



the SCREE

Mountaineering Club
of Alaska

September 2017
Volume 60 Number 9



ISSUE INCLUDES

In Memory of Paul Beatty Crews
High Knight Peak
Montague Island
Baleful Peak (two ascents)
Rainbow Dinner
Mt. Doo-see

“Victory awaits him who has everything
in order - luck, people call it.”

- Roald Amundsen

MCA Meeting, Tuesday September 19, 2017, 6:30-9:00PM at the
BP Energy Center. 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, AK

“Rescued from Mount Logan’s East Ridge” by Max Neale

“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.”

MCA Ice Climbing Festival. September 22-24, 2017 at the Matanuska Glacier. Attendance at the September 19 MCA meeting is mandatory for attendees. Email Jayme Mack at mcaicefest@gmail.com with questions.

MCA Meeting, Tuesday September 19, 2017, 6:30-9:00PM at the BP Energy Center. 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, AK

The show will be “Rescued from Mount Logan’s East Ridge” by Max Neale
 Details: “Max. Be careful not to take a chance on risking Eric’s life. Love, Dad.” In April 2017, three friends were rescued at 16,000 feet on Mt. Logan’s East Ridge by two helicopters supported by a team of 20 Parks Canada employees. Eric had high altitude cerebral edema and high altitude pulmonary edema. Join us for stories of ambition, adventure, support, and hard-learned lessons about choosing people with whom to risk your life in the mountains. Club meeting starts at 6:30. Slideshow by Max Neale starts at 7:30.

Cover Photo: J.T. Lindholm rappelling on Baleful Peak.
Photo: Eric Parsons **Scree Layout/Design:** Paxson Woelber

CONNECT WITH THE MCA





Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities.

FROM THE EDITOR

Over several of the upcoming Screes I plan to initiate an ethics discussion related to climbing. I will provide a brief editorial on relevant topics such as:

- Cairns and summit registers
- Motorized access – aircraft, snow machines, boats, etc.
- Fixed lines, bolts, rappel anchors
- Guidebooks, route descriptions and GPS tracks
- Trash and Noise
- User group conflicts (motorized vs non-motorized vs pack animals, etc.)

Subsequent letters to the editor will be welcomed for additional points of view.

CHOATE’S CHUCKLE

“Inattentive belayers are truly slackers.”

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for the Scree can be sent as attachments to mcascre@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 24th of each month to appear in the next issue of the Scree. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the out-doors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

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Where the Winds Blow Free

Remembering Paul Beatty Crews

By Art Davidson

Many fine and accomplished mountaineers have made their way to Alaska. Some traveled from afar, like the Duke of the Abruzzi, who made the first ascent of Mount Saint Elias. Lionel Terrey, Riccardo Cassin, and Heinrich Harrer all made historic ascents in the Alaska Range.

The Sourdoughs, Belmore Browne, Hudson Stuck, and Brad Washburn pioneered climbing on Denali, and gave us books, and maps, and a sense of adventure that inspire young climbers to this day.

The inimitable Fred Beckey chased first ascents all over Alaska. Larger-than-life guys like “Pirate” Ray Genet and Vern Tejas climbed Denali about a million times, and regaled us with their style.

Along with making 14 expeditions to far away ranges in Alaska, David Roberts has given us some of the most meaningful mountaineering books ever written. Each in their own way, Vin Hoeman, Dave Johnston, Shiro Nishimae, Mugs Stump, Daryl Miller, Charlie Sassara, Masatoshi Kuriaki, Clint Helander, and others have earned enduring respect.

I’ve never been one to think about who was the best or greatest. But Paul Crews was certainly among the finest mountaineers Alaska has ever known – not just for the peaks he climbed, but for the lives he touched and saved, and for how he shared his love of being in the mountains with his children and grandchildren – with people everywhere. All this while serving in World War II and being a distinguished civil engineer, a sailor, and a maker of violins.

Paul started early. He was just five years old, when he climbed a mountain in the Olympic Mountains with his grandpa. Paul’s granddaughter, Sarah, tells the family story of this venture that might have easily gone awry.

“Climbing Mount Elinor was the first overnight hike ever experienced by Grandpa, besides the one he learned a little caution on. His dad and mom decided to clip a leash on him when the terrain became steeper. His dignity was deeply insulted, especially since another child, Helen, didn’t have to

wear one.”

“I saw the top of Mount Elinor beckoning me,” Paul recalled in his book *Early Hiking in the Olympics: 1922 – 1942*. “The only thing holding me back was that damned dog leash. I practically dragged Dad to the top of the peak. It was irresistible, and I had to get there. I had never seen ranges of mountains stacked up peak beyond peak, beyond peak, many of them capped with snow ... Then I looked over the saddle and saw nothing below me for several hundred feet. I was terrified. What if I had gone charging over there without the dog leash?”

If Paul’s love of adventure was kindled that day, so, too, was the caution and sense of foresight that would serve him and his friends well on many trips to the high country. After graduating from Bremerton High School in 1935, Paul was off to the Olympics with a couple of buddies. They’d climb by day, and roast a salmon they’d caught over an open fire at night. By the time Paul reached Alaska in 1950, he had climbed Mount Rainier many times, made first ascents throughout the Olympics and Cascades, and started a club called Bremerton Cruisers, as a way of sharing his love of climbing and skiing in the backcountry.

In Alaska, Paul exemplified what climbing was all about in an era before climbing gyms and competitions, before sponsors and glossy climbing magazines, before climbers tried to outdo each other setting speed records or climbing sheer walls unroped. That stuff’s all fine and good for those who are into such things. But I’m glad that I, too, climbed in that earlier era, and that I became friends with Paul Crews, after our paths crossed in a most unexpected way.

I was 21, and my friend, Hisazumi, was about to return to Japan. Back home he’d never have a chance to make a first ascent, but here in Alaska most of the mountains were still unclimbed. So, I took Hisazumi out to an “unclimbed” peak in the Chugach. We had a great time climbing over mixed ice and rock all day. On the summit ridge, I insisted that Hisazumi go first. What a moment it must have been for him ...

until we spotted a little cairn on the summit. In the cairn was a little can with a rolled-up note.

“Too bad, Hisazumi. Some guy named Paul Crews was here before us.”

Without a lot of fuss, Paul made many first ascents in the Chugach and Tordrillo Mountains with his friends Lowell Thomas Jr., Rod Wilson, Hans Metz, Helga Bading, and Gregg Erickson. Paul started the Mountaineering Club of Alaska in 1958 that has helped generations of Alaskans meet other climbers and learn to climb safely. He also started the Alaska Rescue Group (now known as the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group) that, year in and year out, has done an incredible job making it safer to climb in Alaska.

Like his close friend and climbing partner, Rod Wilson, Paul felt that “Success on a peak is highly individual and very particular. It may be many things. Most of them are intangible. To one person, success is performing better than he or she thought possible. To another, success is finding the right route. To yet a third, times of rest and relaxation in camp, however Spartan, with trusted companions is the best part of a climb.”

Paul writes in Tordrillo that any adventure “Starts with a dream of attaining a certain goal.” For Paul, the dream sprang to life with the planning: “research, members of the party, access, equipment, supplies and other essential details.”

Paul was particularly fond of route finding. “Relying heavily on accounts of previous climbs takes most of the fun out of climbing for me . . . Planning the route skillfully – choosing safe campsites, avoiding dangerous crevassed areas and avalanche slopes, determining the route that avoids falling rocks. . . is what leads to a successful climb. This in my mind is one of the great thrills of climbing.

“Regardless of the path to the summit, the joy of the entire climb is in the doing, and not necessarily in summiting. Enjoy the other things too – the dreams, the research and planning, the problem solving.”

In 1960, Paul’s gift for problem solving, along with his stamina and quick thinking under pressure, were tested in the epic rescue of John Day on Denali. Helga Bading remembers that, “While I stayed in high camp with severe mountain sickness, Paul and our climbing partners

reached the summit, where they met a party of four led by well-known climbers Jim and Lou Whittaker, who were guiding millionaire John Day of Oregon on a speed ascent.”

Descending, Paul looked back and saw that all four had fallen just below Denali Pass at 18,000 feet. Somehow, Paul found the strength to climb back up to help the injured John Day and his battered party. His quick assessment revealed a broken leg, frostbitten digits, a head injury with concussion, and the possibility of broken ribs. To get Day out of the elements, Paul retrieved a tent, cut a hole in its bottom, and lifted it over the top of the badly injured climber.

Paul and his team were the first to bring a radio on Denali, and they used it to call in rescue climbers, a helicopter, and the legendary bush pilot, Don Sheldon. While Paul attempted to stabilize the injured and arrange for a precedent-setting high-altitude air evacuation, Helga Bading’s condition deteriorated.

Just as Paul and the three sound members of his party began helping the stricken Day expedition, Bading became listless and had severe headaches and nausea.



Paul Beatty Crews

In a journal of mountain medicine, George Rodway wrote that “Bading’s acute mountain sickness worsened in high camp at 16,400 feet. Dehydration, prostration, and coma quickly followed ... while the Crews team helped the injured men in the Day party at 17,388 ft.”

It was called a miracle that no one died. In my experience, a miracle like this happens when someone like Paul Crews doesn’t panic, but thinks quickly, acts with courage – and never gives up.

Many have written about why we are drawn to mountains. Many stories have been told around a fire at night. Hudson Stuck and Belmore Browne have shared the excitement of their pioneering days on Denali. Lionel Terray and Hermann Buhl inspired my generation. And no

one writes of life, and risk, and death in the mountains like David Roberts.

As for the sheer joy of being in the mountains, some of the sweetest words are found in a song Paul Crews wrote when he was about 15 years old:

Resting in an alpine meadow,
Where the winds blow free.
Climb, climb, climb to beckoning summits,
Up o’er grass and snow and scree.
Wild flowers in summer find,
O’er them in winter glide
On the swift wings of the ski ...
That’s the place for you and me. 🎧

Paul Beatty Crews: A Remembrance

By Gregg Erickson

One cannot be sure of such things, but I believe Paul Crews, who died in July at the age of 99, saved my life.

In the summer of 1956, when I was 15, I summited Flattop Mountain with a group of teenage friends. It was almost certainly not a first ascent, but at the time I believed we were the first humans to stand on that particular spot and see Anchorage spread out below. It was an exhilarating experience.

The following winter I devoured every climbing book I could find in the downtown Loussac Library, and pestered the librarian to order more. I taught myself climbing knots, studied how to do a hip belay, pound in pitons, attach crampons, rope up, and rappel down. With earnings from my paper route, I bought rope and a mail-order ice axe. I imagined that I could teach the basics to a couple of my buddies and was sure we would soon be bagging first ascents of the mostly-unnamed Chugach peaks visible from Anchorage.

Not surprisingly, this caused my parents some anxiety. Dad reasoned that there must be people with mountaineering experience in Anchorage. He was right, and in the fall of 1957, he made contact with Paul Crews,

one of the first – if not the first – mechanical engineers to open a consulting practice in Anchorage. A few months later Paul asked Dad if I would be interested in attending an evening meeting at his Rogers Park home to discuss forming a climbing group, a group that became the Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA).

Though it was 60 years ago, I remember that winter evening well. I was the youngest of the dozen or so people crammed into the Crews family’s small living room. Everyone was excited about climbing, and several, including Paul, were willing to teach an eager kid how to negotiate the mountains.

That next summer I started real mountaineering. Paul found me a pair of army surplus climbing boots that fit, sort of. He explained why the hemp rope I had was unsuitable, and let me use one of his until I could get my own. When he heard I was going Outside with my family, he gave me the address of a tiny outfit called REI that sold crampons and other esoteric gear out of a loft in Seattle. I visited the loft and paid my dollar to become an REI member. I came home with a set of iron crampons that must have weighed a pound each, and 120 feet of

“goldline,” then the best climbing rope one could buy. Goldline had an amazing fondness for water and dirt. When frozen it became stiff as a halibut rod. But, oh, I was proud of that rope.

From cliff tops overlooking the Seward Highway, Paul taught me rappelling, which we did in those days without harness or hardware. Just wrap the rope about your body in the special way, and down you go. This was as dangerous as it sounds, but Paul made sure we were on a safety line. Be sure to wear leather gloves, he warned. When it slid on skin, goldline often took the skin with it.

Paul was a great teacher, quiet, calm, always encouraging, never finding fault. He not only taught me the technical aspects of safety in the mountains, but also showed me basic engineering. During the design of the MCA A-frame cabin (Pichler’s Perch) later erected above the Eklutna Glacier (*editor’s note: cabin erected over Labor Day 1964, reference August 1964 Scree and September 1964 Scree*), we were tasked with figuring out how to keep the structure from blowing away. We considered and rejected various anchoring schemes in favor of simply piling available rocks on floor joists that we designed to extend out from either side of the walls. Paul showed me where to find wind-loading tables, how to calculate the overturning moment from a 100-mile-per-hour wind, explained why we needed to add a safety factor, and how to pick a reasonable one. We weighed rocks from along Turnagain Arm to figure how many we would need. I don’t recall how much weight was required, but pictures on the MCA website indicate that it took lots of rocks. The cabin is still there.

Was I, a teenager who thought he could find what he needed to know about climbing in the Anchorage library, headed for a bad tumble? Having seen my own children through the perils of adolescence, I think I was at risk. Paul and the other mentors I met that night in Paul’s living room taught me technical skills that kept me safe. More important, Paul provided me with a model of what good judgment, humanity, and humility were all about. For all this I am immensely grateful. 📌

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Prince William Sound Adventure Climbing: Knight Island Highpoint

High Knight Peak (3104 feet), Northeast Ridge

Text and photos by Ben Still

The highest peak on Knight Island is Peak 3104; this also happens to be the highest island highpoint in Prince William Sound. Jon Cannon, Kathy Still, and I set out to climb this peak on June 25th, 2017. We were dropped off at the northernmost part of Mummy Bay at 10:30 a.m. for a nice late start by Paul Koning and Pika the dog, who was quite unhappy to not join us for this adventure. We started up a dry creekbed to the north-northeast, which quickly choked with brush, so we stepped into the spruce forest and found a nice game trail that was easy to follow for a short distance in the open, mossy forest. We hiked around several building-sized boulders with small forests on their tops before breaking out into an avalanche chute. Old, hard snow blanketed part of that chute before transitioning into thick salmonberry bushes. We detoured to the creek and were able to easily walk up the side of the stream until a large waterfall impeded our progress. We crashed through a little brush and entered back into the forest in ever-steepening terrain.

The forest quickly steepened, and after 700 vertical feet, we started climbing over small mossy cliffs, using roots and small trees to pull us up. Not too long after that we ended up pinned between a waterfall and gorge to our left and a large cliff to our right with an interesting route straight up over a series of small cliffs with a final 15-foot headwall. We took the rope out and set up a belay. I climbed out, slinging the occasional tree for protection and quickly reaching the base of the headwall. The headwall turned out to be pretty easy climbing, but trust in large clumps of moss and a couple of fern handholds

made the climbing spicier.

Once over this obstacle, we broke out of the forest into nice subalpine meadows at 900 feet. Time for a snack break; I ate a nice slice of avalanche pizza. While snacking, I couldn't help but look up at the imposing cliffs and gendarmes along the northeast ridge we hoped to be climbing. "It looks knife-edge," I thought.

After the snack break we continued up steep, mellow terrain to a large boulder field and very fresh bear tracks in the snow. I am always happy when the bear tracks lead away from our route. We traversed through the giant boulders and continued up scree and snow to a steep snow gully that broke the cliff band to access the ridge above. We all put our helmets on, took our ice axes out, and Jon put on his Kahtoola spikes for the steep snow.

Once reaching the top of the gully, we were perched in a deep notch at 2350 feet. A similar snow gully dropped down the back side of that notch. Uninviting mossy, chossy rock led to the ridge crest. I thought I saw a reasonably easy route up the cliff, so we broke out the climbing gear and got all set up to start the climb, but once I started up the rock, I quickly backed off, realizing the rock quality was very poor and there really was no protection up this 80-foot cliff. We decided to descend down to the north side of the mountain and probe for greener pastures. At that point I was thinking it might be more of a reconnaissance trip for a future climb up that steep peak.

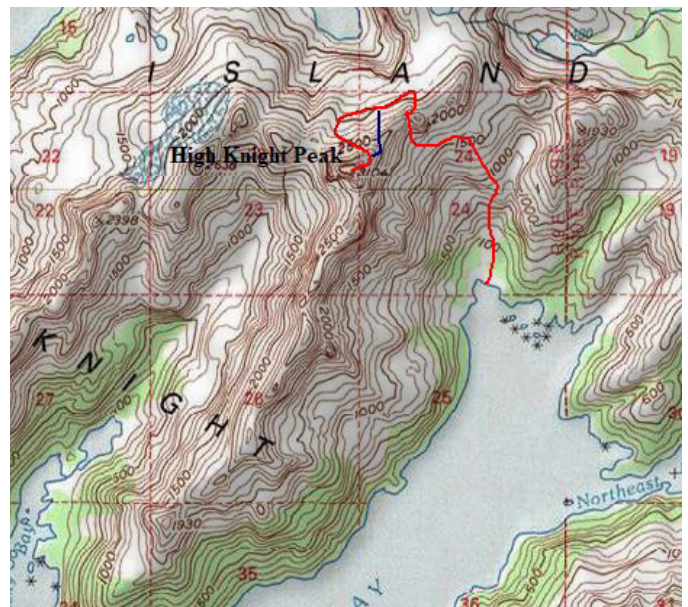
We all down-climbed the steeper upper section of the descent gully, and once the fall line was better and the angle slacked a little, Jon glissaded down while Kathy and I plunge-stepped down. We dropped about 400 vertical feet before traversing west around the north face along a broad snowy bench. Initially, all I could see were large imposing rotten cliffs, but after a quarter mile of traversing, a weakness presented itself. A little bit of chossy scrambling led to an exposed snow climb back up to the northeast ridge near the summit. We couldn't quite tell if the last bit of ridge would work out, but we would be close.

Nice heather ramps led us above a cliff band and to the base of the snow climb. I kicked bomber steps up the slope and Kathy and Jon followed. After a couple hundred vertical feet of steep snow the angle lessened to a short



High Knight Peak from Mummy Bay with route shown

section of horizontal, a short reprieve from the exposure below. The last section of snow we had to angle back over some of the exposure to gain the ridge crest. Not sure if there was a cornice, I continued traversing along the steep snow to a rock outcrop where I could have a look over the edge. I scrambled up and realized the ridge was a 20-foot-





Jon Cannon and Kathy Still scrambling up the northeast ridge of High Knight Peak with the high peaks of Knight Island behind

wide heather ramp. We still had some interesting ridge line ahead, but the ridge looked doable for the final 300 vertical feet to the summit.

After the heather ramp, the ridge became a narrow pile of large loose blocks, some moved when weighted. We all scrambled along the ridge, treading as lightly as possible. We continued up a few steep steps and connected a few ledges together along the final section of ridgeline. We crested onto the summit at 5 p.m. and found a large, flat area to enjoy the summit vistas. The highest point of rock was a nice exposed perch directly above Mummy Bay. The views were amazing, to the north were the rest of the rugged high peaks of Knight Island; to the east was Montague Island and its long, rugged ridgeline; to the south were many more islands and fun peaks; and to the west was a great view of the Sargent Icefield. An excellent summit, we built a small cairn to conceal the summit register we brought. We dubbed the peak High Knight Peak; although the peak was only 3104

feet high, it was a very rugged peak.

After lingering on the summit for a while, we begin the descent down the ridge. Once back to the 20-foot-wide heather ramp, I decided to have a look down the ridge and found easy going. Steeper heather and talus slopes led down to easier snow that connected back to our route below, bypassing the steep, exposed snow sections. We all agreed it looked good; we found the new way was on much easier terrain and made it back to our traverse quickly. We huffed and puffed back up to the notch and followed our route of ascent back to the beach, making one rappel in the trees. Paul and Pika were waiting for us as we arrived at the beach at 9:30 p.m.

Another great peak in Prince William Sound. We spent several more rainy days out in the sound, and climbed up Peak 1750 and Peak 1768 out of Whale Bay; Peak 1542 on the north tip of Bainbridge Island; and Latouche Peak, the highpoint of Latouche Island - all in the rain. 🕒

Peak 2651 and Peak 1903, Montague Island, Prince William Sound

Text and photos by Lee Helzer

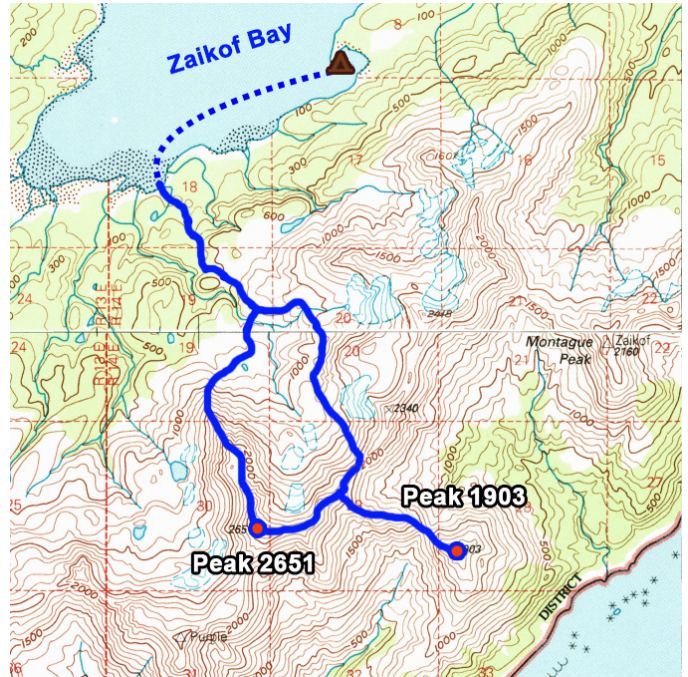
A small crew assembled in Whittier on June 2nd, 2017. It was a rare nice day and we were treated to a grand view of Shakespeare Shoulder while exiting the harbor. Captain Benjamin Peltz of the seafaring adventure vessel, the *Seaquestrian* expertly guided us out to Zaikof Bay on the northeast side of Montague Island. We found camp around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way into the bay on the south side at a small cove.

The next morning I awoke to the soft pitter-patter of rain on the tent, Captain Peltz and Paul Koning readying themselves for a day of halibut fishing somewhere in the Hinchinbrook Entrance. I hollered over toward Jon Cannon's tent, "When you want to start hiking?" "When the rain stops," he replied.

Little did we know that Montague Island creates a micro-climate of clouds and rain precisely where we had camped. We've witnessed this same phenomenon on subsequent trips to the island. At a leisurely 10:30 a.m., we roused, made breakfast, and packed. By 11:30 a.m., Jon Cannon, three dogs, and I boarded the *Seaquestrian's* small dingy and boated 1.5 miles farther into the bay to a reasonable-looking spot by a creek. The tide was high, so stashing the dingy in the weeds wasn't difficult. Initially



Jon Cannon driving the dingy in Zaikof Bay, Peak 2651 above his shoulder.



the alders and devil's club were thick, but after only a few hundred yards, we broke out into a series of lovely meadows connected by well-traveled deer trails.

About 3 miles into the hike, we encountered our first objective hazard, a small canyon with a fast-moving stream. A short, but steep descent, using roots and clumps of vegetation as hand holds, brought us to the water. We walked upstream, looking for a crossing. The dogs easily crossed, as they were not bothered by getting a little wet. We found a spot with a couple slippery rocks and a long jump to the other shore. Jon went first and, despite second guessing himself, easily made the long jump. I followed and quickly understood his caution. The jump seemed much longer standing on the slippery rock next to the torrent of deep snow melt.

After the canyon, we headed west to the north ridge of Peak 2651. The north ridge was a most aesthetic route with a wonderful mix of terrain and difficulty. The ridge started as an easy snow slope with intermixed moss patches. As the terrain grew more vertical, the snow dissipated to steep, mossy and rock steps, requiring special attention to hand and foot placements. While steep, each upward movement offered a new confident position that helped ease the mind when looking back

down. An occasional deer track pointed us to an easier alternative. The steep terrain ended at a false summit and imposing looking, but easily skirted, long cornice. Between the false summit and true summit was a wonderful rolling ridge with spectacular views. Jon and I built a small cairn and signed the register at the peak.

From the summit of Peak 2651, we hiked a half a mile northeast to the intersection of the northwest ridge of Peak 1903. Initially steep, the short out-and-back to Peak 1903 offered spectacular views of the coast and Gulf of Alaska. On the summit, we built a small cairn, signed a register, and returned. Once back on the main ridge, the weather took a turn for the worse and fast.

Clouds materialized, so thick water droplets grew on the micro-hairs of my fleece. Rather than continuing up to Point 2340, we opted to retreat down the snowy saddle toward the canyon. Descending through the soup on fairly steep snow was a bit nerve-wracking, but Jon and I made it just fine. In clear weather, it would have been an exhilarating glissade. We hit the canyon a little too high, right below a waterfall. Lingering snow created



Jon Cannon ascends Peak 2651 above Zaikof Bay on Montague Island.

a helpful snow bridge for safe passage. A small amount of route-finding put us back on our original tracks, which we followed to the dingy without any issues. We were all smiles on the boat ride back to camp, looking forward to a cold brew and fire on the beach.

The round-trip stats: 11.5 miles, nine hours, 4500 feet ascent/descent 📍

▼ **Jon Cannon on the north ridge of Peak 2651 above Zaikof Bay on Montague Island.**



Baleful Peak (7,990 feet), Northeast Ridge, Western Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Eric Parsons

Summer of 2014, I get an email from my friend and regular climbing partner, J.T. Lindholm, about heading up to Blue Eyed Lake for a trip to climb Mount Beelzebub. I declined; it was the weekend of the Single Speed Mountain Bike World Championships in Anchorage and being the bike geek I am, I wasn't going to miss the festivities. Of course, they ended up having a successful trip to one of the most sought-after Chugach high peaks. I ended up with a hangover, sore knees, and regrets. Lesson learned: when friends invite you to go climb a 7000-foot peak that begins with "B" – you drop everything and go.

The call came a few weeks ago in July. J.T. and Dave Hart were organizing a trip to climb Baleful Peak. On impulse I blurted out an, "I'm in" before looking at my calendar. Baleful is the second-highest of the 120 peaks in Chugach State Park. It wasn't on my radar yet, but I saw it as a great opportunity. Baleful was remote, difficult, and seldom climbed, usually only by those trying to bag every summit in the park. J.T. and Dave were in that group and Baleful was the third to last for J.T. and the second to last for Dave. Dave had been in there on two prior attempts. This would be the first for J.T. and me.

"It doesn't look good," said the pilot of the A-Star helicopter through the headset. We're flying above Hunter Creek en route to Blissful Lake at 3300 feet, but a thick cloud layer hung at around 2500 feet, meaning we couldn't fly farther up valley. Options were thrown out through headset chatter as the heli circled gravel bars below the clouds. Indecisive, J.T. finally blurted out, "What if we just do a traverse hike?" Dave shook his head. J.T. and I had stashed bikes earlier in the week at the end of the East

Fork of the Eklutna River, so the worst case was we would turn this into a ritzy heli-hiking trip through new terrain back to Eklutna. The helicopter landed and we hastily repacked gear on a gravel bar amid blasting rotor wash, holding onto a bare minimum of climbing gear just in case. Dave, understandably, declined, having already hiked out from Baleful on prior attempts. During the chaos, I noticed a blue-sky sucker hole through the clouds in the direction of Baleful. "We're totally going to get above this s--t," I told myself. With that the heli took off and J.T. and I were alone.

Our drop-off point was a two miles and about 1,700 vertical feet lower than the usual starting point of the route at Blissful Lake. J.T. and I started hiking up through well-defined moose trails, still unable to see even a hint of the peak looming a vertical mile above us. I remained fired up and confident that we'll be able to get above the gray gloom. As usual, J.T. seemed happy just to be moving. After stumbling through soaking thick fog, we eventually arrived at Blissful Lake. The scene was straight out of a fantasy movie – a window of clouds opening up to



Clearing sucker hole in the fog at Blissful Lake

the Hunter Creek Glacier, Fissile and Hunter Peaks bathing in sunlight. The brief clearing delivered a much-needed morale boost. We exploded our camp gear and started marching uphill in the general vicinity of where we thought the peak was. Upon reaching the snowfields that made up the lower mountain, visibility dropped to 100 feet. We had



J.T. Lindholm leading off-route on terrible rock

no idea where we're going, as both of us were counting on Dave's prior knowledge of the mountain. Without him we were quite literally lost. We laughed about not having studied Ross Noffsinger's 2012 YouTube video more and would have done anything for a photograph of the route.

One thing we did know was that we needed to trend left once on the snowfields. Squinting through the fog, we made out what looked like an obvious notch to leave the snow and start on rock. J.T. led off on a steep pitch of classic shattered Chugach mank. Everything we touched or stepped on was suspect to pulling off, and immediately we're in a steep no-fall zone. Gaining his position after 100 feet or so, I was as mentally shattered as the rock and not thrilled about our predicament. We're off route, in terrain we couldn't safely down-climb, and the terrible rock offered nothing to rappel from. Curious, J.T. tiptoed around a corner and enthusiastically called me over to check it out. We found access to another snowfield and graciously the fog cleared for a few seconds so that we could see where we really needed to go. Grabbing our packs, we made the traverse, left the snow for scree, and were finally on the Northeast Ridge Route.

Climbing higher, we navigated the complex ridge, with its many exposed catwalks and gully sneak-arounds. Still in the clouds, we built cairns here and there to help on the way down. It would have been easy to descend too far off the

wrong sub-face with the low visibility. At around 6000 feet, we reached the 4th-class ridge (moves of 5th if we wanted them). Everything changed, the rock quality became solid and we FINALLY broke out of the clouds! Pumped, we quickened our pace up the steepening terrain.

If we had studied the route at all, we'd have known there was a significant false summit to negotiate. But we didn't, so our hearts sank a bit at the first sight up the upper mountain. The summit block was composed of an exposed down-climb to a traverse and what looked like melted out, steep, and loose terrain to the summit. In the back of my head, the idea of Baleful being the "Chugach final exam" started to take root – having everything that made climbing the high Chugach "special" – and in abundance. Tucking away that thought with a smile, and convinced that things always look worse from afar, we delicately climbed down lichen-crusting slabs and plodded up scree slopes to regain the upper ridge. It was easier than it looked; after a few easy 4th-class moves, we scrambled up and found ourselves on the Baleful summit. Breathtaking views of the high peaks surrounded us while we mocked the cloud layer still hovering below us. Pangs of guilt hit me as I envisioned Dave mowing his lawn wearing mountain boots.

The descent was uneventful, with one rappel on the steepest pitch of the ridge just to ensure we actually used some climbing gear. At camp, we cracked



J.T. Lindholm scouting the route ahead, high on the northeast ridge



Finally above the fog and clouds, the Hunter Creek-East Fork of the Eklutna River divide is in the back right.

the PBRs J.T. had hauled up to Blissful Lake (this was a fly-in trip, after all). Being the lightweights we were, we ended up pouring Dave's token beer onto the tundra in his honor. The following day we hiked over a glaciated pass to reach the East Fork of the Eklutna River. The trip was my first time in the upper parts of Hunter Creek and the East Fork, and I was blown away by its beauty and the mountain adventures waiting to be had. The area had a sense of scale that felt elevated from the Chugach we knew. As we descended into the East Fork, a healthy sense of respect grew for the climbers who approached Baleful both ways by foot. Following epic sheep trails, we eventually stumbled into the trees, where we were greeted by several curious black bears and marched out what remained of the East Fork Trail to our bikes. So much had happened in just 36 hours; it felt like a four-day trip compressed. It's one of the many things I love

about adventuring in the Chugach peaks. It's all right there, incredible mountain terrain only a few hours hike (or a 15-minute heli flight!) away.

Thanks to Dave Hart and J.T. for inviting me on this trip. 🕒



Success, J.T. Lindholm walking away from Baleful Peak

Baleful Peak (7,990 feet), Northeast Ridge, Western Chugach Mountains

Text by Joe Chmielowski and Dave Hart

On July 21, 2017 Dave Hart and I successfully summited Baleful Peak. Five days prior, Dave, J.T. Lindholm and Eric Parsons took a helicopter from Knik River Lodge to 1,700-feet on the West Fork of Hunter Creek near the base of the mountain, but due to marginal weather, Dave decided not to attempt the climb and flew out with the chopper. J.T. and Eric pressed on, and despite the poor visibility, were successful (see page 11). Dave was disappointed, however one week later a weather window opened giving us a crack at the mountain.

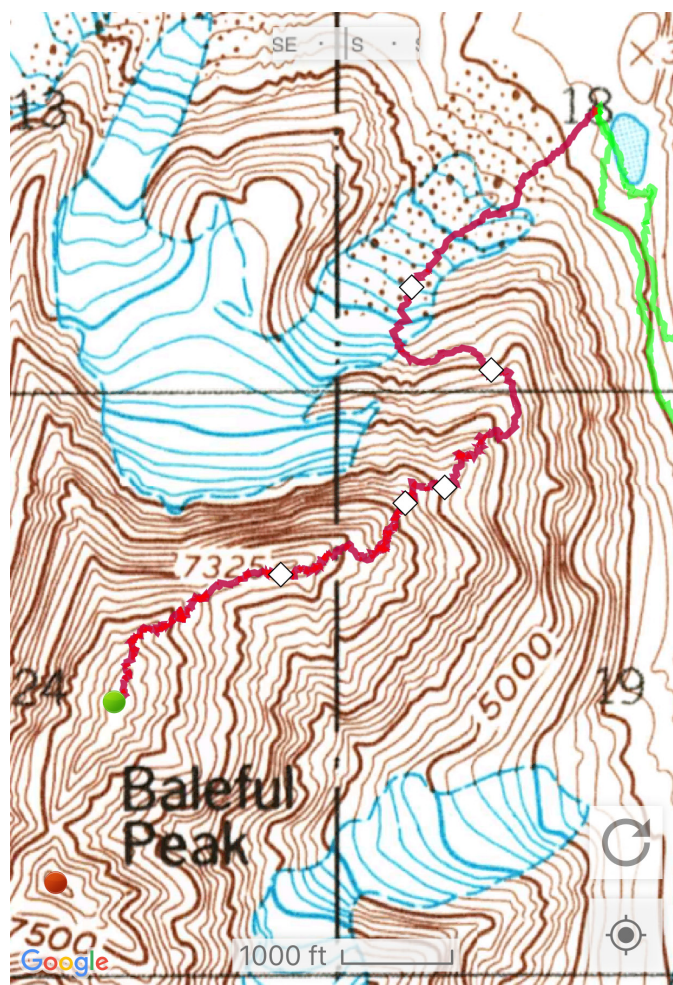
In this article, I will focus on a detailed route description of Baleful's Northeast Ridge in order to assist future climbers. Baleful has notoriety as a complex and challenging mountain. Thus, bear with me as I elaborate on specific times, elevations and landmarks. Here is how Friday, July 21 unfolded...

At 5:30 a.m. I woke up and finished packing my gear which was strewn across the garage floor from the night before. Dave pulled up in my driveway at 6:45 a.m. in his "peak-baggin'-wagon" (a.k.a. a mini-van with a bad battery). We hit the road, and arrived at the Knik River Lodge at the end of the narrow 11-mile paved Knik River Road at 7:45 a.m. Our helicopter flight was scheduled for 8:30 a.m. so we had a chance to talk with the Dutch lodge owner, Peter Schadee. His 4,000 square-foot high-end lodge was built two years ago to support their 22 guest cabins. They focus on independent adventure tourism using two helicopters to shuttle people to Knik Glacier for flight seeing and heli-hiking, Lake George for camping and sea kayaking, and Colony Glacier for dog mushing. Anchorage-based Tanalian Aviation provides their helicopter support using a four-seat R44 and a larger seven-seat AStar.

Peter's summer business is extremely busy (in addition to his normal tourism runs, he was working with a Korean rock-n-roll band shooting a music video at three

different sites on nearby glaciers). An alternative flight service is Pollux Aviation in Palmer. Costs for either service range from \$375-\$500 per person, round trip depending on party size. It is illegal to land aircraft in Chugach State Park; however, our landing site, Blissful Lake is 1/2 mile east of and outside of the park boundary.

The traditional hiking access requires 1-2 days along the Eklutna Lake trail to mile 10.5, then a 5 mile hike up the East Fork Eklutna River trail to Point 2190. From here head uphill to gain sheep trails around 3,000 feet for the last two miles up valley before contouring north into Baleful Creek valley with beautiful campsites. Another

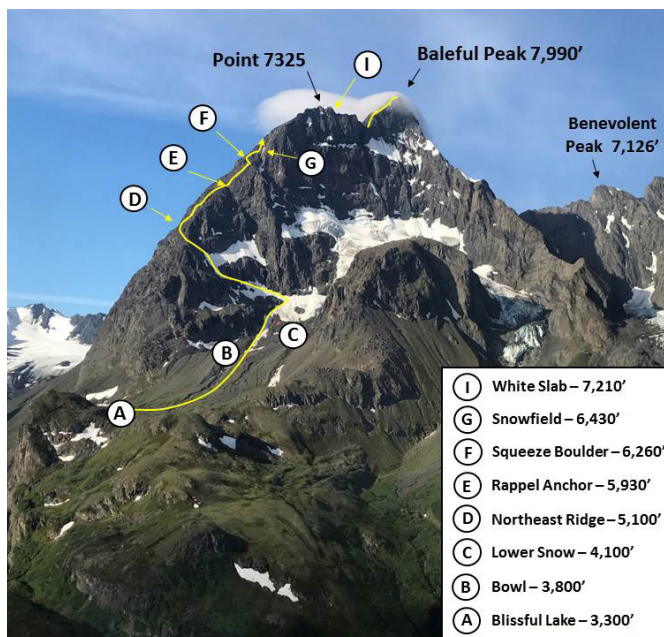


two miles eventually leads to the 5,400-foot pass at the head of the West Fork Hunter Creek glacier. One mile of easy glacier descent and two miles of tedious scree and side hilling leads to Blissful Lake. For a description of this traditional hiking route, see J.T. Lindholm and Eric Parsons' exit after summiting Baleful on page 13.

At 8:15 a.m. we were introduced to our mid-20's pilot who was fresh from the Lower-48 the day before. We loaded up the R44, did a safety briefing and were in the air by 8:30 a.m. Fifteen minutes later we landed at Blissful Lake, unloaded our gear and set up camp. We made a mental note of a lenticular cloud hugging the summit and thought it would go away later in the day. It never did.

At 9:45 a.m. we hefted our packs and looked up towards the base of the mountain. Our gear consisted of one 60-meter 9-mil climbing rope, 6 nuts, 8 double-runners with biners, and some rappel cord. From Blissful Lake **(Point A; 3,300 feet)** the mountain looked gnarly. We hiked up a moderate slope towards the north face hanging glacier and into a rubble strewn bowl **(Point B; 3,800 feet)**. Once at this location, the route became more obvious. For historic note, Dave mistakenly tried to climb this hanging glacier in 2002 with Todd Steele and quickly discovered that this was NOT the route up the mountain because it leads to the impenetrable 3,000-foot north face.

At 10:00 a.m. **(Point C; 4,100 feet)** we encountered large snow patches which we could link together to the end of the snow at 4,800-feet just below the main north ridge crest. On Dave's previous June 2009 attempt, there was considerably more snow which allowed them to climb several hundred feet higher on snow, but the exit onto the ridge was much more exposed. Our lower route was much easier, regardless of season. The conditions we experienced were almost perfect, and will likely remain so until fall snows return to the upper mountain, though with a bit more dirt and scree exposed as the lower snow slopes melt out. On these steep snow sections we used crampons, a standard alpine axe and a Whippet. We also donned our helmets and kept them on all day as there is abundant rock fall throughout the climb. The snow varied from 30 to 45 degrees in steepness with some cliff bands below, so falling would not end well.

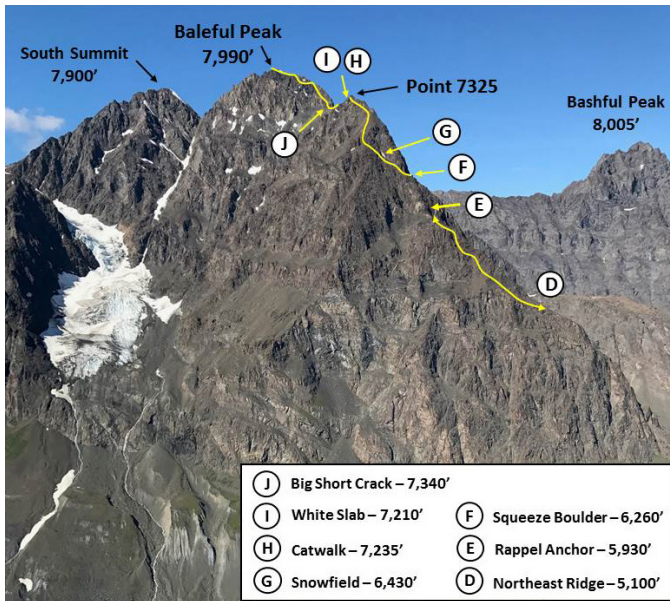


Northwest aspect of Baleful Peak with Northeast Ridge on left skyline. Photo by Joe Chmielowski

At 11:15 a.m. we were on the northeast ridge proper **(Point D; 5,100 feet)**. The views of the Hunter Creek valley peaks and glaciers were breathtaking. J.T. and Eric mentioned that we would not encounter significant snow above here, but we kept our crampons and axe with us just in case. Later, we did encounter small patches of snow, but we easily avoided them.

From 5,000 feet to 5,700 feet, the ridge is straightforward with some 3rd class scrambling. We stayed left of the ridge crest, mainly on ascending sheep trails. At 11:50 a.m. we took a snack break at a large, perfectly flat gravel plateau at 5,700 feet that would be an amazing place to camp. After our break, we started with an easy 200-foot vertical hike up the gravel shoulder where it eventually narrows, forcing us to the base of the first headwall crux at 5,890 feet. This is where the true climb began.

At 12:00 p.m. we put away our ski poles and started scrambling directly up the north ridge arête in front of us. The first hundred feet were fun steep blocky 4th class terrain with a few moves of easy 5th class climbing near the top with big exposure on both sides of the ridge. This section also happens to be the crux of the climb, and the only spot where we rappelled on the descent. We did not use our rope on this or any section of the ascent. As I climbed up I found a 1-inch loop of red webbing near the



Northeast aspect of Baleful Peak with Northeast Ridge on right skyline. Photo by Joe Chmielowski

top. I pulled on it gently in a slightly downward direction and it easily slid off the low-angle boulder it was looped around. “Hmmmmm... I wonder if someone actually rappelled off this?” I continued to carefully climb another 10 feet and found a white runner with an old carabiner still attached to it. The biner had a red piece of electrical tape wrapped around it and I jokingly yelled down to Dave, “Hey, is this old biner yours? It has red tape!” He yelled back, “Yes – it is! It’s from my 2009 attempt.”

When Dave climbed up to me, he explained that on June 27, 2009, he, Ross Noffsinger and David Stchyrba attempted the route. However, due to a recent summer snowstorm, two inches of fresh snow covered the mountain and they elected to turn back at 6,300-feet right above the Squeeze Boulder. They rappelled down from the Squeeze Boulder and also from this white anchor (**Point E; 5,930 feet**). What turns out to be relatively easy climbing on a sunny day like ours, would be a nightmare with a skiff of snow, rain or even moisture from fog/clouds.

From the top of this rappel station, we kept thinking that we would have to break out the rope and do some proper belayed pitches, but we never did. What looked difficult, or like we couldn’t keep going, always had a way through. Above the rappel station, we stayed on the right side of the blocky ridge, and ascended rampy 3rd class ledges for ~250 vertical feet, never very

steep, but with some exposure below. We were a couple hundred feet below and west of the ridge crest. We found several small cairns along the traverse that J.T. & Eric left at particularly confusing spots. We also added a few along the route to help on the way down.

After 30 minutes on the ascending traverse, we chose one of several steeper 4th class or easy 5th class chimney/gullies on our left to regain the ridge crest. Depending where you regain the ridge, continue up the crest until you find the big Squeeze Boulder (**Point F; 6,260 feet**) barring progress along the ridge crest which we reached at 12:45 p.m. We could barely squeeze through this wide crack in the 10-foot tall boulder.



Dave passing through the Squeeze Boulder at 6,260 feet. Photo by Joe Chmielowski

There is a rappel station just below the Squeeze Boulder that Dave used in 2009, though we came up slightly sooner than this anchor.

We scrambled the next 150 vertical feet along a mellow ridge as we approached the second headwall which looks very intimidating from below. As we approached

a prominent upper snowfield (**Point G; 6,430 feet**), the path of least resistance continued up and left over more 3rd and 4th class terrain. We weren't sure about water on the route, so I started the climb from Blissful Lake with two liters while Dave had three. Note that there was a usable trickle of running water below this snow field, but we didn't recharge our bottles here until the descent. There was more snow melt just below the summit as well.

We scrambled up blocky steps on the left side of the snowfield, and kept angling left up ramps and ledges when faced with any difficulties. There was a rappel anchor near the top of the snowfield which might be useful descending earlier in the season with more snow. The 3rd class scrambling continued as we slowly ascended and traversed to the upper east face of the mountain around 6,600 feet where the pitch steepened again. At this point the path of least resistance forced us right, back into the steepening terrain. We ended up at the base of a 10-foot almost vertical crack wide enough for our boots which led to a 50-foot 4th class gully.



Dave topping out on the boot crack at 6,600 feet.
Photo by Joe Chmielowski

This was the second crux of the route, and during our foggy descent we missed the gully, but eventually found it after a 10-minute detour before our GPS tracks set us straight. We could see the mellow upper scree slopes appearing above and to our left, so we traversed that way once above the gully.

At 1:15 p.m. we reached the upper scree slopes at 6,700 feet and took a break from the tricky ridge scrambling. We then reached the ridge crest at 7,100 feet where we stopped briefly to look down the north face. Scree never looked or felt so good. We continued up scree and ledges on the left side of the ridge as we neared Point 7325, then regained the ridge proper just below Point 7325. This afforded us our first view of the true summit since we left base camp. The summit was still a half-mile distant and an 800-foot climb from the saddle beyond Point 7325. It didn't look easy.

From the top of Point 7325 at 2:00 p.m. we didn't see an obvious descent to the saddle. We scrambled down some ledges and a short 30-foot chimney to the south which allowed access to a narrow ledge leading right (west), towards the descent to the saddle. This Catwalk (**Point H; 7,235 feet**) is a narrow ledge about 1.5 feet wide and 30 feet long which skirts south below Point 7235. It is easy to navigate, but the exposure is a bit unsettling.

The Catwalk ended at the top of the White Slab (**Point I; 7,210 feet**) which we downclimbed for 50 feet to



Dave heading across the catwalk 7,235 feet, preparing to descend the white slab. Baleful summit out of photo to left.
Photo by Joe Chmielowski

reach the easy scree to finish our descent to the saddle. The slab itself is obvious as the ridge forces you down to the lowest spot where it becomes a white slab about 10 feet by 20 feet, and covered with patches of black lichen. If it were wet, the lichen would be slick as snot and a real climbing hazard. While no harder than 4th class, a slip would be serious. This is the third crux.

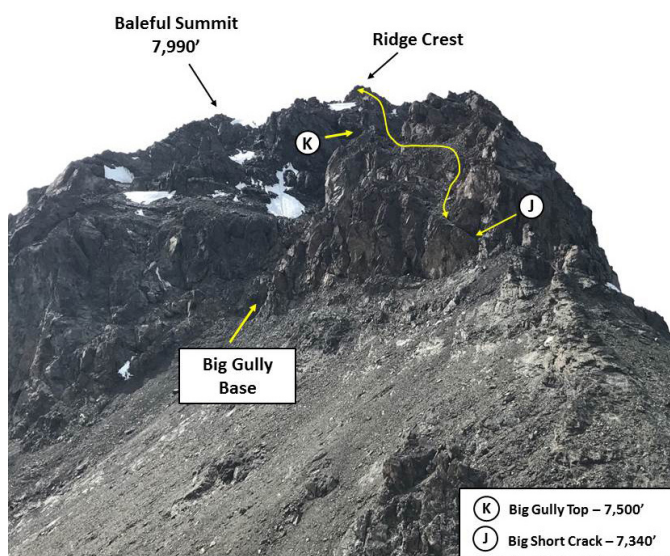
The fourth and final crux of the climb is the



Joe descending the white slab 7,210 feet.
Photo by Dave Hart

actual summit block. J.T. & Eric warned us, “Do not be disheartened by the summit. It’s closer and not as bad as it looks. Just take the big short crack on the right side of the lower summit cliffs below the diamond face, take a ramp left below the diamond, and climb scree back up to the ridge.” I’m glad they gave us that encouragement and advice, because the summit block looked ugly. We paused and stared at it and I was sorely tempted to move left to the base of the largest looking gully, but I could not see if it connected to the summit ridge. So, we followed their advice and found the big short crack (**Point J; 7,340 feet**) on the very far right side of the summit cliffs. We climbed up 15 feet, and then went left up the ramp below the diamond face for 30 feet until we exited at scree slopes above the cliffs. There was a rappel station here. We continued up left on scree until we were back on the narrow ridge. We progressed along the ridge crest and at 2:50 p.m. we encountered the top of the big gully that I was tempted by earlier (**Point K; 7,500 feet**). I am convinced that it would have worked, but not as easily.

The rest of the climb was straightforward and



North aspect of summit block of Baleful Peak.
Photo by Joe Chmielowski

we reached the 7,990-foot summit at 3:20 p.m., about 5.5 hours after leaving Blissful Lake. The last couple hours were in shifting clouds, but the visibility was always good. However, once on the true summit, the clouds began to thicken affording only broken views. We took a full hour break to enjoy some food and rest. There was no wind to speak of and the temperature was warm in our long sleeve shirts. During this time, I investigated some other little features along the summit ridge but we did not find a summit register. I tried to scramble to the next lower spire along the ridge 100 yards to the south, but ascending out of the saddle proved too difficult. I did however have the opportunity to marvel at the huge vertical drops on either side of me as I poked around the gendarmes and snow.



Dave on the summit looking south towards one of the slightly lower blue ridge spires. Photo by Joe Chmielowski

Once rested, we decided to “get while the gettin’ was good” because the lenticular cloud was thickening and expanding and visibility was quickly degrading. On top of that, we expected the downclimb to be much slower than the climb up.

All that said, the descent was less difficult than anticipated, but we relied heavily on our two independent GPS tracks. Due to the clouds, limited visibility and the confusing gully-ridge system, I would highly recommend taking continuous GPS tracks on two different devices. On many occasions this saved us a lot of route finding. Even still, we missed the 6,600-foot second crux gully and lost about ten minutes on a detour.

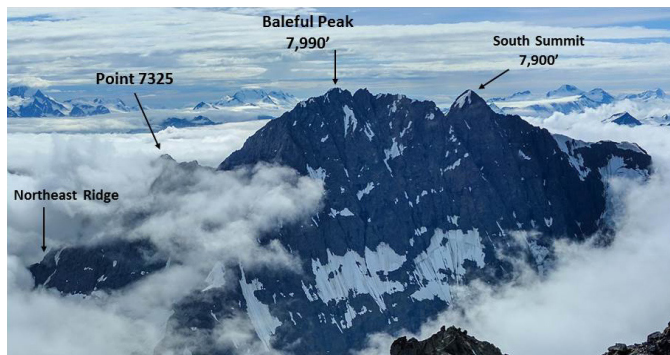
We thought we might do a few rappels at the four fixed rappel stations, but ultimately we felt safe downclimbing the whole ridge and did not rappel until we got back to the 5,930-foot first crux (**Point E; 5,930 feet**). At this point, we utilized Dave’s old anchor, and repositioned the loose red sling just below for a double-equalized anchor with two biners as a bombproof rap anchor. Dave hooked in and said, “OK, I’m going to boogy,” and disappeared over the edge.

I followed and we both relaxed after completing the steep upper section of the ridge descent. The rest of the ridge and the lower snow patches went smoothly and we returned to camp at 10:00 p.m. for some much-needed dinner. I had ramen and a meat stick and we hit the sack at midnight. As we were chatting, we both agreed that the climb was smooth, comfortable and fun. That said, conditions change year to year and day to day, so it is imperative to exercise caution on this mountain.

As we closed our eyes, I muttered, “Congratulations Dave, only one more to go.” Summiting Baleful was



Rappel Station: Dave finishing the only rappel of the climb at the bottom of the first crux 5,930 feet. Photo by Joe Chmielowski



Northwest aspect of Baleful Peak from Bashful Peak July 30, 2017. Photo by Nathaniel Bannish

Dave’s last Western Chugach 7,000’-er and his 119th peak out of the 120 Chugach State Park peaks.

The next day we spent 14 hours trying to climb 5,705-foot Siwash Peak by both the northwest and southeast ridges before getting cliffed out. It turns out both routes have been climbed in the past; we just underestimated Siwash Peak after our big day on Baleful. Once again, we had a long day and ate dinner at 10 p.m. before hitting the sack. We flew out at 7 a.m. the next morning after less than 48 hours in this wonderful section of the Park. 🕒

Gear: Crampons, alpine axe, Whippet, helmet, harness, 60-meter rope, nuts, slings, GPS

Trip Stats: Time = 12 hours, distance = ~5-6 miles round trip, ascent = ~5,000 feet

GPS Track:
<http://peakbagger.com/climber/Ascent.aspx?aid=835756>

July 2012 Ascent Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_KNObiAYzk

Ascent History of Baleful Peak:

8/8/1965	Art Davidson, Vin Hoeman
8/6/1980	Greg Higgins
6/25/1990	Tom Choate, Willy Hersman
6/1993	Phil Fortner, Jim Saylor
6/9/1997	John Cafmeyer, Karen Cafmeyer
6/27/1997	Steve Gruhn, Kneely Taylor, Niles Woods
6/30/1997	Richard Baranow, Wendy Sanem
6/15/2002	Josh Sonkiss, Martina Volfova
7/10/2006	Wayne Todd, Carrie Wang
7/10/2012	Ross Noffsinger, Charlie Sink
7/16/2017	J.T. Lindholm, Eric Parsons
7/21/2017	Joe Chmielowski, Dave Hart

Rainbow Dinner

On Friday, August 11, 2017, Art Davidson hosted a group of mountaineers for a wonderful evening at his home in Rainbow Valley.



Attendees included those pictured above (left to right): Roman Dial, Steve Gruhn, Ned Fetcher, Tom Meacham (kneeling), Charlie Sassara, Dave Johnston (sitting), Art Davidson, and Dave Hart.

Roman Dial made first ascents in the Alaska Range, Brooks Range, and on waterfalls in Valdez and Chitistone Canyon from 1979 to 1987. He helped spawn the sport of adventure racing, winning four Alaska Mountain Wilderness Classic races, founding the winter version, and directing seven races. In 1986 he traversed the Brooks Range from Kaktovik to Kotzebue by ski, foot, packraft and kayak and in 1996 traversed the Alaska Range from Canada to Lake Clark by mountain bike and packraft. He is the author of [Packrafting! An Introduction and How-to Guide](#). He also holds advanced degrees in both mathematics and biology, teaches at Alaska Pacific University, and explores the world's remote places on adventure and biological research projects.

Steve Gruhn has served as the MCA President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Board member, and Scree Editor.

From 1994 to 2015, he made the first ascents of Esbay Peak, Lowbush Peak, Gulch Peak, Nagoon Mountain, Pass Out Peak, Right Mountain, and The Sail, among others.

He has also visited the highest points of each of the 50 states, completing that quest in 2013 when he teamed with 78-year-old Tom Choate to reach Denali's summit, thus helping Choate become the oldest person to reach Denali's summit, 50 years after he had first climbed the peak with Johnston in 1963 in the first north-to-south traverse of the peak.

Ned Fetcher was a high school classmate of Davidson's. He was a member of one of the first exploratory expeditions

into the Revelation Mountains in 1967 with Davidson, David Roberts, Matt Hale, and George and Rick Millikan where he made the first ascents of Hydra Peak and South Buttress. In 1968 he attempted the first ascent of Huinchuli in the Annapurna region of Nepal with Johnston, George Menard and Ed Bernbaum. They were forced to retreat after Ned and Ed were caught in an avalanche and Ed lost his gear. In 1977, Ned returned to Alaska to begin research on arctic tundra ecosystems. He has since maintained strong ties to Alaska with his world-renowned research on arctic flora, leading teams funded by the National Science Foundation to study tussock cottongrass on the North Slope.

Tom Meacham has served as MCA President (twice), Vice-President, Treasurer, and Board member. Tom provided pro-bono legal assistance to the MCA for many years.

Tom participated in seven expeditions to the Tordrillo Mountains, two to Denali, and he made the first ascent of Adjutant Peak in the Chugach Mountains, and Lucas Marten Peak and Nagishlamina Peak (with Johnston) in the Tordrillo Mountains. He, along with Johnston, is one of only 23 honorary lifetime MCA members.

Charlie Sassara has served as President, Treasurer, and Board member of the American Alpine Club. Between 1983 and 2007 he made numerous first ascents in Alaska, including Mount Miller, the first winter ascent of Denali's West Rib, the East Buttress of University Peak and the first winter ascent of Polar Bear Peak (using a route that would become known as Sassara's Chimney). During his 30+ years of climbing, he has made expeditions to the Alaska Range, Chugach Mountains, Saint Elias Mountains, Patagonia, and the Himalaya. He is also one of the founders of the original Alaska Rock Gym.

Dave Johnston made dozens of noteworthy trips in Alaska from 1963 to 1994, including the first ascents of Andy Simons Mountain, Mount Kiliak, Bird Peak, Mount Case, Cantata Peak, Ice Cream Cone (Skybuster) Mountain, Truuli Peak, Paradise Peak, and Nagishlamina Peak (with Meacham); the second ascent of Mount Hunter (and first ascents of Mount Stevens and the Middle Peak of Mount Hunter); the first north-to-south traverse of Denali; the first winter ascent of Denali (with Davidson and Ray Genet), the first solo winter ascent of Mount Sanford; and the first complete crossing of the Harding Icefield. In 2000 he finished his quest to visit all 50 of the state highpoints. In 2005 he became the first (and so far only) person to visit the highest point in each of the 50 United States in winter. He was the first park ranger at Denali State Park, a position that he held for 26 years, and also worked for a year as a ranger at Glacier Bay National Monument. He is one of only five recipients of the Hoeman Award, the MCA's highest honor, and, along with Meacham, is one of only 23 honorary lifetime MCA members.

Art Davidson made the first winter ascent of Denali (with Johnston and Ray Genet) in 1967, which he documented in his well-known classic adventure novel

Minus 148°. Before coming to Alaska in 1964, Art made the first ascent of the south face of the Petit Grepon in Colorado (with Bill Buckingham) in 1961, a route later recognized in Roper's and Steck's 1979 classic climbing history and guidebook Fifty Classic Climbs of North America. In Alaska he made the first ascents of Kichatna Spire, Korohusk Peak, Baleful Peak, Benign Peak, Mount Beelzebub, Didilkama Peak, Mount Goode, Mount Yukla, Mount Seattle, Mount Logan by the tremendous West Ridge of King Peak traverse (with Boyd Everett and team), and was part of an expedition that made the first ascent of the South Buttress of Denali with the Osaka Alpine Club. He helped develop the high altitude research program at the Institute of Arctic Biology, and guided a research expedition on Denali in 1968. Davidson was also instrumental in the creation of Chugach State Park in 1970 and formed the Rainbow Valley community within the Park. In addition to Minus 148°, he has published five other books and numerous articles about mountains, nature, and culture.

Dave Hart has served the MCA as President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Board member, and Scree Editor. In 2006 Dave and his good friend and climbing partner Paul Barry became the first (and so far only) people to climb the highest 22 peaks in Alaska and Canada. During his 35+ years of climbing, he has spent over 500 days glacier camping and has participated in 55 climbing trips and expeditions up to 8,000 meters in 20 countries. This includes over 40 expeditions to the Aleutian Range, Alaska Range, Talkeetna Mountains, Chugach Mountains, Kenai Mountains, Wrangell Mountains, Saint Elias Mountains, Fairweather Mountains, and Coast Range. From 1996 to 2017 he made over a dozen first ascents, mostly in his favorite areas of the Wrangell and Saint Elias Mountains including Mount Riggs, Mount Pandora, Bruin Peak and Peak 12007, and climbed new routes on Mount Natazhat, Mount Vancouver, Wetterhorn and Peak 12850, among others. In August 2016 he climbed a record 101st 14,000-foot peak in North America and in July 2017 he became the ninth person to climb all 21 of the recognized 7,000-foot peaks in the Western Chugach Mountains. 📍

Peak of the Month: Mount Doo-see

By Steve Gruhn.

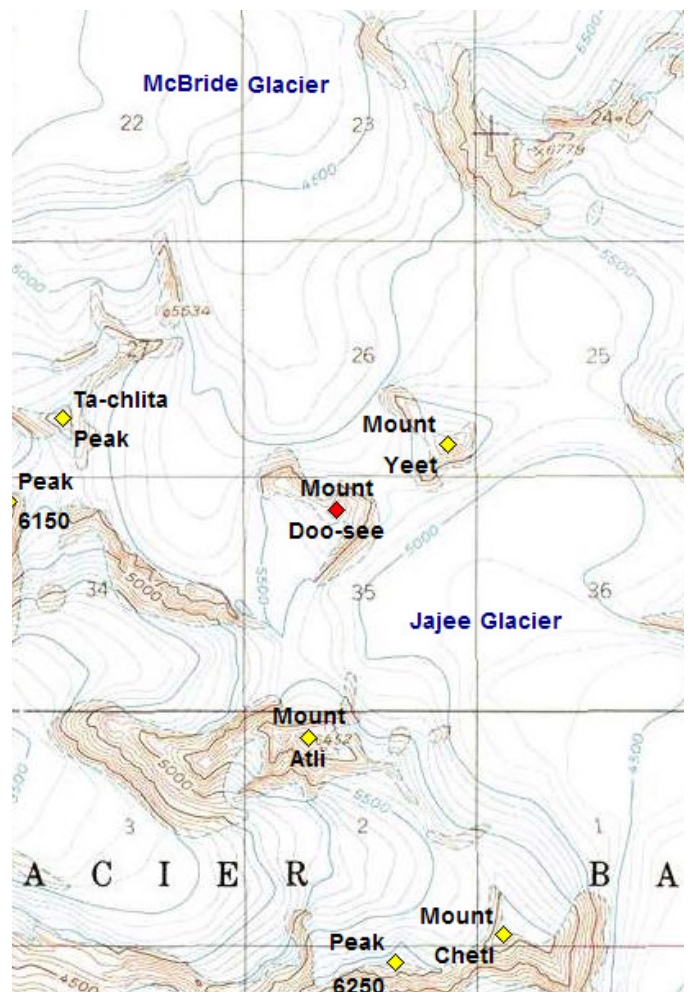
Mountain Range	Saint Elias Mountains; Takhinsha Mountains
Borough	Unorganized Borough
Drainage	Jajee Glacier and McBride Glacier
Latitude/Longitude	59° 8' 33" North, 135° 56' 15" West
Elevation	6025 feet
Prominence	575 feet from either Mount Atli (6452) or Ta-chlita Peak (6250)
Adjacent Peak	Mount Atli, Ta-chlita Peak, and Mount Yeet (6075)
Distinctness	575 feet from either Mount Atli or Ta-chlita Peak
USGS Map	Skagway (A-3)
First Recorded Ascent	June 11, 1966, by David C. Chappellear, Robert Rickey, and David Seidman
Route of First Recorded Ascent	East ridge
Access Point	4000-foot level of the Jajee Glacier

On June 5, 1966, Layton A. Bennett flew Lawrence E. Nielsen and Dave Chappellear, one at a time, in his Piper Super Cub from Haines to the 4000-foot level of the Jajee Glacier, where they established a camp that would serve as their base for the following three weeks. The next day Bennett flew Bob Rickey and Dave Seidman to the base camp.

The base camp was located near the highest peak (at 7550 feet) in the Takhinsha Mountains, which the team named Mount Tlingit Ankawoo, the Tlingit term for chief. They proceeded to name other features in the area with Tlingit words, including the Jajee Glacier (snowshoes), Mount Atli (mother), Mount Doo-see (his daughter), Mount Yeet (son), Ta-chlita Peak (stone knife), Mount Chetl (6350; thunder), Mount Dech (7475; two), and the Dukadee Glacier (rock slide).

On June 7 the party climbed Mount Atli via its southeast ridge. The following day they rested and on June 9 they attempted the southeast face and northwest slopes of Mount Tlingit Ankawoo, but turned back short of the summit.

At 3:30 p.m. on June 11, after having rested for a day, Chappellear, Rickey, and Seidman set out from




their base camp to attempt Mount Doo-see. The first 200 feet of rotten rock on the east ridge posed a hazard of rockfall. Leaving their snowshoes, they unroped and proceeded one at a time up the hazardous section of rotten rock. After 200 feet, they climbed up the talus and occasional snow of the east ridge to the summit, arriving at 7:15 p.m. They left a register on part of an envelope and returned to camp at 9:30 p.m.

On June 13 the party attempted the north ridge of Mount Tlingit Ankawoo, but again turned back short of the summit. On June 14 Chappellear, Nielsen, and Seidman climbed Mount Yeet via its east ridge. After two weather days, Bennett flew in with Gil Dewart and then the team moved their camp to the Dukadee Glacier. On June 19 the team climbed the north ridge of Mount Dech from the east. Warming temperatures prompted the party to move their base camp $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile up the Jajee Glacier to the 4300-

foot level so that the snow would be firmer for an airstrip. Bennett returned on June 25 and flew the party to Haines.

I don't know of a second ascent of Mount Doo-see.

The information for this column came from Nielsen's and Chappellear's article titled "First Party in the Takhinsha Mountains, Alaska," which appeared on pages 273 through 287 of the December 1966 Appalachia; and from Nielsen's trip report titled "Takhinsha Mountains," which appeared on page 348 of the 1967 American Alpine Journal.

The 1954 1:63,360 Skagway (A-3) quadrangle map indicated the summit elevation of Mount Doo-see was between 6000 and 6100 feet. A map included with Nielsen's and Chappellear's article in the December 1966 Appalachia indicated Mount Doo-see's summit elevation as 6025 feet, but the source of that elevation wasn't specified. 



MCA's Pete Panarese basks in the setting sun December 10, 2016 atop 5,001-foot Harp Mountain above South Fork Valley, near Eagle River. Photo by Frank E. Baker.

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Background photo: High Knight Peak Summit photo Kathy Still, Jon Cannon, and Ben Still enjoying the sunny weather. Photo by Ben Still.

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