



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

OCTOBER 1992

Volume 35, Issue 10

OCTOBER (ANNUAL) MEETING

- Oct 21 7:30 pm Wednesday, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Sts.,
downtown Anchorage, Alaska.
- GEAR SWAP Bring in your unwanted skis, climbing gear, packs, boots, etc.,
as well as your checkbook.
- ELECTIONS MCA will hold an election of officers at this annual meeting.
All offices are open.

OCTOBER EVENTS

- October 24 UPPER HUFFMAN
Campfire gathering at the trailhead. Bring large tents,
lanterns, firewood.
Leader: Dan O'Haire 561-1141

Annual Election
Offices and Duties

- President - presides at meetings; coordinates committees and officers
- Vice President - presides when president is absent; provides entertainment
- Secretary - records minutes; procures meeting place
- Treasurer - receives and disburses funds; maintains financial records
- Board Member (2) - advisory capacity; attends board meetings

Board Members are elected to two-year term, all others are for one year.

Board Members to serve another year are Dolly Lefever and Paul Berryhill, and Dan O'Haire will serve one year as Past President on the board.

Committees and Volunteer Status

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Conservation Committee:	Jennifer Williams
Equipment Committee:	Marcy Baker
Geographic Names Committee:	Willy Hersman
Hiking and Climbing Committee:	Don Hansen
Honorary Membership Committee:	Tim Neale
Huts Committee:	Maxine Stoddard
Parks Advisory Committee:	Scott Bailey
Programs Committee:	Joel Babb
Training Committee:	Paul Berryhill
Librarian:	Joe Kurtak
Scree:	Willy Hersman, Mark Findlay, Paul Berryhill
Refreshments:	Tom Choate, Roy Smith
Corresponding Secretary:	Willy Hersman

We still need a volunteer to help with mailing of Scree.
Contact Paul Berryhill, 248-6271.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

1. Mountain Man, The Story of Belmore Brown, Bates.
2. Mount McKinley, The Conquest of Denali, Washburn & Roberts.
3. High Alaska, A Historical Guide, Waterman.
4. Antarctica, Both Heaven and Hell, Messner.
5. Mountain of My Fear, Roberts.
6. Mountaineering, Freedom of the Hills, Seattle Mountaineers.
7. The Organization of an Alaskan Expedition.
8. American Alpine Journal, 1980 1983.

TRIP REPORTS

Rainbow Peak

Don Hansen

On a bright sunny Saturday morning, September 12th, the three of us: Bernie Kaye, Dennis Morford and I went for a pleasant hike up Rainbow Peak, along the standard route from a high point on the Johnson Trail, up the foot of the ridge leading to the peak and up the ridge on the low angle rocks to the base of the south face and traverse below the face and a short climb up a scree slope and traverse back on the ridge to the summit. We saw several Dall sheep on the way up the ridge and Bernie got so close to one flock of ewes and lambs to get pictures that I thought the sheep were going to adopt him. From the summit we could see part of the new McHugh Creek Trail in the valley to the north of the peak. Dennis donated a new notebook to the register tube which only had some small paper "stickems" for registrants to use. We had a pleasant hike down and only spent about five hours on the trip, including lunch and sheep-watching.

Mountaineering in California is not exactly like mountaineering in Alaska. First, there is the matter of the wilderness permit. Many one-day ascents of Mt. Whitney are done for the simple reason that overnight trips require a wilderness permit and these are not available. Half of them are given out on March 1st; the other half are on a first-come first-served basis on the starting day and usually disappear early from the Mt. Whitney District Ranger Station in Lone Pine.

Since I am doing my residency training in Emergency Medicine in Bakersfield, Chris and I have discovered the Sierra Nevada. On two recent weekends, we were determined to visit the mountains and get their good tidings. On the 29th of August, we drove the three hours to Lone Pine, arriving after noon. I had worked late the night before and we di n't get an early start. Much to our surprise, we received a permit for two of the last three available slots on North Fork Lone Pine Creek, our first choice! We drove to the trailhead at Whitney Portal, elevation 7800 feet and set off on the Mt. Whitney trail on our approach to climb Mt. Russell (14086).

The Mt. Whitney trail is not quite as wide or as heavily traveled as Interstate 5 in Seattle, but it is basically a freeway. Fortunately, we left it after about a mile in favor of the unmarked trail on the south side of the North Fork. Our guide to California Fourteeners assured us that the marked trail on the north side would peter out in half a mile, leaving us mired in willows on the creek bottom. After a pleasant hour of uphill progress through woods and over talus, we reached the infamous willows and spotted the sentinel lone foxtail pine which marks the start of "Clyde's Traverse," a series of ledges, generally Class 2 climbing, which lead in a large zigzag above the willows. Above these ledges, another well-defined trail led us to Lower Boy Scout Lake (10260), where we found an ideal camp on sand and pine duff in open woods.

The book assured us that having gone through Clyde's Traverse with full packs we now had the most difficult part of the climb behind us. The next 3800 vertical feet would be at most a formality. We started at dawn, reached Upper Boy Scout Lake after only a few false starts in the willows, and toiled up a slope which our book described as interminable. This loose 2000-foot high slope eventually ended in a high plateau which we crossed in half an hour to a 13200-foot pass overlooking Tulainyo Lake. It was from this plateau that we had our last view of nearby Mt. Whitney, for the clouds were closing in rapidly.

From the pass, a knife-edge ridge led to the lower east summit, whence an even knifier ridge led to the true west summit. As all of this was enshrouded in clouds, it was fortunate that only the details of the route were unclear, rather than this grand plan. After the third slabby block with no real footholds that I crossed by hanging on to the top while enjoying hundreds of feet of exposure, I began to suspect that my climbing was deteriorating from disuse. After all, this ridge was only Class 2. Eventually, I surmounted the last obstacles and had only the last steep climb to the summit. Surely this was Class 3 climbing! On the way back, the easy ledge below the last bit of my route tempted me down to look for the easy way. Alas, it terminated in a vertical cliff and I had to toil back up to the ridge.

On the way down, we found the correct 2000-foot high slope which was even looser than the one we had mistakenly ascended. It made a fantastic scree slide to the bottom. We got lost in the willows below Upper Boy Scout Lake, but eventually found our way out of them and down to our camp. We were a bit tired back at camp, but a snack revived us and we plunged down the trail to Clyde's Traverse. Below this, we followed a different route than before, crossed back to the north side of the creek and reached the Whitney trail on the marked trail this time, no worse for wear. We drove back to Bakersfield that evening. I was relieved to find that the standard climber's guides ranked Mt. Russell's east ridge as Class 3.

This pleasant whetted our appetite to climb in the Palisades the next weekend, when we had four days off together. After the three-hour drive to Lone Pine on the Friday before Labor Day, we stopped in at the Ranger Station where we were offered any permit we wanted including the Mt. Whitney trail. Our plans were more ambitious and we drove north another hour to Bishop, where every trailhead quota had long since been reached. We couldn't get our first, second, third, or any other choice. We decided to spend a night at the Gable Lakes (a non-quota area) and then do a three day trip to Red Lake in order to climb Split Mountain (14058). As we left the Ranger Station, one of the rangers said, "by the way, a landslide wiped out the first half-mile of the trail to Gable Lakes last year, so you will have to do a little cross-country."

We found dozens of cars parked at the trailhead, but all of the people were headed somewhere else. We followed a delightful trail for ten minutes before we concluded that it wasn't really going to Gable Lakes. So we went to the trailhead and toiled up an obvious landslide where our old map showed a former trail. We headed for an old tramway tower, but when we got there, no trail. We struggled to a higher tower, still no trail. Finally, just before we turned around for good, we found a beautiful trail that led us to the Gable Lakes. We saw one other person, a day-hiker on his way out, about twenty minutes later. We had the lakes to ourselves and saw nobody else that night or the next day. Stepping over a few rocks on the trail, we reached the original trail on which we had started. All of our toiling had brought us to a point about 100 meters past the place we had turned around the day before.

We drove back to Bishop, where a parade was in progress in front of the Ranger Station. We parked as close as possible, but when we got there, the rangers were sitting outside watching the parade and the station was closed until noon. They must have sensed our frustration with the system, because one of the rangers got up from his seat and opened the office to issue us our wilderness permit, for Red Lake.

I had visited Red Lake in July when I was weathered off Split Mountain, and had vowed not to drive that road again. Red Lake is also a non-quota trail. The road sees to that. The last five miles takes about 45 minutes, mostly in four-wheel drive, low range. Only trucks with high clearance make it. From a start in the desert at 6600 feet, we reached Red Lake at 10460 feet in just over four hours. The only incident was when Chris slipped and put her hand down on a prickly pear cactus. The big spines came out easily and she tweezed the small ones out for the next two days.

We found a pleasant sandy camp near the lake, with a great view of the east face of Split Mountain. The wind howled all night, but by morning, the weather looked better and the wind had abated. Giant rotor clouds stood to the east. The route up Split Mountain leads up ever steeper slopes to some easy Class 2 and 3 gullies and ridges before reaching the summit plateau. We spent a delightful hour and a half on top admiring the view. On our way down, we met a 79-year-old man from Big Pine who made the climb as well as Gus Benner and his party from Berkeley. Gus is an old Sierra and Alaska hand, but he told us the

of woe of their party who had followed an old map and gone up the wrong side of the creek to Red Lake, arriving in a meadow below the lake at dark.

Chris had planned to bask in the sun at Red Lake, but it set behind the peak at 4:00pm. We spent the last hour of light down at the Benners' campsite, reminiscing about Alaska. We hiked down to the truck and drove home the next day, well-satisfied with climbing a mountain and making a new friend. We hope to do a few more climbs before returning to Anchorage.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

September 16, 1992. Lots of new members.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$4296.97
Checking Acct	-	1284.63
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$5633.70

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing.

Don Hansen reported on the Rainbow Peak trip.

Scott Bailey and Chris Tomsen spoke on the upcoming Snowhawk trips.

Training.

Paul Denkwalter made announcements for the Ice Climbing School. Instructors still needed.

Huts.

Maxine Stoddard outlined the seven club huts and made a sales pitch for club T-shirts.

Scott Bailey reported on large black bears near Bock's Den.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion to spend postage to ship wooden ice axes to the club by Al Robinson was approved.

New librarian is Joe Kurtak.

New treat folks are Roy Smith and Tom Choate.

Elections will be held next month.

Volunteers were solicited to take over as Conservation Committee Chairperson and Chugach Advisory Committee Chairperson.

The Anchorage Womens' Club was thanked for the new carpet and chairs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A reception with Brad and Barbara Washburn was announced by Paul Denkewalter. Be at AMH on September 17th.

There was an announcement for a slide show by Fred Beckey at UAA on September 25th.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Tomsen

President's Commentary:

He was as loathsome as I hoped he would be. I got my first look at criminal Daniel Arts as he stood before the judge and had his probation revoked. At his trial, he had stated that he had heard it was "easy pickins" to break into cars at the Portage train station. He and his partner, Robert Robertson, had been caught after breaking into 11 vehicles, but were given probation instead of jail at the trial. But Arts made no effort to do his restitution and community service, the conditions of his parole. He will see Judge Gonzalez on November 13th at 3:30 pm for re-sentencing. Let him know we don't like being "easy pickins."

Editor's Note:

Several years back, when Mark Skok was president, he called a meeting of the Scree Committee, the people who put together the newsletter. He wanted some policies set for the Scree. That was the first, and last time we met to do so. One of the policies was a space limit for trip articles. Normally a half page and one page for long trips. It was a good policy, but as Editor I let it slide a lot over the years to accomodate people.

Please try to learn to say more with less. If Eric Shipton can travel by foot over unknown passes and ridges halfway across Asia in a few sentences. And Dave Roberts can recount death in the mountains in a paragraph, then you should be able to take us on a two-week journey through the Brooks or ski up a peak in the Chugach in a page. I know you can. Thanks.