - 1 or 2 piece or 22' webbing

Locking carabiner

Rigid soled mountain boots - no hunting boots or wafflestompers

Ice hammer - optional, get one if you can

Day pack - for all this junk

Lunch - for two days, a thermos is nice

Wind parka and pants - Goretex or other semi-water proofs

Wool or pile pants - no jeans or cotton pants

Pile jacket or wool, or polarguard type

Wool hat or pile hat

Wool or pile gloves and mitts - bring extras, it's wet out there

Overmitts - water-proof or repellent

Gaiters

Sunglasses and glacier cream, bandana, visor hat

Camera, guitar, violin, sax, trumpet, drums, walkmann, etc.

Camping equipment, food, etc., for overnight

John Dillman

#### KNOYA CLIMB

July 23, 1983

Despite overcast skies and the threat of rain, five people got together to do some easy climbing in the near Chugach. Pat Murray had originally planned this climb, but thought it might be inappropriate to show up with two broken legs; so he kindly gave us his detailed directions for finding a shortcut, which would cut out several miles from the route in 55 Ways. He also arranged permission to start at Stuckagain Heights.

Thanks, Pat. There were a few changes, however.

We never did find the shoestring hanging from a tree to guide our way through the brush. Maybe the light was poor. We also were a bit overwhelmed after missing a turn and found ourselves amidst 25 protesting dogs. The staked-out pig you mentioned had apparently been served up two nights before our arrival and that threw us off for awhile.

But you failed to mention the crux. The sign says, "DON'T PLAY WITH THE PUPPIES!". Ha, I thought. Suddenly from nowhere came an onslaught of fur, yelps, and wagging tails. I was under attack by at least 14 of them. Have you ever been surrounded by excited little pups just starving for someone to play with and shoes to chew on? It was hell, Pat.

But we made it through. Before the day was done we climbed not only Knoya, but also Tikishla and nearby Kanchee. Making the climbs were Pat Ragar, Barb Kaehler, Marcia Bandy, and Mike Shlach.

CLIMB OF MOUNT SUSITNA, 4396', USGS TYONEK B2

July 24, 1983

Shortly after joining MCA in 1958 I innocently asked, "How does one climb Mt. Susitna?" This produced guffaws and a spate of derisive answers like, "No one climbs Mt. Susitna", and "You land at the top, walk down, and then walk back up again." I have gazed at Susitna every day for twenty-five years, just as everyone gazes at it. This summer, by golly, I climbed it.

The "crux" of the climb was Larry Schmidt, Larry is a helicopter pilot affianced to my daughter, Catherine. He had never climbed a mountain on purpose, but with 12,000 hours, mostly in Alaska, Larry knows what he is doing with a bird.

On July 24, six of us got into the Bell Long-Ranger for the thirty minute flight to the mountain. Included were Larry, Catherine, Judy McConnell, Malia Spaulding, Gwynneth Wilson, and me. Larry landed on a bench at 1500' on the east side of Mt. Susitna approximately 1/2 mile north of the deep gully which runs up between the "head" and "torso" of Sleeping Lady. Alexander Creek was 3-1/2 miles east across heavy forests and swamps. Cabins on the creek were mostly out-of-view behind Dinglishna Butte, 479'. The braided lower Susitna River lay beyond.

The first thousand feet up the mountain was tall grass, thigh-high, stubbly blueberry bushes, and thick patches of alder. Signs of bear were abundant. At one spot, deep in alder, we came upon a place where a black bear had been eaten. All that remained were a few strips of hide and one paw. Emerging from this disquieting spot, we could trace where the victim had been recently dragged down a grassy slope.

Gaining tundra at last, it was an easy walk up successive rocky shelves to the top. We knew we were nigh near when windblown trash began to appear on the slope. There is a Super Cub landing strip on top and an unmanned relay station in a long quonset hut. It contains busily burbling generators, much electronic gear, and quarters complete with food, carboys of water, bunks, and stitchless goddesses on the walls.

We walked north 3/8 mile to the summit knob, 4396'; and then back south to the start of the "torso", 4255'. We did not descend to the 3760' col (appropriately from the Latin "collum" meaning "neck") which leads to the South Peak, 4251' (the "head" of Sleeping Lady). Views west toward the Tordrillos and into the lush, lake-pocked drainages behind Mt. Susitna were particularly rewarding.

Descending a bit to the north of our way up to take advantage of rock and tundra as much as possible, we still could not avoid alder and signs of bear. We regained the helicopter nine hours after starting.

If one wants to climb the entire mountain from Alexander Creek or Susitna Station, he had better take a machete and allow two to three days!

Rod Wilson

### WOLVERINE CREEK

August 6 and 7, 1983

Ten of us showed up at 7 a.m. and journeyed to the trailhead near the outlet of Wolverine Lake, northeast of Palmer. You reach this by turning off the Glenn Highway at Palmer (the Tesoro Station exit) and going 2+ miles east across the Matanuska River to Clark-Wolverine Road. From there it is 6 miles to Wolverine Creek and 2.2 miles to the turnoff to the right and another 0.3 miles to a small creek and a turnaround. Proceed through the gate and up the road 0.8 miles to a cabin - a summer "camp" for those tending cattle on this leased land. This road may be passable by 4-wheel drive.

After another 3/4 mile or so on a broad, climbing "cow trail", the route turns downward nearly to Wolverine Creek on a good trail cut into the hillside. Follow Wolverine Creek, never actually being on its bank, for about 3/4 mile past a small creek where the trail turns sharply left, up a long, steep ridge - the USGS map is helpful to find this place. The "best" trail goes past this point and eventually peters out - we know, we missed the turn. If we'd turned here, we would have gained about 600' or 700' elevation to a broad bench that extends all the way to the forks of Wolverine Creek and beyond, up the left fork.

Instead, we proceeded along the grade of the creek and after about 2 miles the going got so bad we climbed up a steep scree slope several hundred feet and eventually found the trail, plus a lot of ripe blueberries.

We camped near an old cabin at the forks - not the cabin I remember when an old man - Mr. Moorehouse, I think - lived in it when I last was there 25 years ago on a sheep hunt. At that time the trail was on the south side of Wolverine Creek and started at Lazy Mountain - but parts of it slid down the hill into the creek. Dawn Moreau elected to stay in the cabin, which had four bunks of sorts, a workable stove, table, etc., and lots of mementos from earlier days and various tenants.

Sunday morning, John Nevin, Gregg Moulton, Dawn, and I hiked up the trail and then climbed the 4,670' mountain behind us - but only John and Gregg got all the way up. The weather was a little shaky, but we never got rained on either day. But neither did we see much game - two moose on the way out, which took about four hours, versus seven coming in.

We learned that 2 days isn't enough to get far into this country where there are sheep, easier travelling and rugged scenery, including glaciers. And the creek was high. We needed 3 or 4 to do it right.

Aside from the leader getting "lost" on the way in, the trip was uneventful but rather scenic along the bench and higher elevations - looking into the Wolverine Canyons and at the backside of Byers (Matanuska) peak and other rugged peaks to the south. Other hikers included Marcia Bandy, Kathryn Engle, Curvin Metzler, Susan Scherkenbach, Judy Woodward, and Marty Bassett.

Bill Wakeland

A NOTE OF THANKS...

Enclosed, please find a "poem" of thanks to the MCA for making my Alaskan vacation and adventure such a terrific one! I truly admire the enthusiasm and effort all of you put into your club to make it the success it is. I also feel as if I located the "pot of gold at the end of the rainbow" when I became affiliated with your members and group functions. I tried to express my sincere thanks to y'all through this "poem" - if it could be relayed to the members, I would truly appreciate it.

Thanks, all of you, once again, and if you're ever in the Houston area, please look me up!

Sincerely,

Donna  
Sill

"A Thanks to all of Y'all"

Coming from Texas for a break and a rest,  
I knew Alaska offered outdoor adventure, truly at best  
Yet, being alone and not knowing the trails,  
I began calling and searching for vital details.

The numerous calls were not made in vain,  
For I finally made contact with a group, so humane!

Dona Agosti supplied such a dynamic list,  
I felt Victor Creek, Eklutna Glacier and Castle Mountain  
just couldn't be missed!  
Other splendid places like Crow Pass, Arctic Valley, Independence  
Mine, Eagle River and Wolverine Peak -  
Boy Scout Rock, Alyeska, and the Old Johnson Trail, and Rainbow  
Valley at McHugh Creek -

All offered beauty, grandeur, peace, and joy to me.  
But the great people I shared these moments with,  
created my sincerity.



The feeling of acceptance, warmth, helping, and sharing,  
Made me realize, the MCA is composed of the concerned and caring!

It would be a mistake to deny my regrets in leaving,  
For it's the friends I've made and the scenes I've viewed, that  
Have made my visit so relieving and pleasing!

It's true, you won't find such a committed organization nor such an  
enriching environment such as this, in Houston,  
Which makes y'all and Alaska even more worthy of a good "hoostin'!"

So, I want all of you to know, that my somewhat reluctant,  
departing attitude,  
Is overwhelmingly filled with deep respect and much gratitude!

Thanks for sharing -  
Donna Couvillon  
Houston, Texas

#### A SOLSTICE TRIP

On August 20 and 21st, 16 individuals participated in MCA's packpacking adventure into Kenai Fjords National Park. They were John Balcerak, Marcia Bandy, Eileen Cavanaugh, Bernie Helms, Don Hansen, Joyce Leonard, Gretchen Reeve, Priscilla Lukens, Michael Rees, Jim Lasche, Mike Miller, Alan Johnson, Pauline Keyes, Katy Byrne, Mark Findlay, and John Morris. The event inspired the following account.

It's been two months since the solstice;  
the sun's not as high.  
The snow's creeping towards us;  
Colored leaves meet the eye.

Yet amidst the profusion  
of berries and brush,  
there remains ample moments  
to explore mountain "hush".

To explore it up close  
away from the rest;  
to adventure within it,  
to seek peace at its best.

With this as our interest,  
we departed this town.  
A score, less 4 people;  
sixteen, icefield bound.

Our embarking was timely;  
the commute trouble-free.  
As we hiked from the trailhead,  
high overcast, had we.

The route we were following  
didn't challenge us at first;  
'til it narrowed and steepened;  
As a "trail", few are worse.

While some hoped for sunshine  
we all soon surmised,  
that the high cirrus cloudiness  
kept us cool as we climbed.

O'er roots and eroded trail  
our boots squished and skid.  
We found lots of view points  
which from elsewhere were hid.

Not long after lunchtime  
the first hardy soles,  
tread their way ever lightly  
through a meadow of roles.

Our ascent to the Harding  
was still out of sight,  
But this meadow of tundra  
was to be nightfall's respite.

We dispersed to discover  
our own unique spaces,  
to construct and enliven  
our Eureka's and North Faces.  
With a view that commanded  
Earth, Ice, Snow, and Sky,  
we chose campsites insuring  
a rest, sound and dry!  
In very short order  
With our slumber well planned,  
we resumed our climb upward  
to the icefield o'er-land.

Past bushes concealing  
their ripening fruit,  
and grasses demanding  
a deliberate foot.

All the while we were passing  
to our south overhead,  
a group of goat residents  
gazing down from their beds.

Our steps led us higher  
to an alpine terrain,  
filled with wide open spaces  
that few minds could contain.

We soon stood supremely  
at the prime viewing spot,  
as we gazed at the icefield  
with an Awe that that brought.

White snowy fingers  
of an ice mass so great,  
extending around us  
a mem'ry to make.

We shared our perspectives;  
we talked and compared,  
we studied the complexities  
of the world we saw there.

And I discovered quite simply  
that the role which we hold  
means no more than the passing  
of the wind, or the cold.

For the sounds of the marmots,  
and the tracks in the snow,  
leave no traces of the others  
who come, pause, and go.

And true to that pattern  
that ceases to fail,  
we spun on our heels  
and retracted our trail.

The day was just fading  
as our steps wandered back,  
to our cookstoves and dinners,  
and to unload our packs.

Sleep came ever gently  
with the sure peace of heart  
that comes from a day full  
of exercise and of "art".

The dark settled 'round us  
with the stealth of a prow,  
for accompanying it swiftly  
came clouds, rain, and scowl.

A drizzle persisted  
through most of the night,  
which soon we discovered  
would remain through the light

The stage was a wet one  
when in morning we woke,  
to begin the procession  
down the roots, rocks and slope.

The route suffered sorely  
from our maximum use,  
in conditions lending greatly  
to environmental abuse.

Yet, with graceful performance  
of a mountaineer's descent,  
we executed precisely  
a three-point slide step.

A controlled alder slalom  
down the rocks, through the mud  
we wound back down the mountain  
to the valley's mild flood.

With the rain falling constant  
and the clouds thick and thin,  
two octets of hikers  
walked out, the way in.

And with hardly a breather,  
they forged on to their homes.  
They returned to the city  
to continue their own "poems".

But lingering behind them  
and fresh in their hearts,  
dwells a special remembrance  
of Kenai Fjords National Park.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Morris