



SEPTEMBER 1994

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## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday

September 21st, 7:30

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets  
Downtown Anchorage

**Slide Show:** Dave Hart will show slides of Mt. Hunter's West Ridge.



### TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL

place: Matanuska Glacier  
date: September 24-25

fees: \$ 7.50 equipment replacement  
fee  
\$12.50 access to glacier and  
camping

meeting: Thursday, September 22,  
Pioneer Schoolhouse 7:00 PM.  
This meeting is mandatory, so  
plan to attend.

coordinator: Nick Parker

The ice climbing school is for all levels of experience from beginner to leader. We will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice. We will not emphasize glacier travel techniques, however, this year a glacier travel option is available for people with ropework experience to learn crevasse rescue and safety on a glacier. There will be 16 places for this.

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED. Sign-ups are at the September meeting for MCA members only. If you cannot attend by the September meeting you may call Nick Parker at AMH, 272-1811. All students should become members by the September MCA general meeting since AMH does not collect dues.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 22nd. Students are required to bring their boots, and crampons for inspection. Club equipment



will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) Fees will be collected. Questions will be answered. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND. AMH rents boots, crampons and ice tools for people signed up for the school. See the special ad in this issue for purchase discounts for students! Some equipment is sometimes available from instructors, but you should not count on it.

The school will begin at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 24th, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 7:00 am or go up Friday night (no extra charge in the campground).

### School Goals

- Learn a useful and safe technique for climbing ice in the alpine and waterfall environment.
- Learn to use modern tools and equipment in order to insure maximum safety and speed while climbing.
- Learn and practice all of the basic state of the art rope management techniques; including a fundamental knowledge of knots useful for alpine climbing.
- Learn and practice basic climbing techniques, with emphasis on skills most useful for winter (and ice) climbing.
  - Belaying the leader, through mechanical devices and non-assisted or traditional technique.
  - Building safe anchor systems regardless of the terrain or conditions.
  - Route-finding to rapidly and safely achieve the goal without having unnecessary objective hazards.
- Achieve a climbing and fitness level to assure basic competency in alpine winter climbing.

### Equipment for Ice and Winter Alpine Climbing

#### *Technical gear:*

Ice axe - your basic tool, most useful in the 55 cm to 60 cm range as the primary tool. Modern ice tools have curved or re-curved picks with serrated teeth for maximum holding power in most ice conditions. Taller climbers or those who primarily are snow-climbers will prefer a 70 cm axe. The second tool will be in the 45 cm to 55 cm range, specialized for steep water ice-climbing. A great variety are available, so try to use as many styles as possible to find the tool that

best suits your style.

Crampons - rigid 12-point are the best choice for ice climbing. The new one-buckle system is far superior to the neoprene straps for attachment. Footfangs are an obvious choice, also.

Helmet - a must for the beginning to experienced ice-climber; ice hurts.

Boots - double plastic or leather (if you can get them). Plastic boots are the warmest and as stiff as the best leather without breaking down. Alveolite foam inner boots are the best liner yet made, in terms of warmth vs. weight.

Neoprene socks or booties which are loose fitting are also helpful.

Neoprene or cloth/insulated overboots are necessary for altitude and all but spring conditions in Alaska. A margin of warmth must be maintained for safety.

**Your boots are the most important piece of gear you use; except for your head.**

Harness - must be adjustable with wide leg loops, that will open up to put on over all your various clothing systems. Most modern styles have this capability.

Ice Screws - you should employ a variety of types and lengths to accommodate varying ice conditions. Pound-in and screw-in types of various lengths should be carried on the climbing rack.

Ratchet wrench - is very helpful, especially for leading steep ice with older screws.

Carabiners - you must have three large locking type and several regular carabiners. As you increase your proficiency and the difficulty of the routes you lead, you will require increasing amounts of hardware to protect your leads.

Slings - you will need to carry several of varying lengths, plus you should have a quick-draw for each ice screw you carry on the rack. You will also need several two-meter lengths of 6 mm to 8 mm perlon for prussik slings and other specialized uses for which tubular webbing is not suitable.

Special mechanical devices - jumars, figure-8, and other gizmos will be used and discussed to establish their relevancy to ice and winter climbing.

#### *Clothing Systems for the Winter Alpine Environment:*

The clothing system should layer well and be adaptable to a variety of uses and temperatures. Strive to use the minimum amount necessary to reduce both weight and bulk. The use of pile and (gor-tex-et-all) should yield a warm and

at suit able to keep you warm in anything short of a mizzard. An expedition parka and/or suit would be the final layer.

Socks - light wool or poly liner,  
heavy wool or pile outer.  
Or a neoprene sock, especially built for climbing.  
Capilene, wool or blends all are used.

Legs - poly or capilene long-johns in various thicknesses.  
Salopettes or pile bibs.  
Mountain pants or a mountain suit.  
Bibs - or a one-piece suit are the best choice because they eliminate the waist hassle.

Torso - Bib pile or insulated suits are the best choice.  
Poly or capilene t-neck tops.  
Pile or wool sweater.  
Down vest.  
Mountain anorak or parka.

Hats and mitts must be warm and wind proof. A balaclava or face mask should be carried. Waterproof shells for the mitts are necessary.

Gaitors - keep you from catching crampon points in your pants; such an embarrassment.

Everything in the clothing system should have long zips or full side zips, so they can be easily removed or put on.

## TRIP REPORTS

### Eklutna Ice Climbing - The Mud Routes

by Ernie Borjon

**D**ave Lucey and I had been going into Eklutna Canyon all winter whenever possible or tired of the highway, or Portage was weathered out, or Bird Creek not frozen. The ice climbs in Eklutna have always been like a good partner, always reliable, always there. But how many times and how many lines can you climb on these test pieces? We, as anyone else who climbs and climbs in the canyon, always have our eyes open for new routes. Of course, new routes in Eklutna are limited for there is a finite number of waterfalls there.

As we climbed and searched and looked at the walls, we began to expand our thinking. We imagined routes on icy slabs, or routes meandering up a gully

with a smattering of ice in it's crotch, lines connected by frozen turf, or snow upon rotten rock. We looked and became convinced that some of these lines could actually be climbed by using mixed rock and ice techniques.

By leaving the ice screws behind and replacing them with lots of webbing and some rock gear we decided to give one a try. In Scottish winter climbing they talk of *boldness, poor protection, long runouts*. Well they don't sell boldness at A.M.H., so we decided that perhaps we could replace this with a we bit of reality aversion and maybe some practical stupidity. Long runouts? Denial was the perfect psychotic security here. And poor protection? Not us!

One Sunday morning we walked in to climb Annie Green Springs, Dave waited at the base as I walked about 75 yards and looked at the wall opposite Annie Green Springs, and saw what was to become "Scottish 'Arf 'n 'Arf," a couple of weeks later. I called Dave over to have a look and we both agreed that it looked like a route could be done there. However, we went back to Annie, with our tails between our legs, after deciding that maybe in the future we would come back and do that route.

We went back on Thursday, a week and a half later. I left most of my ice screws home except for three, I brought about 10 pitons of various sizes and a set of Friends and rock gear. I brought about eight runners and three ice tools, a little boldness and I figured I was experienced enough to delete stupidity, although one never knows. We climbed "Scottish 'Arf 'n 'Arf." Grade III+. I climbed 80 feet on snow-covered, icy slabs to a malnourished spruce ":tree," and I belayed Dave up. The route continues 20 feet and enters a small gully that narrows to a slight depression with ice about 12 to 18 inches wide and about an inch at thickest. The route then diagonals slightly left past three baby alders which can be used for imaginary protection, for about 20 feet to lesser angle and then goes to the right. Continuing up for about 30 feet to where I placed a bolt, then 15 feet to a very rotten, loose exit and on another 30 feet to a belay tree we reached the end. We rappelled on one double rope to the bolt where I placed a second bolt. From there a normal two-rope rappel would get one to the river. Equipment needed was six runners, one for the tree at 80 feet, one for each of the three alders, one for the bolts and one for the end tree.

Two days later on Saturday March 26, we returned and climbed "Methanol," a U-shaped gully about 20 feet right of Scottish 'Arf 'n 'Arf. This route has a second pitch, that we didn't do, because it was out of condition (it was raining). It goes over large broken blocks and from what we could see would finish at the same ledges as Scottish 'Arf 'n 'Arf. Methanol was not as terrifying as Scottish 'Arf 'n 'Arf, probably because we had a mind set of what is required to climb routes such as these. Thirty

feet up I was able to use a #2 friend, another 30 feet an alder, 20 feet another alder, and so on, Grade III. There is a certain freedom to be felt, to be doing technical winter climbing and not be on a waterfall, an added dimension to Eklutna.

Dave and I returned to Eklutna on Good Friday, April 1, and climbed "Wine Loco." Graham MacDonald pointed this line out to me about 1983 and said that in his Scotland, "That would be a route." I've looked and studied it ever since, and I swear that this route sneered at me forever, as I scuttled about on the river, upstream and downstream. This climb is a slight depression in the wall opposite Ripple. It is a 65° moss, rock and frozen soil, with a wee bit of ice here and there. It is almost even with the top of Ripple. Grade II.

After Wine Loco, we moved downstream and Dave led us up "Zima." This climb is a full pitch long and is a ramp of about 55°, that climbs through broken trees and some alders. The ice is about 1½ inches thick. This would be a good introduction to this type of climbing because it is well-protected. It is about 200-300 yards upstream from "T J Swan," on the opposite wall. It is not perpendicular to the canyon walls, it parallels them and the river. If "Wild Irish Rose" were to continue it would arrive at the same rappel tree. Grade II. Four to five runners, no screws, no pins.

We now look at the walls of Eklutna Canyon with hungry eyes and see where many routes will go and will go safely. The occasional route will require long run-outs and boldness, but most have trees or brush alongside for protection. What looks like thin ice from below is actually ice thick enough to axe and crampon, that is tenaciously attached to the rock or frozen turf. It seems that late winter, or mild weather is the season that this type of route comes into condition, probably because of the warmer weather and wetter snow. Increased runoff during the day and freezing temperatures at night causes a build-up of ice on the rock. If you decide to try it, enjoy!

### MCA Suicides Trip

by Roy Smith



On Saturday, August 24, six of us met at the Carrs Huffman coffee shop around 9:00 and set sail in typical fair weather winds for the Falls Creek trailhead.

Four hours of easy uphill scrambling gave way to a rewarding summit. Everyone in the group

was easy-going and kept track of each other real well. We were: Ray and Bernie Destacio, Mike Paoletti, Dee Lewis, Dennis Morford and me. We made it a real enjoyable trip.

The trail is very direct, and mainly follows Falls Creek up to brush line, to where it peters out as a small hanging valley. You then see the summits slowly emerge as you head for the saddle and follow the ridge up to the summit of South Suicide Peak. Good views all around. The weather was trying hard to spoil it, but failed. There was virtually no wind until we reached the saddle, where a 20° drop in temperature was felt with a slight breeze. At the summit we were met by snow flurries, the first of the season. These changed to heavy flakes as we descended. As we passed a half-drained tarn back to the hanging valley, the snow stopped, the *termination dust* disappeared, and then later in the evening, returned for good.

The condition of the trail was slick and muddy, but plenty of alders provided hand holds. The berries were plentiful, with lots of salmonberries, watermelon berries, crowberries, blueberries and raspberries. Lots of Dall sheep dotted the hillside and some hawks (or eagles) hovered overhead.

I was out-voted on continuing toward North Suicide Peak, so I will plan another trip to return to climb it one day. It gives me a good excuse to return to this pretty little valley; good access to several summits.

#### For Sale

Internal frame pack. "Professional" Mountainsmith. 5000-6000 cu. in. New condition. \$175 obo. Mikki 561-4478

ADZE



**A.M.H.**  
**Gear Discounts**  
 for the  
**MCA Ice School**

	Regular	Sale ↗
<b>Black Diamond ALPINE harness</b>	35.95	29.95
<b>Black Diamond BOD harness</b>	49.95	43.95
<b>Climb High HMS Mondo Locking Carabiner</b>	17.50	14.00
<b>AFS Expedition Asolo Boots</b>	495.00	425.00
<b>Koflach PARA Boots</b>	225.00	195.00
<b>Lowa Boots w/Alpine Liners</b>	small	225.00
<b>Lowa Boots w/Red Hot Liners</b>	sizes	299.00
<b>Footfang crampons</b>	137.50	120.00
<b>Grivel crampons</b>	139.95	120.00
<b>B.D. switchblade crampons</b>	149.95	127.50
<b>10.5 50-meter rope</b>	147.50	129.95
<b>Black Diamond ATC</b>	14.95	12.95
<b>Edelrid Helmet</b>	68.50	57.50
<b>Russian/Titanium Ice Screws</b>		9.95

**BOARD MEETING**

August 25, 1994. Jonathan Rose's home. Those in attendance:

Dave Hart, Jonathan Rose, Roy Smith, Mindy Baum, Tim Kelley, Bernie Kazmierczak.

Topics:

*Treasury.*

- ☐ Chris Ernst is leaving town, and will no longer be available to fill his position. Duties will be turned over to Ron Rickman, who volunteered to be Treasurer, and Dave Hart will also help. Jonathan Rose and Mindy Baum volunteered to help check the club mailbox.
- ☐ A new club bank account was opened after it was discovered that the checkbook and petty cash had been stolen.
- ☐ Approximately \$9500.00 is in the treasury. Ideas on how to spend the money were discussed. The following suggestions were made:

1. Request an estimate from the Hut Committee for replacing the Mint Hut outhouse and any other repairs needed at the huts. Ensure all existing huts are in good shape before a new one is built.
2. Give Joe Kurtak \$200.00 for purchasing new books or replace missing books.
3. Request an estimate from Joe Kurtak on the cost of a locking bookcase for all valuable books.
4. Look into replacements for missing club crampons.
5. Look into training members for future trip leaders.

*Scree.*

- ☐ American Alpine Club is seeking permission to reprint a recent article on Mt. Torbert.

*Library.*

- ☐ The club needs to put an announcement in Scree for the return of missing books.



- ▣ The Colorado Mountain Club case histories were discussed placed into the library.

*Elections.*

- ▣ Nominations were discussed and ideas put forth.

*Ice Climbing School.*

- ▣ Upcoming class was discussed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roy Smith

### 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 non-technical 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 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 is 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 by MCA Board, March 1987

### General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment is on the reverse side of this list.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. 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 in the MCA Sanctioned trip.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. When carpools are arranged, please plan to pay the driver your share without his (her) asking you. Generally \$5 - short trips, \$10 or more for longer.
7. 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.