

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

October 2006

Volume 49 Number 10

'Long Live the Crew'  
Jake Britenbach

MINTaineering  
ANWR – Spring Creek  
Twin Lakes/Turquoise Lake Traverse  
Peak 4550 Kenai Mountains  
Amphitheater Mountains Orienteering  
Sheep Mountain

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, October 18th @ 7:30 PM

Program: Helga Byhre talks about  
establishing the MCA in 1958.

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

*"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"*

Join us for our club meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9<sup>th</sup> and G Streets next to the Philips Building (you may use marked parking after hours)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org)

**Cover photo:** Randy Howell, Wayne Todd and Carrie Wang on the Summit of Spearmint in the Talkeetnas. Photo by Ross Noffsinger.

**Article Submission:** Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

October 10-15 - Peter's Creek .

Hike/Bike the length of Peter's Creek to the Raisin glacier and back. 42 miles round trip. Class D Leader Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

October 11, Spencer Loop Trail

This is a Class A hike around the Spencer Loop Trail area that will last about 2 hours. Bring a headlamp and appropriate gear for the weather conditions. To sign up, contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979 or via e-mail: [hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

October 14, Knoya Peak

This is a Class C hike up Knoya Peak, about 12 miles RT with 3,000' elevation gain. Bring appropriate gear for weather conditions. To sign up, contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979 or via e-mail: [hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

Oct 15 - End-of-Month Traverse:

Turnagain Arm Trail Class C. 9 miles. Hike the trail from Potter House to Windy Point. Requires spotting vehicle(s) prior to departure. Not exactly end of month, but schedule doesn't permit later.

Leader: Willy Hersman, [mcak@gci.net](mailto:mcak@gci.net)

October 25, Kincaid Park

This is a Class A hike to help stay in shape for winter activities. We'll hike around some of the ski trails for 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Bring a headlamp and appropriate gear for the weather conditions. To sign up, contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979 or via e-mail: [hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

# MINTaineering by Wayne L Todd



## Ross Noffsinger on Triplemint

A gentle toss of the food bag nestles it just where I want between two adjacent rocks in the middle of the Little Su River. Safe from bears (maybe), marmot, ground squirrels, picas, mice, shrews, voles.... the blue bag slowly topples forward. I react too slowly (wanting to keep my boots dry) and the sack plops in the river. "Food bag, food bag!" Carrie, in underwear and bare feet, seems to be in a strategic place to retrieve the rogue bag but it bobs by out of her reach. Ross is neck and neck with the satchel but on the west side of the river. Randy is, where is Randy?

Our three days of sustenance lodges against a rock at the head of a beautiful tiny island (ablaze with

fireweed, lush green moss and grass....). Ahah, no problem, I stroll in that direction. Only five feet from our delectable food, the sack swings right into swifter current. Damn it! I launch down the island and fall face forward. Adrenaline and a man versus nature instinct prevail as I leap up prepared for a Herculean lunge. The blue devil is lodged against another rock, again seemingly quite stable. I make a couple of dignified strides and then leap into the water, wrestling the monster into submission (and getting my feet wet). Hmmm, the food bag seems heavier than before.

Wow, only 45 minutes to secure our provisions and to cross a 6 foot wide stream. Where does the time go?

Between boulder hopping, the four of us snatch glances at the west face of Triplemint, scanning for a reasonable ascent route. We've been told by a credible source, Willy, that his group climbed without a rope. Skepticism is high as we make our way south-east. The lower buttress angle begins easing off as we approach the south ridge until we see a scrambleable way up the initial part of the climb. Connecting grass benches on 45° smooth rock, and a few zigs and zags, gets us to a small bowl where we see numerous less steep slopes beckoning to the summit ridge. After

various ascent routes we find ourselves, and a register, and fine views of ..... Hey, we never used the rope! Reversing the ascent route is easy enough in the afternoon sun, but a slip or descent in wet conditions could have serious consequences.

A suggestion of "Telemint is just up the valley" soon places us at the south end of the Telemint glacier after a leisurely stroll through foot-deep wet snow (leisurely at least when Carrie is leading). The vertical tower we passed by seems awfully close in height to the 'Telemint' we are now sitting upon. A water bottle check confirms suspicions that it is higher, by around 30 feet. The back (east) side doesn't seem so vertical so we deem it worth pursuing. The snow covered glacier leads easily to

a ridge-access 100 yards from the summit block. Carrie waits on the sunny side as she's had her fill of scrambling for the day. Ross follows to the dark side but quickly decides to become a spectator.



**True Telemint**

Randy and I cross a couple of perpendicular sub-ridges until we just suck it up and descend 100 feet, crossing more easily into a gully which accesses the south side of the summit block. The scramble is on as we make our way up the gully, then exit right onto a small bench where we decide to harness up... but not to rope up? As the easy-looking-scramble from below gets more difficult, I wish the rope in my pack was attached to my harness so I might place some pro and perhaps have a bit of security.



This short bit tops out on a 2-foot wide upward right trending ramp. I yell to Randy, 'holler' if he wants a belay. He declines, as "it doesn't look too bad." The ramp terminates at a 50° left-trending

lichen covered face. The rope comes out and an embedded boulder is slung. Ahh, some protection. Randy pops up from the first scramble, "that was a lot harder than it looked. I wouldn't have minded a belay."

I lead up and right on belay, placing a couple cams and slings, a few of which would hold a fall. At the crest, I 'au cheval' the last 20 feet to the summit, where an oddly bomber boulder awaits an anchor. After Randy is belayed on board, we view the Talkeetnas and dark threatening clouds from our perch. This point is definitely higher than the labeled Telemint.



**Approaching True Telemint Summit**

A thorough investigation of two summit blocks reveals no register, no cairn, nor any sign of previous human visitation. We place a register. Our yells are answered from somewhere below on the glacier. Rapping off the summit in short order seems prudent. We decide on the south ridge. Randy goes first and sets another rap station so I rap twice into our ascent gully. Hoping for a quick rap onto the glacier, I peer over the edge of the gully to a 200 foot overhanging abyss. Let's see, 50m rope times 3.3ft/m equals 165 ft divided by two (plus some rope stretch) equals about 90 ft. Or

working the other way, 200 ft times 2 equals 400 ft. Nope, don't have a rope stretcher or a vertical compressor either.

Hmm, back the way we came, should go faster now that we're familiar with the short traverse. Except we overshoot our original gully. Ascending numerous gullies failing to meet easy glacier access criteria, we find a candidate one-third of the way back towards the original Telemint.

We descend snow tracks, then a mostly boulder free and then vegetated descent route back to camp (knee friendly). A busy beaver, eating grass alongside his/her pond, fails to notice our myriad of photo shots, even with a flash. After verbally identifying the creature, "Beaver!" he/she retreats to the water scanning for, but failing to find the source of the sound, Randy.

The next day, after a move to the hut, we traipse up the Mint Glacier in the afternoon for another round at Troublemint. Last year we turned about 30 feet below the summit. Sensing an 'easier' day is in order, we agree to climb Spearmint instead. I recall a major snow gully route to the plateau north of Spearmint as being simple and assure everyone of this. After procrastinating at the wet snow firn line, someone leads out toward the gully entrance. The gully this time of year is only one-third filled with snow and only one short section looks tricky.

#### **Carrie in the gully**



Leaving the relative security of kicked steps in wet snow, the 30-50° gully varies from wet snow patches to mud to stacked boulders to hard rock with sprinklings of earthen matter. The ascending method varies from the 'tight pack' to one or two leaders with the rest waiting in a safe zone. A rope is called for and a belay morphs into a running belay. Topping out on the gentle plateau is a relief.

While the others make their break-intensive way toward the summit, I head north in search of an easier descent route. Both a gully to the north and the saddle between Montana and Spearmint look more enticing. The gully wins out as there is continuous snow from plateau to glacier. A photo opportunity emerges as three dark objects ascend the snow-covered peak with grey and black clouds threatening the skyline.

#### **Spearmint bound**



Joining the others on top, we hurriedly take photos and apprehensively watch the rain front to the east, while searching for a register. None is found. [Has it been removed or have too many folks climbed this peak?] We guesstimate the location of the Dinigi hut, gobble a snack, and head off before any appreciable precipitation lands on our bodies.

The northern snow gully works well for down climbing. The only mishaps are a few 'faceplants' while plunge stepping when the snow collapses around buried boulders.

We encounter Jim Bouchard from Trapper Creek who is really, really lost. Actually, he is quite the Alaskan climber and outdoorsman so we share stories that night and the next morning. We are disappointed that he didn't arrive sooner so we could climb together.

Not bad with a forecast of mostly cloudy skies along with a chance of isolated or scattered showers. What is the difference between 'isolated' and 'scattered' anyway?

*Submitted by Wayne L. Todd. Accompanied by Randy Howell, Ross Noffsinger and Carrie Wang July 22-25, 2006*

# ANWR Spring Creek

By Don Hansen



**View from summit of 6,501 peak, photo by Dan Shoe**

On July 19<sup>th</sup> Jim Scherr, Dan Shoe and I drove to Fairbanks and stayed at a B&B in order to catch our commuter flight on Wright Air to Fort Yukon. It was sunny in Fort Yukon as we waited for Yukon Air charter pilot Kirk Sweetsir to return from flying customers up north. After he arrived and loaded the plane with our gear it took about an hour to get to Spring Creek airstrip located on a large tundra bench just east of the creek drainage. The weather was overcast in this drainage while it was sunny in the rest of the eastern Brooks Range however Spring Creek drainage looked rather dry and the creek was low. That afternoon we setup camp on a lower bench adjacent to the airstrip and went for a short hike down to a large patch of “auf ice” a common feature in Brooks Range drainages. We took pictures of the ice and Jim soaked a sour toe in the creek. Next morning we packed up our gear and left a food cache at the airstrip and backpacked up Spring Creek to establish a base camp from which we planned to do day hikes for the next 5 to 6 days.

We setup our base camp on a narrow tundra bench adjacent to a talus slope on the east side of the creek. The next 2 days, Saturday July 22nd and

Sunday July 23<sup>rd</sup> were rainy days with frequent showers throughout the day. On Sunday Dan and I went for a short hike further up the drainage and took pictures of a carpet of yellow flowers on a bench along the creek. As the rain started again I headed back to camp while Dan continued on up to Carter Pass and the Continental Divide. Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> the weather cleared and I went for a solo hike up to Carter Pass under clear sunny skies and took several pictures of the mountain reflections in a small lake just north of the pass. Dan went on a solo hike up a 6,000 plus peak across Spring Creek on the Westside of the drainage. Jim stayed near camp nursing his sore foot but did some geology exploration in the creek bed. Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of July was also a sunny day. Dan and I went on a longer hike up a main fork of Spring Creek that branched to the west. This drainage opened up into a pretty valley with interesting rock formations. The drainage forked again with one branch leading south into a box canyon with rocky spires and flat slopes of slate like rock that glisten in the sun. Travel up and down the drainage was easy on tundra benches but there were gravel bars with large rocks in them that we had to travel over to get from one bench to the next.

The next day, July 26<sup>th</sup>, we broke camp under partly cloudy skies and headed back to the airstrip to restock our packs with food. It was a pleasant backpack to the strip with a faint order of smoke coming up the valley from some fire in the interior, but this dissipated before we got to the strip. The next morning we packed up our gear and headed for another drainage east of Spring Creek through a small pass following a good game trail with fresh moose droppings and some bear scat. After going through the pass we hiked up a knoll looking for a small lake that would be our source of water since there appeared to be no water flowing in this drainage east of Spring Creek. We located the lake in a small depression adjacent to the knoll to the west. We set up camp at the lake and spent the next 2 days exploring ridges and knolls above the drainage. The mornings were partly sunny with intermittent thunderstorms in the afternoons. On our first day hike in the area, Dan spotted a cow moose and calf as they crossed the gravel bars of the creek basin.

On the second day hike, Dan & I hiked up a ridge 2 miles from camp and walked along the ridge & headed back to camp just as the thunder heads were forming to the south and headed our way. We got back to our tents just in time before the storm hit. Thunder & lightning & hard driving rain and wind lasted for about an hour.

After 3 nights at the lake, the following morning we packed up & headed back to the airstrip. It was an easy trip taking only about 2 hours. The next day Dan & I planned to do a long day hike up a ridge across the creek from the airstrip, but the weather turned marginal. We did a short hike up the ridge above camp with rain showers starting off and on. We got back to camp around noon as the weather began to come down with low clouds building to

the north. A Yukon Air pilot flew by bringing another party through Carter Pass to the Marsh Fork of the Canning River airstrip. On the way back he stopped and asked us if we wanted to get picked up a day early. He said the weather was coming down & He may not be able to pick us up the next day. He would fly by again bringing the rest of the party north through the pass. If he saw that our tents were down & our packs ready to go on the strip he would pick us up. It didn't take us long to decide whether we would leave a day early. It was likely we would spend the rest of the day in camp anyway so we broke down our camp and waited for the pilot to return. We took off from the Spring Creek airstrip just as the rain started and clouds began to drop.

Kirk Sweetsir, our pilot, made arrangements for a commuter air flight to Fairbanks to wait for us in Fort Yukon. We got back to Fairbanks later that afternoon and were on the road back to Anchorage early that evening.

**Spring Creek valley, photo by Dan Shoe**



# Twin Lakes/Turquoise Lake Traverse

Beautiful weather, bugs and brush

By Don Hansen



## View from 5720 Summit

After arriving at Rust's Flying Service on Lake Hood at 9 AM on July 1<sup>st</sup> we - Anne Nelson, Chuck Kennedy and I, were told to come back that afternoon to wait for the weather to clear. As the clouds broke on the low overcast morning, blue skies appeared to the west and I knew it was a go. After crossing upper Cook Inlet, we flew over Blockage Glacier and took a narrow pass to Twin Lakes. We were dropped off on the north shore of lower Twin Lake near the outlet to Chilikandrotna River. We setup camp on a tundra bench above the lake and took a short hike to the outlet under warm & sunny skies. The following day we left camp early in the morning for a hike up 5720 peak. To get to the base of the mountains, we had to endure a mile bushwhack through dwarf birch more than six feet tall and, of course, willows and alders. Swarms of gnats rose up from the brush with each step. At least they don't bite. We hiked up a steep tundra/scree gully to reach the ridge that eventually lead to the peak. We bagged two lower peaks on

our way to the summit. It was a long hot but breezy journey.

We were thankful for the snow patches left over from the cool spring we had in South Central Alaska. We filled up our water bottles more than once on the decent back down the ridge. The following day we went on an easy hike along the lakeshore and prepared for the next day's backpack and bush whack start to Turquoise Lake. We got an early start in the cool of the morning when the bugs were not so bad. The gnats had been replaced by hordes of mosquitoes. On our route, we angled through spruce trees to avoid much of the brush. In the last 200 yards to above the brush line we could not avoid the thick alders and dwarf birch. I inhaled several mosquitoes on the way through the brush, hacking as I went. After getting through the brush, travel got much easier although there were patches of tussocks to go through. A cool breeze kept the mosquitoes at bay



most of the day on our pack to the 5720 drainage. The drainage is about half way to Turquoise Lake.

We found numerous snow patches along our route that we used to fill up our water bottles. At one lunch break, Chuck used snow and his peanut butter to make a peanut butter slurpee. We hadn't seen any game at Twin Lakes but a bald eagle and some waterfowl. As we descended into 5720 valley, we spotted one lone caribou trotting up the drainage. There were bear diggings near our campsite along the creek but no fresh bear signs. The next morning we packed up the ridge across the drainage and headed over flat tundra to where we could see Turquoise Lake below. That afternoon we descended into a valley that drained into the lake that had protection from winds and a good campsite above the creek.

The next morning we went for a hike up 5295 ridge above camp. During our ascent, thunderclouds were building over the 6,000 ft peaks to the east of the ridge. As we approached the summit, thunder and lightning occurred. We dropped off the summit as rain and then hail came down. It was exciting as we contoured our way around the ridge. When we got back to the route we had ascended the ridge, the sun came out and we descended back to our camp. We then had a weather day in camp with rain and low ceilings. The next day in the fog, we hiked up the hill from our camp and headed for the lake. The fog lifted as we descended toward Turquoise Lake. We traveled along the lakeshore a few miles to where we set up camp on a tundra

bench just above the lake. The wind calmed and the mosquitoes swarmed around us. They were worse there than at Twin Lakes a few days earlier.



**Reflection of Turquoise Lake**

Under sunny skies on the day of our pickup, scheduled for 3 PM, we went on a day hike along the shore to the inlet drainage and head of the lake. There we had great views of “hanging” glaciers and Mount Telaquana up the valley. Our flight out that afternoon through Telaquana Pass was spectacular with great views of peaks and glaciers. We arrived back at Lake Hood in Anchorage under sunny skies Sunday afternoon.



## **Peak 4550, Kenai Mountains Gleason Creek**

**By Steve Gruhn**

I recently led a MCA trip to attempt to climb Bench Peak. While we did not reach the summit on that trip, it got me thinking about some of my previous sojourns into the Bench Creek country.

In late August 1995 my Dad (Merlyn) and I hiked up the Johnson Trail from the north end. About a mile after we crossed the second Bench Creek bridge, we found a place to bushwhack up a knoll to the

east of the trail. The bushwhacking here wasn't too bad and we were able to connect patches of tall grass to thread through most of the alders. After cresting the knoll, we came to a deeply incised gorge to the southeast. Luckily, the water level in the creek was pretty low, so, after a little bit of hunting for a possible crossing point, we were able to wade the stream and climb up the other side. We continued southeast, wading another stream, until

we found a suitable campsite at about 2050 feet on the south side of the valley. This valley is filled with boulders and there are not a lot of level campsites.

The next day we headed north, crossing the stream again, hiking up the steep grassy slope, and reaching a hanging valley. The stream in this valley is the one that had carved the deep gorge below. But crossing the stream in the valley above the gorge was quite easy. Once across the stream, we followed a herd of goats (nannies and kids) and

scrambled up the rocky slope to Peak 4550 (elevation 4550 ± 50; Sec. 36, T7N, R1E, S.M.) overlooking the Gleason Creek drainage. We had intended to continue east on the ridge, but found the going a little too slow for our liking, so we dropped back down to the valley floor and returned the same way we had come.

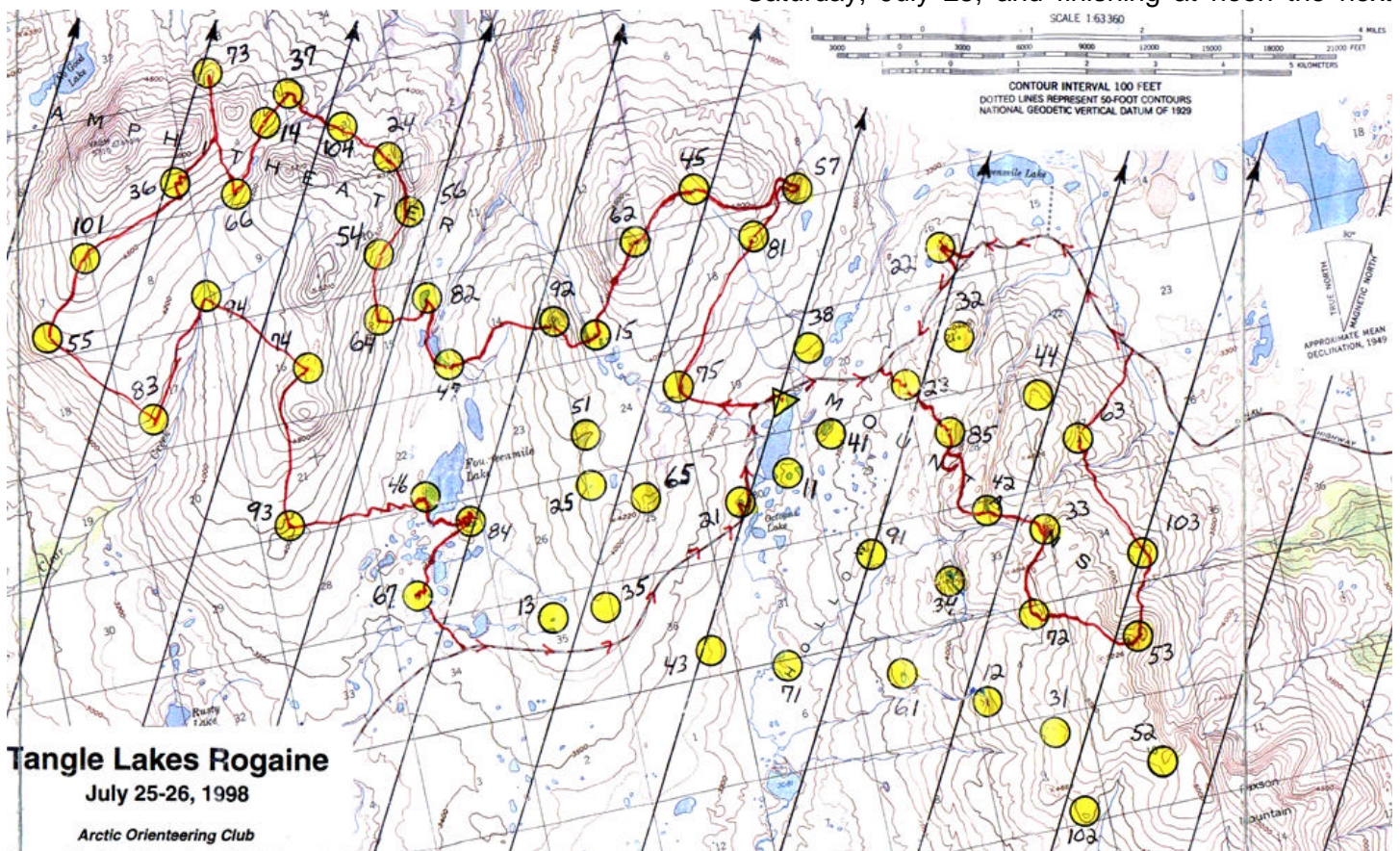
It's neat when today's trips can bring back fond memories of yesterday's.

# Amphitheater Mountains Orienteering

By Steve Gruhn

I have long loved both mountains and maps. In 1990 Bryan Carey introduced me to two local clubs that provided an outlet for my energies – the Mountaineering Club of Alaska and the Arctic Orienteering Club.

The object of this meet was to visit locations (called controls) that the meet organizers had indicated on the map provided. Each location was given a specific point value and the goal was to gather the most points in 24 hours, starting at noon on Saturday, July 25, and finishing at noon the next



In July 1998 I had the opportunity to combine my interests at the ROGAINE (Rough Outdoor Group Activity Involving Navigation and Endurance) sponsored by the Arctic Orienteering Club. This was a 24-hour meet held near the Tangle Lakes.

day. Because this event involved a lot of off-trail navigation, bushwhacking, darkness, and fatigue, we were required to travel with a partner. I joined with Jim Green and Gunnar Knapp.

The course directors (Ron Rickman, Joe Anders, and Ted Cahalane) handed out the maps an hour before the start so we could plan our route. We plotted a route and used a formula to figure out how long each leg would take us. We guessed that we could move at 20 minutes per mile and 35 minutes per 1,000 feet of vertical elevation gain.

At noon we set out at a fast hiking pace carrying light day packs. Our fifth control was located slightly east of the summit of Peak 4790 (T21S, R10E, S13, F.M.) overlooking both Fielding Lake and Octopus Lake. Our time to this point was 2 hours and 12 minutes, some 35 minutes ahead of schedule. To get to the next control, we went west over the summit (there was a cairn). I slipped and scraped my right buttock while descending the boulder field to the southwest of the summit. This slowed our progress a bit while Jim did some field dressing. Our seventh control was at the summit of Peak 4403 (T21S, R10E, S13, F.M.), also overlooking Fielding Lake. At that point we were 39 minutes ahead of schedule; our cumulative time was 2:58. We continued westward, dropping into the Clear Creek drainage, then over to the Garrett Creek drainage, to a point overlooking Long Tangle Lake, our 20th control. I had been leading our team up to that point and we were still 21 minutes ahead of schedule; our elapsed time was 7:56. But leaving this control I made a mental lapse that Gunnar quickly caught. After the 21<sup>st</sup> control I made another mental lapse and Jim took over navigation duties. Evidently, my brain's upper limit for continuous navigation seems to be near eight hours.

We went back down to Clear Creek, up the stream, up the ridge to the east, down that ridge and then down to Fourteenmile Lake. Gunnar hurt his knee coming down the hill to the lake. Our elapsed time was now 11:17, still four minutes ahead of schedule. A vandal had written on the next control something to the effect of, "Anchorage residents, go home!" And the control after that had been stolen. We limped out to the Denali Highway about a half hour after midnight. We had gone about 26.3 miles with about 5600 feet of elevation gain, all but a quarter mile of it without the benefit of a trail. At this point we were about 23 minutes behind schedule. But, given Gunnar's knee injury and the bushwhacking through willows south of Fourteenmile Lake, I think our formula had been pretty good.

We continued back to the start area, grabbed a couple hours of sleep, and Jim and I continued on

the course, leaving Gunnar and his bum knee back at the start. The next leg of the course took us south of the Denali Highway along a ridge north of Paxson Mountain. Our progress on this leg was substantially slower than what we had estimated. We eventually completed the course at 11:30 Sunday morning. Jim and I had finished first in the men's division. All told, we had covered about 48 miles and 9,100 feet of elevation gain in 23.5 hours, all without any running. But we were only third overall! We were beat by the veterans (combined ages over 80) team of Karl Swanson and Dave Johnston (both renowned mountaineers) and by the co-ed team of Jen Jolliff and Ian Moore.

The lessons that I learned from this event were several.

- ? Our formula of 20 minutes per mile and 35 minutes per 1,000 feet of elevation gain worked pretty well for the first 12 hours of off-trail hiking mostly above brushline in favorable summer conditions. The route did not involve much in the way of scrambling. For most legs we were within a couple minutes of our predicted time.
- ? Mental fatigue set in after about eight hours of continuous navigation. Trading off navigation duties reduced the effects of the fatigue.
- ? My body was in better shape than my mind. Even though I felt strong after eight hours, I made some substantial mental mistakes that, had my partners not been with me, would have had some severe consequences.
- ? Physical fatigue set in after about 14 hours. The fact that it was 2 a.m. at this point might also have had something to do with our exhaustion. We did not recover well after only two hours of sleep.
- ? Brush and physical fatigue slowed us from our predicted times.
- ? Post-race calculations revealed that a more accurate formula would have been **21 minutes per mile and 30 minutes per 1,000 feet of elevation gain** for the portion of the race before Gunnar injured his knee. I now use this formula to predict my travel time for the first 14 hours of hiking over brush-free tundra and scree.
- ? If I ever decide to do something like this again, I will try to get a driver for the ride home. Jim's Dad drove us back to Anchorage while we slept and I am grateful for his assistance.

# Sheep Mountain 6223

By Greg Higgins

On my way to Anchorage to attend the club meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup>, I stopped at Sheep Mountain Lodge. The lodge has been very nicely developed since I was here last, and offers inexpensive beds in a small bunkhouse. The food was also very good. I lodged with MCA members Doug Vaught and Chris Tomsen who were on their way north to go sheep hunting.

Despite the cloudy and wet weather, I set off up the south side ridge just before Gypsum Creek around 9:30. After the usual miserable wet hike through the lower trees into the willow/soap berry shrubs, the ridge becomes pleasant except for an occasional rotten section that is easily passed on the left. Eventually the ridge makes a 90 degree left turn towards the actual summit. This ridge deteriorates into high broken pillars with tremendous exposure for several hundred feet from the top. Dropping off the back side, I was eventually able to reach the top in clearer weather hiking up scree slopes on this side.

On the top (actually 50 feet down the West Ridge) was a cairn with only a single sign-in: Wayne Todd, Kathy Stills and A Sellers in 2000. They had tried to preserve a mining claim placed there in 1983 by Ed

Goldshmidt. Unfortunately, everything was water soaked and in poor shape.

From the top, I dropped down the West Ridge and then into Gypsum Creek to slush my way back to the lodge. The creek was a beautiful hike with the iron stained gypsum displayed in shades of yellow, brown and gold. Occasionally you find fist-sized pieces of white gypsum in the creek bed.

The views from the upper ridges are stunning. The locals tell me that a favorite day hike is to go up the Gypsum Creek fork that traverses to the left hand ridge turn that I mentioned and then go down the backside to come out the next creek bed towards Gunsight Mountain. I suspect that this area will eventually become a popular hiking region because of the beauty of the stained gypsum, the consistently good weather and the magnificent views.

*Greg Higgins is An Honorary member of the Mountaineering Club and a recent recipient of the Vin Hoeman Award. He was very active in the club in the 70s and 80s and has submitted 45 articles to the Scree although this is the first since 1993. He currently resides in Chico California. Ed.*



## Notes from Steve and Stu

Steve Gruhn would like us to remember that MCA's rental agreement with First United Methodist Church prohibits us from having alcohol on the premises, affixing things to the walls, or using their paper products or items such as coffee.

Stu Grenier advises us that the calendar committee needs any dates, historic or future events, that people would like to have noted in the 2007 calendar. Anything that may be of interest to the Alaskan Mountain Culture Community. Contact Stu 337-5127 or oinkmenow@hotmail.com.

## General Membership Meeting Minutes

Minutes from General Meeting  
September 20, 2006

7:30pm: Meeting opened by President Steve Gruhn. There were several new members and visitors tonight, including from Oregon, Montana, and even South Africa.

Treasurer's Report: Debbie Arens reported that the budget now stands at \$22,518.70.

Equipment: Steve Parry gave a complete inventory of club equipment. For more details, please contact Steve.

Geographic Names Committee: Tom Choate reported that the club has taken a neutral position on the proposed name of Mount Blachnitzky for Peak 6552 in the Gilkey Glacier area of the Coast Mountains.

Hiking and Climbing Committee: recently-appointed co-chair Jayme Dixon reported that there are several club-sponsored trips coming up: Willy Hersman is leading Mile High Saddle to Glenn Highway on 9/23, Amy Murphy is leading a trip up to the Ballfield on 9/27, Greg Bragiel is leading a 40+ mile Peters Creek trip from 10/10 to 10/15, and Willy Hersman is leading Poter to Windy Corner on 10/15. Take note that the Hiking and Climbing Committee is looking for experienced people to lead trips, and for everyone to suggest ideas for more trips. Contact co-chair Randy Howell if you have a suggestion or want to become a trip leader.

Huts Committee: recently-appointed chair Greg Bragiel reported that he is continuing to research the human waste disposal options for the Mint Hut and will have recommendations soon. In the meantime, anyone planning to go to the Mint Hut should contact Greg and bring in empty bags for use at the hut. Other hut news: Vice President Sean Bolender reported that he and Board Member Annette Iverson flew in to do maintenance on the Scandinavian Hut, and it is in good shape now. Greg Bragiel reported that Rosie's needs some maintenance to hold the wood together.

Parks Advisory: Cory Hinds reported that a Parks Future public review draft should be coming out in October for the public to review. Also, South Denali will be building a new visitor complex in the near future.

Training: Jayme Dixon reported that the Ice Climbing Festival will be held the weekend of September 30-October 1. On Wednesday, September 27, there is a mandatory meeting for students and instructors at First Methodist Church. Students: come at 7:30 and bring your harness, boots, and crampons. Instructors already approved by Jayme: come at 6:30. Other volunteers: come at 7:15. Students: the weekend festival is \$45, and equipment can be rented separately at AMH or at APU.

Awards: Bill Romberg reported that the Awards Committee is still looking for nominees for the Hoeman, President's, and Meekin awards.

Calendar: Stu Grenier was not present, but if you have activities or events that you want on the calendar, contact him at 337-5127 as soon as possible.

Announcements: Steve Gruhn announced that patches are for sale, \$5 apiece; T-shirts will be for sale at the October meeting, and Willy Hersman is working on the PayPal membership renewal. Also, just a reminder that there shall be no alcohol, attaching things to walls, or use of church property or products.

Elections are next month at the general meeting. We are looking for plenty of nominees for each office. You may nominate yourself or someone else.

New Business: there was used gear for sale on the back table.

Tonight's slideshow was Natalia Aluenbacher's first ascent of Peak 8947 in the Marcus Baker drainage of the Chugach Mountains, now named Sunray Peak. Natalia won the Meekin Expedition Grant for her first ascent. Criteria for eligibility for the Meekin Grant are at the MCA website, [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org).

Please continue to donate for the refreshments and be quiet during slideshow presentations.

\*Tonight's minutes were taken by Board Member SaraEllen Hutchison

## Adze

For Rent  
Iridium Satellite Phone, Rent my satellite phone, solar charger and waterproof pelican case. Perfect for rafting, paddling, hunting, expeditions. \$2/min + \$10/day field time only. Discount for extended trips. Best rates in Alaska.  
Dave Hart, 244-1722, david.hart@pxd.com

For Sale  
Downsizing duplicate mountaineering gear! 50% off retail! Scarpa Inverno plastic boots, size 11. Very good shape. \$125. Integral Design MK1XL 4 lb single wall 2 man tent/vestibule. Compare to Bibler Eldorado. Like new; used one trip. \$300. Petzl Sarken crampons, fits boot size 6-12+. Like new; used one trip. \$80.  
Dave Hart 244-1722, david.hart@pxd.com

## 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 nontechnical 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 or stream-crossing 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 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: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

## General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment is available from the trip leader.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. The trip leader can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-prepared (e.g. inappropriate clothing/gear).
4. 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 the MCA Sanctioned trip.
5. The trip leader has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), dependent upon current conditions. However, he/she must appoint a qualified co-leader to lead the second group using the guidelines specified in the current Trip Leader Responsibilities.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Total number of people on club trips:  
Minimum: 4 (for safety reasons)  
Maximum: Leader option, depends upon the trail and campsite conditions, but generally limited to 12 in trail-less areas or State/ National Parks
10. Firearms are not encouraged, and please let the leader know if you want to carry one - it will be leader's option. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

## RELEASE OF LIABILITY—READ CAREFULLY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), am aware that mountaineering sports (including hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; and ski mountaineering) are hazardous activities. I wish to participate and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. ("MCA") I recognize that these activities involve numerous risks, which include, by way of example only, falling while hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; failure of a belay; being struck by climbing equipment or falling rock, ice or snow; avalanches; lightning; fire; hypothermia; frostbite; defective or malfunctioning equipment; and attack by insects or animals. I further recognize that the remoteness of the activities may preclude prompt medical care. I further recognize that risk of injury or death may be caused or enhanced by mistakes or negligence on the part of either my fellow participants or MCA officers, directors, guides, instructors, or trip leaders. I nevertheless agree to accept all risks of injury, death, or property damage that may occur in connection with any MCA activity, including use of MCA furnished equipment and MCA backcountry huts.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

### **GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS**

By signing this Agreement, I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA and my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage for any claim is provided by an automobile insurance policy or related excess insurance policies). **I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes or negligence on the part of either my fellow participants or the MCA.** (As used in this agreement, MCA means the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc., and all of its officers, directors, guides, instructors and trip leaders.) I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until such time as I provide signed written notice of its revocation to the MCA.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

### **MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE**

I agree that I will not sue, or otherwise make any claim against, the MCA or my fellow participants in MCA activities for injury, death, or property damage which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering sports. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or this release shall only be filed in the Superior Court for the State of Alaska, Third Judicial District., Anchorage, Alaska. The provisions of this release are severable and if any part of this release is found unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

### **MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

I also agree to release and discharge the MCA and my fellow participants in MCA activities from all actions, claims, or demands, both for myself and for my heirs, dependents, and/or personal representative, for injury, death, or property damage occurring in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering sports.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

### **MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY**

I agree to pay all expenses, including attorney's fees and court costs, that the MCA or my fellow participants in MCA activities may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of injury, death, or property damage suffered by me.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

### **MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT**

I consent to any hospital care or medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment which may be necessary as a result of my participation in activities with the MCA. I also understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all applicable charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue cost.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

**I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A BINDING, LEGAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN ME AND THE MCA.**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 19): \_\_\_\_\_

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

|                |               |          |              |                         |          |
|----------------|---------------|----------|--------------|-------------------------|----------|
| President      | Steve Gruhn   | 344-1219 | Board member | Eric Teela              | 240-9693 |
| Vice-President | Sean Bolender | 333-0213 | Board member | Annette Iverson         | 222-0581 |
| Secretary      | Julie Perilla | 222-6939 | Board member | Randy Howell            | 346-4608 |
| Treasurer      | Debbie Arens  | 688-4606 | Board member | Steve Parry             | 248-8710 |
|                |               |          | Board member | your name could be here |          |

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, Please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the club treasurer. The Post Office will not forward the newsletter.

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles and notes submitted for publication and other communication related to the newsletter should be submitted on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) or mailed to Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage Alaska 99510. Articles should be received by October 18th (the club meeting) to be in the November Issue.

Paid Ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be 'camera ready' and pre-paid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by our monthly meeting to pick it up or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko and Randy  
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell – 346-4608, Jayme Dixon - 383-0210  
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008  
Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127  
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 346-2589  
Web: [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) (change your address here)  
Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoo.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoo.com)

Mountaineering Club of Alaska  
Box 102037  
Anchorage AK 99510