



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
SEPTEMBER 1989

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510
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SEPTEMBER MEETING

The next monthly meeting of the MCA will be held Wednesday, September 20th, 7:30 pm, at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Sts., downtown Anchorage. This month's program will be given by Ron Cothren from the School of Engineering at the University of Alaska. His subject will be the recent remeasurement of Denali's elevation (20,306 feet) using satellite readings from the summit. Slides of the ascent will be included.

***** TECHNICAL ICE SCHOOL *****

Place: Matanuska Glacier
Date: September 23, 24
Fees: \$5.00 equipment replacement fee
\$12.50 access to glacier and camping
Organization Meeting: September 21, Pioneer Schoolhouse 7:30 pm. This meeting is mandatory, as it is every year, so plan to attend.

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

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

This annual extravaganza will begin Thursday September 21st, with an indoor session at the Pioneer Schoolhouse. This meeting will include equipment, knots, clothing and answer your questions. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons and ice axes for inspection. Club equipment will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) Groups will be assigned. Fees will be collected. Tickets to get in will be handed out. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.

The outdoor session will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 23rd, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 7:00 a.m. or go up Friday night (there should be no extra charge if you are part of the class). Bring the ticket you get at the meeting or you will probably have to pay again.

ICE CLIMBING CLASS EQUIPMENT LIST

(Everyone must have all equipment.)

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

Crampons - 12 points, hinged or rigid

Helmet

Harness - 1 or 2 piece or 22 feet of webbing

Locking carabiner (or two regular carabiners)

Rigid sole mountain boots - no hunting boots or wafflestompers; plastic boots are best

Ice hammer - optional, get one if you can

Lunch - for two days, a thermos is nice

Wind parka and pants - Goretex or other semi-waterproofs

Wool or pile pants - no jeans or cotton

Wool or pile jacket - synchilla, polarguard, whatever they have these days

Wool or pile hat

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

Overmitts - water repellent

Gaitors

Sunglasses, sun cream, bandana, visor hat, camera, guitar, violin, sax, trumpet, drums, walkmann, etc.

Day pack - for all this junk

Camping gear for overnight

TRIP REPORTS

Classic Climb of Pioneer

Neil O'Donnell

At 8:30 am Saturday, August 12, eleven mountaineers headed up the standard route on Pioneer Peak (Marcia Bandy, Mindy Baum, Suzanne DiPietro, Ed Goss, Larry Hartig, Neil O'Donnell, Jim Sayler, Margaret Stock, Beth Taylor, Kneely Taylor and Niles Woods). It was a warm day but low-level clouds hid the ridge from view. At 1:00 pm the clouds parted and at 3:00 pm we were on Counterpoint. There were spectacular vistas in all directions, including an unobstructed view of Marcus Baker and the Knik Glacier.

Most of us elected to go on to the true summit, but others were prevented from doing so by the onset of sun-induced drowsiness. Rappelling off Counterpoint and climbing to the summit one at a time to avoid rockfall took several hours. Kneely regaled us with tales of Matanuska Man and his infamous southern ridge route off Pioneer.

On our descent we were treated to ringside views and announcements from the Palmer drag raceway (Runnin' Rebel won the funny car event!). The group arrived back at the cars around 9:30 pm and reconvened at Garcia's in Eagle River to reminisce about our heroic efforts. Some were so overwhelmed by the experience or the sangria that they renewed their long-lapsed MCA memberships!

Looks Like a Good Day to Paddle Portage Creek
or
Me Bring the Paddles? I Thought You Brought the Paddles!

Kathy Burke

Usually I wouldn't start out on a day trip at 3:45 in the afternoon, but this was the most perfect Alaskan day I think I'd ever seen, and a late start seemed better than nothing. Portage Creek looked good, lots of water, so Sue Axxe and I put in the canoe behind the Visitor Center. We soaked up the sun and celebrated the fact that the sun would be out till long after midnight.

It wasn't long before I heard a suspicious noise and asked Sue what that roaring sound was. Sue said it was probably a waterfall on the mountainside. (Even a peon canoer like I knew better than that.) We got through the first rapids O.K., but it was a creepy sight to see just off to the side of the canoe, high jagged boulders only two inches under the water, and even creepier when we felt them slightly bend the bottom of the canoe up under our knees and feet. We stopped and scouted the Boulderfield Rapids, it was probably the biggest on the creek. It took me a while to get brave enough for it, but once we paddled into it, a calm excitement took over and it was great fun. We stopped and sunned and enjoyed the hanging glaciers.

Back into the creek, we rounded a corner and found ourselves in an obstacle course of sweepers that made the Boulderfield Rapids look like child's play. Then we found ourselves broadside on the "sweeper from hell." We balanced the canoe with our knees and by grabbing the sweeper. There was so much water in the canoe we couldn't tell if there was a hole in it or if it was just splashing over the sides. Of course, as luck would have it, upstream from us a tour bus pulled off into a scenic view pullout and we became entertainment. We figured we dealt with getting ourselves safely off that sweeper for about one and a half hours and talked about how we were darn lucky the sun was gonna be out till long after midnight.

It was a slow methodical process of discussing our safest options and then very carefully carrying them out. We were really proud of the no-panic-clear-thinking and total cooperation that we both did.

The sweeper made us a little overly cautious for the rest of the trip. If we suspected any danger we immediately paddled for the bank, Sue always wanting to do a perfect eddying technique and me overriding that and paddling us four feet up onto the bank. I will admit to being a canoe owner with a rafter mentality!

Anyway, wild trip but we kept our wits about us and worked as a perfect team in a dangerous spot. The only mishap was somehow I got a blister on my toe. Someone suggested that I try paddling with my hands rather than my feet. Wow, that's a novel idea.

Last of the Firsts - Western Chugach

Willy Hersman

Hunter Creek...the 56th Way. This is the trail that got left out of the guidebook. You won't find it on any map, but it's there. Just drive up the Knik Road, cross Hunter Creek, note the school bus turnaround on the left and then look carefully on the right for the trailhead. Now that you've found the trail, see if you can keep it. That's part of the challenge of a trip up to Hunter Creek Glacier. In addition, there is deep mud, a real fun stream crossing, interesting

brush-beating, lovely canopies of Devil's Club with wasps nesting nearby, great crevasse-jumping, sparse campsites and of course the rocks that make Chugach famous, the kind that Moses would have loved to write on and then smash.

Jim Sayler and I and Jeff McCarthy (from Maine) headed up the trail on July 25th bound for the glacier and whatever climbs we might be able to do, and even though it was my fourth time I still managed to lose the trail in places. We locked arms across the creek after the trail ran out, looking somewhat comical when our feet went numb. We looked even more comical beating a path up the brush headwall to the right of the creek; three hours to do a quarter-mile. A gravel campsite was the best we could do, a windy place at the foot of the ice where four years ago the wind had broken five out of eight VE 24 poles. The next day we crossed the glacier and climbed a bank of steep dirt to reach a moraine and a small glacier sitting below Big Timber Peak (6745) and our objective, Peak 7240.

From this glacier we crossed a bergschrund and kicked steps up a steep snow slope to reach the west ridge at 6000 feet. The ridge went easily up to a step at about 7000 feet where Jim and I contoured north across rotten slabs and Jeff remained true to the ridge. Eventually we met on the summit in perfect sunshine to find, as we had expected, no evidence of a previous ascent. We built a cairn, dropped in a register and set up a short rappel to get off the summit block. As we descended we found a nice scree gully on the south side of the ridge and used it to exit back to Hunter Creek Glacier and camp. We named the mountain Devil's Club Peak, because the Satanic Salad is, more than anything, responsible for keeping it virgin for so long. Twelve hours round-trip.

Hunter Creek Glacier doesn't get a lot of visitors. Of the larger drainages in the Western Chugach, Hunter Creek is most remote, and being outside the present-day boundary of Chugach State Park doesn't help advertise it much. State Parks has its eye on the area as a logical addition to the Park, but for now it is in Native hands, and on two of my trips up there a fence has been across the trail.

In 1970 there was a short burst of climbing activity at the beginning of October of a competitive nature, I guess. Steve Hackett had planned a trip to go up there with his brother, Jim. They would come in from East Fork Eklutna River, taking a rather rigorous route over several high ridges to reach the glacier, do some exploring and continue out Hunter Creek. Grace Hoeman, angry that she hadn't been invited and worried that they might grab a peak she intended to climb, decided to do a little speed-bagging. On the day after the Hacketts left she flew into Lake George with a pilot of a supercub and proceeded to climb Mt. Palmer while he went hunting. She bagged her summit, I assume he bagged whatever he was after (regulations don't allow hunting the same day as flying), and they flew out at the end of the day. A very energetic day for Grace.

It might have been more amusing if Steve had actually climbed Palmer right afterwards, but he and Jim climbed two more difficult, and higher peaks across the glacier instead. Hunter's Peak (7549) and Troublesome Peak (7465) were climbed from the pass between them on separate days. As far as I can tell those peaks have not had second ascents and no one tried to climb anything in the area for 16 years! In December 1986 I and two others did not make it up Mt. Palmer due to short hours but six weeks later our wands apparently gave Leo Americus a route through the crevasses to solo up the glacier and complete his claimed winter climb of Palmer.

On July 28th, then, Jim, Jeff and I started up from our 5100-foot camp on the glacier towards the last virgin peak over 7000 feet left in the Western Chugach.

ere are 21 peaks which reach that height in the area bounded by the Knik and
Twenty-mile drainages, Turnagain Arm and Anchorage. It was a very sunny day and
Mountaineer's Peak (7265) would be an easy ascent. Three and a half hours from
camp we were building a cairn and dropping a register on top, after climbing the
south ridge from a 6000-foot pass between it and Mt. Palmer. A nice drinking-pool
sits near the summit, and we quenched thirsts on the descent. We had intentions
of repeating the Hacketts' ascents, but as usual the weather put that off for
another day. I doubt that the vegetables on the headwall will have faded by then,
only my memory of them.

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST MEETING

The August meeting was held on at the Pioneer Schoolhouse on the 16th. New
members and guests were welcomed. The slide show was by Todd Miner. Thanks for
sharing your ascent of the Sultana Ridge on Foraker with us, Todd, what a great
trip!

Treasurer's Report:

Petty cash	- \$	37.10
Checking	-	375.68
Money market	-	<u>3720.17</u>
Total	-	\$4132.95

Committees :

Hiking and Climbing - Don Hansen reported that his recent trips turned out
well. He reminded us of upcoming trips to be found on the schedule.

Training - Ice Climbing Class is to be held the weekend of September 23/24.
Looking at the calendar one can see that this is the last full weekend of the
month, which is when the class is traditionally held. Paul Denkwalter is the
man in charge (272-1811). Cost is \$17.50. Harriet, at the lodge, will offer a
hotcakes breakfast for \$3.00, that's a good deal!

Huts - We have cups and t-shirts for sale to support the hut fund. For some of
these items somebody wrote checks that bounced! Let's not start this sort of
thing in the club!! Since we don't take bankcards, have money in your account
or don't write a check! Folks who do business this way WILL HAVE THEIR NAMES
PUBLISHED!

Old Business :

Todd Miner reports that the climbing wall is growing in support, if not
physically. The annual picnic was proposed to be held August 30th on the strip.
(It can be reported that it never happened due to the rain, however six people
showed and went for Grandes in a drier atmosphere instead.)

New Business :

None.

Announcements :

Elections, taking place in October, at the annual meeting, will be a lot of fun
due to all those colorful individuals who will be fighting for the limited
number of openings available. Two board positions and a new crew of officers,

like Pres, V Pres, Secr, Treas. After the elections will be the annual gear swap, so bring those old skis and climbing boots and make enough money to buy a round at Simon's, our "after-meeting meeting place."

REI is looking for photos to display, see John Baker.

The new AAJ is out and for sale at AMH. John, who announced these events, went on to read a passage in the new journal, which had four MCA members mentioned. Other members were mentioned in Climbing Magazine and Summit. You can read those publications at the club library at AMH. The Forest Service had a book explaining everything they do, also at the library. AMH has a rock-climbing class at the end of August.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pete Sennhauser

OCTOBER ELECTIONS

We're looking for volunteers for all positions.

President - run meetings, coordinate committees, hold board meetings, represent the club, delegate duties to others

Vice-President - find programs, run meetings in the absence of the Pres.

Secretary - tape minutes, secure a place for meetings

Treasurer - pay the bills, collect dues and waivers, keep a list of members

Board members (2) - vote at board meetings, advise club on policies

Nominations are open until the actual vote on October 20th. A nomination list will appear in the next newsletter.