

# the **SCREE**

## **Mountaineering Club of Alaska**

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**Volume 57 Number 10**



### ***Contents***

**The Camaraderie of Mountaineers on Mount McKinley**

**Poem: Sacrifice on the Altar of Denali**

**Mount Fairweather Traverse**

**A Mighty Pushin' for Makushin Volcano**

**Peak of the Month: Longspur Peak**

**Monthly meeting: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 21**

**Program: Carl Battreall presents on his spring trips to the Gillam Glacier in the Hayes Range and to the Nutzotin Mountains.**

***Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.***

**-T.S. Eliot**



# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

[www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org)

**"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 meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 21, at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, Alaska.

<http://www.alaskageology.org/graphics/meetingmap.gif>

## Contents

### The Camaraderie of Mountaineers on Mount McKinley

Poem: Sacrifice on the Altar of Denali

Mount Fairweather Traverse

A Mighty Pushin' for Makushin Volcano

Peak of the Month: Longspur Peak

## Cover Photo

Danny Powers skis from the summit of Mount Fairweather.

His right binding was held together with ski straps. (And that tiny white pack is all that Danny used for the four-week trip!) Photo by Luc Mehl.

**Article Submission:** Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 21st of the 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 outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

## Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, October 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Program: Carl Battreall presents on his spring trips to the Gillam Glacier in the Hayes Range and to the Nutzotin Mountains.

**Officer and Director Elections will be held at this meeting. All officers' seats are up for election and two directors' seats with two-year terms are up for election.**

## Climbing Notes

Scott Hamilton Peters reported that on July 16 Lucas Haaland, Matt Kearns, Masahito Sammyo, Michael Stewart, Jim Wiedemer, and he climbed Peak 11430 in the Jordan Glacier drainage of the Saint Elias Mountains and that on July 22 Kearns, Sammyo, Stewart, and he also climbed Mount Pandora (12110).

Ben Still reported that on September 14 Danielle Pratt, Josh Varney, and he climbed Cooper Mountain (5270) and Peak 4642 in the Stetson Creek and Upper Russian Lake drainages of the Kenai Mountains. We look forward to detailed reports of these climbs in an upcoming issue of *the Scree*.

## Huts News from Greg Bragiel, Huts Committee Chairman

I have suggested to the MCA Board of Director's that Pichler's Perch is in need of an overhaul similar to the one done for Hans' Hut in 2013. If the board elects to pursue this project, the general membership will be asked to approve funding as well as solicited to participate in the project. Estimated cost is \$15,000.

The Dnigi Hut is in need of maintenance. During my last trip there, in May 2013, I discovered serious structural rot of the walls. Mitigating procedures were done to limit further deterioration. I propose we organize a team of snowmachiners and carpenters to travel to the hut to evaluate what needs to be done. Participation of local snowmanchiners/users is needed. Contact MCA Huts Committee Chairman Greg Bragiel at [unknownhiker@alaska.net](mailto:unknownhiker@alaska.net) or 907-350-5146.

## 2015 MCA Calendar News

The 2015 MCA Calendar will be a vertical calendar. Please have your 8-inch-by-10-inch photos ready for display and voting with your contact information and captions on the backs by the start of the October meeting. The photos need to have been taken in Alaska and the categories are climbing, scenery, hiking, and people. The categories will be very loosely enforced to allow the voters to have more choices. Contact Stu Grenier at 907-337-5127 or [stugrenier@gmail.com](mailto:stugrenier@gmail.com) for more information if you have any questions.

## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

⇒ **Ship Creek Maintenance Weekend.** December 13-14. Join Stu Grenier and Greg Bragiel for the annual MCA Ship Creek trail clearing. We will work the northern five miles of the Arctic Valley to Indian Trail. Sign on at the October and November meetings.

## Volunteer Needed

The MCA will be needing an Assistant Scree Editor starting in April 2015 with the May 2015 *Scree*. The position requires the use of Microsoft Publisher (or similar) software and requires approximately six hours per month. If interested, contact Steve Gruhn at [scgruhn@gmail.com](mailto:scgruhn@gmail.com).

Online? Click me!



**Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.**

# The Camaraderie of Mountaineers on Mount McKinley

By Steve Gruhn

In May 1998 I went on my first significant mountaineering expedition. My partners were Tom Choate and Bruce Kittredge. I didn't know them very well at the time, but we became good friends during those nine days near the Hunter Creek Glacier (see the October 1998 *Scree*). Tom was destined to become my most frequent climbing partner; over the next 15 years we partnered together to climb 38 peaks. Bruce and I also subsequently climbed 14 peaks together. In May 2003 the three of us joined with Paul Davis to attempt Mount McKinley. Paul turned back at the 17,200-foot high camp and Bruce and I turned back at about 18,900 feet. At 68 years old, Tom was the only one of our team of four that reached the summit. For the next 10 years I would second-guess my decision to turn around. Should I have pushed ahead in spite of the cold temperatures and high winds? Was my desired margin of safety too great? Would I ever get another chance? Did I make the right decision?

In 2013 another chance presented itself and I jumped at it. Tom, Bruce, and I had each casually mentioned that we were interested in attempting Mount McKinley again. Tom first reached the summit on July 19, 1963 (see the October 1963 *Scree* and pages 56 through 59 of the 1964 *American Alpine Journal*), and has tried to return every decade. Bruce had previously reached the summit three times, but just likes to get into the mountains in the spring during pollen season. I was the only one of the three of us who hadn't stood atop the highest

point in North America. I had climbed the highest points of the other 49 states and had an itch that needed scratching.

But Tom had his hip replaced in April 2012 and was now 78. He wasn't sure it would be able to handle long days. After the three of us climbed Mount Eklutna together on May 7, we all felt a bit better about Tom being able to handle some elevation gain. But

we knew that we'd have to move slowly and we were concerned about how far we could go and how much elevation gain we could handle each day. We would be a geriatric party, with an average age of over 60.5.

We arrived in Talkeetna on May 24 and began sorting out gear in the hangar of Sheldon Air Service. SAS treated us well, allowing us to sort gear and food in the hangar, feeding us lots of Holly Sheldon Lee's homemade cookies and stew, and letting us camp on the front lawn. I've flown with other air charters before, but none had the added personal touch like SAS. We broke in the afternoon for the mandatory National Park Service briefing before continuing to sort food and gear. A day later, after measuring food into meal-

sized portions, David Lee flew us to the Kahiltna Glacier in SAS' de Havilland Beaver for the start of our (planned) 33-day climb.

We set up camp near the airstrip and continued to sort food and re-pack. At base camp we met several people we knew – Clint Helander, Roger Robinson, John Brueck, and Rob Litsenberger – and made new friends with a group from Fairbanks and Sweden – Vaughn Fetzer, Ron Koczaja, and Fred Ström. Tom quickly became something of a celebrity on the mountain. Finally, on



(Left to right) Bruce Kittredge, Steve Gruhn, and Tom Choate after placing a cache at about 6800 feet on the lower Kahiltna Glacier. Photo by John Brueck.





*Tom Choate leads Steve Gruhn and Bruce Kittredge up from the 11,200-foot camp. Photo by Anthony Bell.*

the afternoon of May 26, we made our first carry from the 7,200-foot base camp down Heartbreak Hill to 6,800 feet on the main stem of the Kahiltna Glacier. We each carried full packs and we each towed loaded sleds as well. It was a hot day, the snow was soft, and we sweated a lot. The next evening we switched to a night schedule. That night MCA member John Brueck roped up with us for a second carry to 6,800 feet. We were grateful for his help and the camaraderie of a fellow mountaineer.

And then on the evening of May 28 we finally cached some supplies at base camp and moved our kit to a camp at 7,300 feet. In the cool night the three of us returned to our 6,800-foot cache and then Bruce and I made a second and final trip to retrieve the last of our gear from the cache. The nighttime travel gave us a break from both the heat of the day and the crowds of climbers. While resting alone in our quiet camp during the heat of the day we listened to the wind and avalanches and felt and heard the glacier settle several times. That was a little disconcerting, but there wasn't a lot we could do at that moment, so we rode it out with jokes about getting

seasick and needing Dramamine. On the lower glacier we encountered several warblers – both alive and dead – that had been stranded on the glacier without much food to eat. That night Bruce and Tom ferried our first load to the 7,800-foot camp at the base of Ski Hill and later Bruce and I ferried our second load to that camp. Then on the evening of May 31 we moved the last of our gear to the base of Ski Hill. Just after midnight as we were coming into camp, I met my former co-worker Dmitry Sidorov, who was returning from the summit with several clients. He offered me some tea and it was good to chat with an old friend and to experience the camaraderie of a fellow mountaineer.

Tom, Bruce, and I carried a load to 9,100 feet the next evening and then Bruce and I followed up with a second load, returning around 5 a.m. on June 2.

And then it snowed. What a way to welcome in June. We stayed in camp all day and finally departed on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to move our camp to 9,100 feet. On the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> we made another carry. We started out in cloudy conditions that turned to fog and then to complete whiteout. Vertigo set in



and we had tremendous difficulty finding the route in the fresh snow. Eventually, we cached our load and hoped to be able to find it upon our return. On the 5<sup>th</sup> we moved camp to our cache. When the skies opened up the following morning, we could see that we were at about 9,800 feet. On the 6<sup>th</sup> we moved our camp to the 11,200-foot camp at the base of Motorcycle Hill. The next day we returned for our cache and brought it up to camp, where we met a group from Seattle – Anthony Bell, Rich Draves, Mike Harrington, and Katrina Hilpert. We would leapfrog this group for much of the rest of our time on the mountain and we became good friends. It was yet another opportunity to revel in the camaraderie that the mountain brings out in mountaineers.

We cached snowshoes, Tom's sled, and extra gear at the 11,200-foot camp. On the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup>, we set out to carry a load up Motorcycle Hill. Bruce and I labored under the heavy loads, but Tom, no longer burdened by a heavy sled, set a quick pace. I almost wished that his hip would be more of a hindrance. At 12,700 feet we stopped, cached our gear, and headed back to camp. The next evening we brought our camp up to our cache in a light snowstorm that turned into a full-on blizzard. As we prepared to leave the following evening, Clint Helander and

Ryan Johnson came by our camp and chatted with us. Zac Davies and Peter Inglis, leading a guided group returning from the summit also stopped to chat and told us that if we needed extra food to ask another Mountain Trip party camped higher on the mountain. It was a pleasant day to chat with other climbers; we felt as if everywhere we turned we were met by friendly mountaineers.

We started hauling our camp that evening. We made OK time until we got to Windy Corner, which was living up to its name. Visibility was poor and the howling wind made communication difficult. We got a bit off route following another team and Tom punched his leg through a snow bridge to find a crevasse. One member of the other team did the same thing – twice. We eventually managed to get on route, finally getting into the 14,200-foot camp at the base of the headwall just before midnight on the 10<sup>th</sup>. As we were exhausted and spent, the Fairbanks/Sweden team welcomed us into camp and suggested that we camp by them. They plied us with hot liquids and soup and helped us set up our tents. They were a godsend. Once again, my heart warmed with the camaraderie of our fellow mountaineers.



*Steve Gruhn (left) and Tom Choate returning to camp after placing a cache at 12,700 feet. Photo by Bruce Kittredge.*



We rested the entire day on the 11<sup>th</sup>, our first full day of rest since we started ferrying loads. On the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>, Bruce and I made a quick trip to our cache to retrieve our gear. Windy Corner was calm this time and on the return trip we ditched the sleds and packs and hiked up to near the top of the 13,350-foot point west of the Corner. It was a pleasant time. Back at the Corner again, we loaded up and began the trudge up to camp. We met the Seattle party en route and enjoyed chatting with them, boosting each others' spirits.

The next day we walked with the Seattle group over to a place known as "The Edge of the World" where we could overlook the Northeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier. Picking out the summits in the distance was entertaining. And looking down at the 7,800-foot camp at the base of Ski Hill, we could see melt ponds atop the glacier, indicating that the warm weather would have a toll on the snow bridges for our descent. The next day Tom and I carried a load of gear to 15,400 feet. The following day, June 15, Tom and I carried a load to 16,200 feet, retrieving our previous cache as we ascended. And then we returned to 14,200 feet to await favorable weather. Spindrift blew off the upper ridges for several days, indicating high winds aloft. Conrad Anker, Jon Krakauer, Jeremy Jones, and a team sponsored by The North Face moved into camp at 14,200 feet, as did a team from the National Outdoor Leadership School. Much revelry ensued. The North Face team amazed everyone by skiing and snowboarding several steep, icy lines between the fixed lines on the headwall and Rescue Gully. The Fairbanks/Sweden team had ventured off to climb the Cassin Ridge. Around midnight one evening, they returned to camp. It was nice to be able to return the kindness that they had first shown us by preparing them hot water bottles and helping them with gear and tents. The camaraderie of the brotherhood of mountaineers once again warmed my heart.

Finally, on June 19 Tom and I started to ascend the fixed lines on the headwall. Bruce had opted to remain at 14,200 feet, citing difficulty with his vision. We left my sled and a bunch of extra food and gear with Bruce, taking only one of our three tents (two had been for sleeping and one for cooking) and my emergency one-man bivy sack. Once atop the headwall at 16,200 feet, we retrieved some gear, but re-cached the majority, and continued up the ridge to the 17,200-foot camp. This stretch of our trip had concerned us from the beginning. There is a paucity of suitable campsites along the route, so we had to do it in a single push and we had wondered if Tom's hip would allow him to ascend 3,000 feet in a day. Arriving at the 17,200-foot camp at midnight, we eventually had our answer. But we had arrived in a windstorm and were pretty tired and I was cold from moving slowly. Fortunately, the brotherhood of

mountaineers once again swung into action. Just as we pulled into camp, NPS ranger Chris Erickson and his volunteer partner Mike Kingsbury greeted us, invited us into their tent, and offered to set up camp for us. We greatly appreciated their generosity. The next day, we had hoped to retrieve our food from the 16,200-foot cache, but high winds kept us pinned to camp and facing the prospect of meager rations. But once again, the generosity and camaraderie of fellow mountaineers sprang into action. NPS volunteer Mike Ochsner knocked on our tent and offered us a couple of freeze-dried meals that the NPS had recently salvaged from abandoned caches. We gratefully accepted. And the following day, still pinned by high winds, a Mountain Trip guide offered us some of their extra food. It seemed as if we were surrounded by mountaineers looking after their fellow mountaineers.

The winds abated on June 24 and we descended to our 16,200-foot cache, retrieved our food and fuel, and returned to camp at 17,200 feet. The next day we rested so that we could make a summit bid on June 26. We had contemplated placing a camp at Denali Pass, but ultimately decided that the location would be too exposed in the high winds and that it would take more effort to dig through the hard-packed snow to make a bomb-proof camp than it would to hike up and down Denali Pass from the 17,200-foot camp.

On June 26 Tom and I started up the Autobahn to Denali Pass. Several guided groups ahead of us caused us to move slowly as each person clipped into and unclipped from the pickets that lined the route. A couple hundred feet above Denali Pass, Tom and I pulled into the lee behind a rock outcrop to take a break. Tom was tired, cold, in poor spirits, and contemplating descending. While we were resting there, Jon Krakauer showed up, dropped his pack for a quick break, and began to tell Tom how much of an inspiration he was. This buoyed Tom's spirits enough that we were able to continue ascending. A few hundred feet higher Jon caught up to us and again buoyed Tom's spirits. And this time he had the rest of The North Face team with him to cheer on Tom. Tom fed off their energy and soon we were crossing the Football Field to the base of Pig Hill, the final hill before the summit ridge. Just as we were starting up Pig Hill at 19,600 feet, a thunderstorm developed on the summit and Conrad Anker descended past us, eyes widened, warning of an "electrical storm." Tom and I opted to wait it out for a couple hours, but the storm continued, the clouds descended, and snow began to dump out of the sky. Several other parties that had opted to wait ultimately decided to descend through the fog together. Once again I was struck by the fellowship of mountaineers.



After returning to camp, I was dejected, recalling 10 years of second-guessing myself about turning around just short of the summit and fearing that such reproach would only get worse. We rested a day and started a second summit bid at 8:15 a.m. on June 28. We were the first group out of camp. But because we were moving slowly, we were the last team to reach Denali Pass. Along the Autobahn Jon Krakauer came up behind us once again. Jon and I chatted for a while about one of his books and I mentioned how much Tom and I both appreciated his encouragement two days earlier. And when The North Face team decided to pass us



*Wind and cloud on the summit of Mount McKinley from camp at 17,200 feet. Photo by Tom Choate.*

Jon again told Tom what an inspiration he was and that he wanted to see us on the summit. I laughed and said that because he'd been such an encouragement I'd rather see him on Pig Hill. We continued ascending alone at first, but after a while teams began to pass us while descending from the summit. When we reached the base of Pig Hill there was only one team remaining above us. Members of The North Face team were waiting along Pig Hill, encouraging Tom as we ascended. And then we were alone again. Once we reached the ridge, the winds increased. Tom and I slowly made our way along the ridge and at 8:40 p.m. I stepped up to what looked like an odd sort of ice axe planted in the snow. It turned out to be the summit bench mark; we could go no higher. I brought Tom up to join me. He leaned heavily on me, putting one hand on each of my shoulders. "Steve, you're my hero," he said. "No, Tom, you're mine." Two days short of 78 years and 9 months, Tom had become the oldest person to set foot on the summit and (I suspect) also the person with the greatest duration of time between his first ascent and his most recent ascent (49 years, 11 months, and 9 days). It was a special moment that I will always treasure.

After resting only 10 or 15 minutes, we began our slow descent. We pulled into camp at 4:45 a.m. on June 29 after a 20-1/2-hour summit day. The remainder of the day we rested as the wind devoured our five-foot-high snow walls. On June 30 we tried to

descend to the 14,200-foot camp and Bruce, but high winds forced us to return. In the morning of July 1, we again attempted to descend and were again rebuffed by high winds. Finally that afternoon we successfully descended to reach Bruce at the 14,200-foot camp. Traveling unroped below the fixed lines, I reached camp first and caught Bruce just as he was crawling into his sleeping bag. He came out, got dressed, and took off to 15,000 feet to help Tom with his pack. It was to be Bruce's high point on this expedition. On July 2 we rested again.

In the 13 days we had been gone, Bruce's food stockpile had actually increased as other (perhaps smarter) parties found a willing recipient as they sought to lighten their loads for the descent. On July 3 we ate like kings, burned as much fuel as we could, packed up, and prepared to descend. Shortly after midnight on July 4 we left the 14,200-foot camp. Much melting and rockfall had occurred since we first traveled this stretch over three weeks earlier. Routefinding in the twilight was a little tough and the high winds and cumbersome sleds made it a bit more challenging. At about 13,500 feet my right leg punched through a snow bridge into the crevasse below. It was a rather disconcerting feeling to have air under my foot. We milled about, trying to find the route, adjusting gear, and getting cold. Bruce led us away and around Windy Corner, which once again lived up to its moniker, but this time it was snowing, too. My overloaded, top-heavy sled was causing us fits. So, we cached



some of our gear and one sled above Squirrel Point at about 12,600 feet and proceeded to the 11,200-foot camp at the base of Motorcycle Hill. We retrieved our cache from nearly a month earlier. The clients of an Alpine Ascents International group waiting out the snow and wind offered to help us set up our tent, made snow walls for us, and then invited us for hot drinks inside their cook tent. Once again, my heart was warmed by the friendliness of my fellow mountaineers. Somewhere during that leg of the trip I frostnipped my fingers. What a Fourth of July I was having.

Bruce and I retrieved our cache from 12,600 feet the next day. And on July 6 we descended into a whiteout below the 11,200-foot camp. A dump of fresh snow had obscured the wands that marked the trail, making route-finding in the whiteout quite challenging. At about 9,700 feet we gave up and set up camp again for the night next to a tent of Lithuanians who also were having trouble finding their way down. We left camp the morning of July 7, but again had some difficulty navigating in the fog. Eventually we caught up to the Lithuanians who had been traveling in circles. Together we held a council of war and one member of their party and I (both orienteers) figured out where we were and then we plotted a course to the top of Ski Hill. It worked surprisingly well and soon we were below the murk and resting at the base of Ski Hill. One of the Lithuanians commented that it would be great to have some ice cream. That's my one vice and I heartily agreed, laughing "If only it could be." The next thing I knew, one of the Lithuanians was handing me a bowl of ice cream that he had just prepared from a freeze-dried kit. While it wasn't Ben and Jerry's, it certainly hit the spot after six weeks on the mountain. I shared my cinnamon hard candy. They gave me a patch of a Lithuanian flag as thanks for navigating through the fog. We continued toward base camp, but again had difficulty finding the route. The Lithuanians led us to a crevasse field and we again had a meeting of the navigators. I plotted us on a diagonal course to where I thought the track was and, with Bruce in front, Tom kept us on a straight course by telling us when we veered off our bearing. It worked well and soon we were on the main track down the glacier. A considerable number of crevasses had opened up during our absence and the snow was quite soft and slushy – not optimal conditions, to be sure. After a while on the main track, we stopped for a rest and the Lithuanians continued onward. We could see Heartbreak Hill in the evening after the fog lifted a bit. An SAS plane had landed well below the normal airstrip (because of the low ceiling) and was having some difficulty taking off. After a few attempts, though, the plane was airborne. We straggled up to that point at about 11 p.m. A Czech party had just been dropped off on the mountain at about 7,000 feet.

We camped next to them and planned to get up early in the morning to reach the airstrip in advance before the incoming storm that the Czech team warned us would be coming around noon. The Czech party let me send a text message on their satellite phone to let my wife know that I was alive and well, despite being 10 days overdue. Again, I was impressed by the friendliness of my fellow mountaineers.

I was up early the next morning, July 8. I packed up my gear, hauled it to the upper airstrip at about 7,400 feet, and retrieved the cache we had left at the lower airstrip more than a month earlier. The warm weather had left the lower airstrip unsuitable for use, so Heartbreak Hill became 200 feet higher for us. Air traffic had been greatly restricted by the stormy weather of the past few days and the upper airstrip was crowded with about 75 people awaiting flights to Talkeetna. I returned to our camp and hauled a sled load of gear to the upper airstrip with Tom in front of me. As we approached the upper airstrip, everyone rose to their feet and gave Tom a standing ovation. It was a sight to behold. I returned for the last of the gear and hauled it to the upper airstrip. Tom boiled some water and I ate breakfast. And then we waited for our plane. There was one other SAS party ahead of us in line (one of the benefits of traveling with a smaller air-charter outfit is that one doesn't often find himself behind a horde of people in the queue). Although the weather was clear over the airstrip, other climbers with satellite phones reported that Talkeetna was socked in. After a couple hours, Jok Bondurant flew in with the SAS Cessna 185 and David Lee was right behind him with the SAS Beaver. Jok wanted to take whoever was ready, so we asked the other SAS party if they were ready. They still had a bit of packing to do, so Bruce and I threw our gear on board and we took off with Jok in the 185. Tom and the other SAS party took off with David in the Beaver 15 minutes after us. We flew under some low-hanging clouds around the lower Kahiltna Glacier, barely above the ice. The humid air smelled wonderful as we flew over the Peters Hills. After we landed in Talkeetna, Holly Lee fed us homemade cookies. She had even made a cake for Tom. But it would have to wait. When we reached Talkeetna we learned that David Lee had turned around due to the low ceiling and that Tom, David, and the other SAS party would be spending one more night on the glacier. After 45 days on the mountain, I had lost 30 pounds on Uncle Tom's weight-loss program. But it had been a joy to experience the camaraderie of my fellow mountaineers.

Tom returned on July 9, 46 days after we had first landed on the Kahiltna Glacier. And he took the cake.



# Sacrifice on the Altar of Denali

By Tom Choate  
At 7800 feet on Denali

Doomed warblers hopped about camp  
Searching for equally disoriented insects;  
Hopes and dreams stolen  
By merciless, blinding clouds;  
Life energy slowly sucked away  
By endless fields of white-leech snow.

Cheery twitters disguise the desperate adventure  
Into the temporary world of tents and treasures,  
Of humans, themselves in a life and death quest  
For the distant, hidden summit  
Of a great icy, inhospitable mountain.

The miraculous appearance of birds in a depressing blizzard  
Is an uplifting surprise, even if they become  
A sacrifice to the Mountain God.  
If such tiny lost souls are ever optimistic,  
Perhaps I should push the boundaries  
Of my limited and worn old body.  
Perhaps my soul will be allowed  
To fly again.



*Warbler on the lower Kahiltna Glacier. Photo by Tom Choate.*

## Mount Fairweather Traverse

*Text and photos by Luc Mehl*



*Graham Kraft, Marcus Waring, and Danny Powers using the packrafts as sleds (and lounge chairs) on the Grand Plateau Glacier.*

*“If you want an intense, life-transforming experience, walk in from the coast of Cape Fairweather or Lituya Bay up Desolation Valley and the Fairweather Glacier.” – Alaska: A Climbing Guide, Michael Wood and Colby Coombs.*

Or ... if you want to ski the mountains as cheaply as possible, walk 100 miles from Yakutat, then ski and raft 100 miles out to Haines: two hundred miles, blue skies, steaks on summit day ... with Graham Kraft, Lindsay Johnson, Marcus Waring, and Danny Powers.

In mid-winter Graham Kraft invited me to fly to Mount Fairweather and then ski out to Haines. I wasn't very interested, partly because of the likelihood for bad weather, partly because I was still recovering from the Mount Logan Traverse [*Ed. note: see page 169 of the 2013 American Alpine Journal*], but mostly because it would seem strange to fly to a mountain 15 miles from the coast and not spend any time on the beach.

Then the semester ended, I got restless, and Graham left a message proposing we start in Yakutat and hike 100 miles to the

mountain, mostly on the beach. Graham's girlfriend Lindsay could join for the beach walk, and his high-school friend, Marcus Waring, could join for the ski. Marcus and Graham wanted to spend a month at the base camp, more time than I could give, so I needed to find someone that could exit early with me.

I got Graham's message on a Tuesday, thought, “Who do I know that can take a month off work and is comfortable enough on skis to navigate the nasty icefalls?” By Friday I had Danny Powers committed. I love Alaska. I knew Danny from the Alaska Wilderness Classics and figured he'd have the right mindset for a trip that would likely be wet and cold.

We paid \$2.50 to fly to Yakutat with frequent flyer miles. Fred, the guy that drove us to the end of the road last year, met us in a “new” van/cat den and gave us a lift to the beach. We spent an incredible week walking 75 miles of sand under clear skies. It could not have been more different from last year's approach to Mount Logan [*Ed. note: for video, photographs, and a detailed report of that trip, click on [Scree – October 2014](http://thingstolucat.com/logan-</a></i></p></div><div data-bbox=)*



[traverse/](#)], where Graham was literally wringing water from his sleeping bag the night before we got on the glacier.

Each day we watched Fairweather grow larger. We saw whales, seals, sea lions, and dead sharks. We beach-combed and found a dozen Japanese glass balls. A few nights we waited uncomfortably for the nearest bears to settle in elsewhere. Hands were held. Danny walked barefoot.

A highlight of the beach walk was paddling the iceberg-choked lake below the Grand Plateau Glacier. The sandy beach turns into huge boulders (rounded moraine rocks) with an impassible drainage outlet. To get around the outlet, we hiked through the lush green forest to the lake, paddled between icebergs, and cut back through the forest on the other side of the channel.

At the end of the beach walk, Marcus flew in (he conveniently had a break-up in time to join for the hike from the beach) with our mountain gear and extra food. Lindsay flew out to start work on a fishing boat. In addition to bringing the most technical experience and awesome laid-back attitude, Marcus brought a case of beer because he thought he was arriving at 9 p.m., not 9 a.m. Danny didn't complain.

Based on Caroline Van Hemert's, Pat Farrell's, and Ryan Bougie's reports, we knew to access the Grand Plateau Glacier as high as possible to avoid crevasses. We moved slowly through the brush with our full packs (80 pounds?), seven miles in two days. Crossing the toe of the Sea Otter Glacier was the crux. It was

one of the most bizarre landscapes I've seen; the moraine has a mature forest on it, crevasses in the middle of a rain forest.

When we hit the Grand Plateau Glacier (at 3,000 feet) we were greeted with smooth snow, no visible cracks, just a wolverine track. We used our packrafts as sleds and cruised through the Grand Plateau icefall to base camp at 9,800 feet. Graham had arranged for a food drop at the base camp; we ate like kings: pizza from scratch, ham, steak, ribs, and two growlers of beer, compliments of Beth from the Haines Brewing Company. Graham and Marcus didn't have pee bottles, so they debated sharing an empty growler.

We had two days in thin cloud cover before a crisp, clear sky for summit day. We left camp around 5 a.m. and had an uneventful climb to the summit (15,325 feet). The greatest hazard was the possibility of ice fall and avalanche debris at 11,000 feet. We weren't travelling under the icefall, but twice during the day we saw powder clouds that reached our up-track.

A cloud bank hung at about 6,000 feet, creating a vista with stunning islands in a sea of clouds (click on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ucmNBThbfY> for a nice pilot's view). Graham pointed out that, collectively, we'd skied the big peaks we could see to the north: Marcus on Mount Saint Elias, Graham and I on Mount Logan, Graham and Marcus on Mount Hubbard.

After a comfortable snack on the summit we stripped our skins to ski the descent. We discovered that one of Danny's Dynafit heel pieces was broken, so he had to down-climb. Danny maintained his incredibly positive attitude, the same attitude that allowed him to shrug off losing his water bottle, axe, shovel, sleeping pad, and a mitt during the trip. In case anyone else is planning on using an ultra-light pack for an expedition ... don't.

(Danny, don't read this part ...) The ski descent was



Graham Kraft (foreground) climbing up the final sastrugi steps on Mount Fairweather. Marcus Waring leads at right.

awesome! The snow wasn't great, mostly soft sastrugi, but it was still awesome, and exceptional, considering the elevation, exposure, and weather.

We spent a few more days at high camp waiting out thin clouds before Danny and I started the ~100-mile exit. We made a few mistakes ... due in part to the fact that I only brought pages of the gazetteer as maps. The first mistake was trying for a shortcut over the ~1,000-foot climb to Watson Col. Graham and Marcus joined to help scout it out. The climb to the col was steep and icy. The backside had a massive cornice and no obvious exit ramps, so we retraced our steps. I hoped to ski down from the col, but didn't trust my skis on the steep, crusted snow. I decided to switch to crampons mid-slope. The wind was howling and pulses of slough accompanied each gust. I had to wrestle my ~70-pound pack onto the slope to get my skis onto the pack. In the process a shoulder strap broke. Then the toe bail on my aluminum CAMP crampon broke. Ugh. I managed to get a few ski straps around the toe piece and gingerly worked my way down the slope using the other guys' toe imprints. I had to force myself to move slowly even though I knew the guys would be getting cold waiting at the bottom. Marcus climbed back up to lend a proper ice tool. This was the only crappy part of the trip. The brush on the Sea Otter Glacier moraine was bad, but I'm good at that kind of bad.

The rest of our exit was uneventful. It was really cool to see how much Danny's rope skills and route-finding had improved during the trip. He came in with the least experience, but that meant he got to learn the most. He led nearly the entire exit and we had no crevasse falls.



Danny Powers on the Tsirku River.

Exiting the Tsirku Glacier was a treat. We had the sun directly behind, casting long shadows down a ridge on the toe of the glacier. The ridge was sloped just enough that we could glide toward the moraine and weave between boulders as they became more abundant. We exited the moraine right where Josh Mumm and I had exited in March (for a video, photographs, and detailed information about that trip, click <http://thingstolucat.com/haines-loop/>), and it was really cool to compare the winter and summer landscapes.

The Tsirku River was straightforward. The start was boiling with big boulders, but quickly mellowed into braided channels. The rapids in front of the Le Blondeau Glacier were easily skirted. We pulled over at the village of Klukwan so Danny could check the ferry schedule; he was anxious to get home. A fisherman saw us, admired our loaded packrafts and gave us some delicious dried fish.

We pulled off the Chilkat River at a boat dock and caught a ride to town with some rafting guides. They knew Graham and Lindsay and were excited about our trip. They brought us to "Meat Night," a weekly barbecue. We met a ton of cool folks. They suggested that I take off my ski boots, but I thought that was a really bad idea. We smelled bad.

Danny flew out the next morning; I stayed a few nights at Graham's and Lindsay's treehouse, waiting for Sarah Heck and Kellie Okonek to drive from Anchorage for a bike race. I bought shoes, pants (too big), shirt, and hoody (too small) all for \$10 from the thrift store. I even bought underwear. I've never considered used underwear, but I was convinced that it was better than what I had on. Someone pointed out this Flight of the Conchords' lyric to me: *"You know you're not in high finance, Considering getting secondhand underpants"* (see the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wqfcwgTODs>). I took a \$4 shower and worked through three razors to shave. I had forgotten to buy socks, so I relieved some lovely striped ladies socks from the lost-and-found bin at the laundromat. I was nervous that someone in town would recognize the socks. I think a lot of the folks from the barbecue didn't recognize me when I waved to them the following days. I should rob banks.

For additional photos and text, visit <http://thingstolucat.com/fairweather-traverse/> and for a video of the traverse, visit <http://vimeo.com/70344184>.



# A Mighty Pushin' for Makushin Volcano

By Sam Zmolek

Makushin Volcano is the beating heart of Unalaska Island in the Aleutian chain. This flat-topped smoking summit is the fourth highest volcano in the Aleutians and the highest point on Unalaska Island. John Muir himself wrote of Makushin's beauty, covered with glaciers that run down the flanks of the mountain to within sight of the sea in some places. Even though this volcano is near the town of Unalaska, often referred to as Dutch Harbor, it is still quite remote and requires a skiff ride across Unalaska Bay to even make a reasonable approach to the base.

I was lucky enough to have a decent weather window and a willing

climbing partner to make an attempt on the mountain, but success was by no means assured. First of all, Erik Rook and I had a limited time, as he was assigned to a fishing vessel that was only in port for an offload. So we were only able to budget about 29 hours from the time the skiff dropped us off to when it picked us up. As the total

distance seems to be around 27 miles, including 12 miles of soggy, bug-infested bogs, we knew it would be tight. Most summits of Makushin I'd ever heard of were multi-day affairs, with three days being considered the bare minimum and often five days due to weather.

Second, the weather wasn't going to be awful, but we still had to hope the clouds gave us some kind of visibility. We decided against roping up for glacier travel because we had scouted a safe route that relied primarily on rocky ridges and snowfields, rather than just following one of the glaciers up. This had the added benefit of reducing weight of our packs, but obviously with the caveat that we had little margin for error if we ran into impassible obstacles. Since we were more or less at the mercy of the mountain and

conditions anyway, we decided to give it a go and see what we could accomplish.

Friday morning came, and Erik and I set out on the skiff, full of excitement and anticipation. The wind was calm, and we buzzed right to the beach in Broad Bay before 9 a.m., just north of the Makushin Valley River. We brought our secret weapon with us, which was our waterproof boots, which we thought would help us get through the boggy nastiness that awaited.

We made surprisingly good time through the marshes, and in three

hours we were at the head of the valley, about to follow the old World War II jeep track onto the volcanic plateau. Our boots ended up being very useful, but not because they kept our feet dry. In fact, the filthy muck, thick vegetation, sharp willow roots, and unseen potholes of the marsh had conspired to put holes in my boots and actually top one

of Erik's. But we still got to dry our feet off and put on fresh socks and hiking boots as we cached the used boots at the base of the switchbacks. Tired as we were, things were just beginning.

The next few miles were lovely and uneventful, as we climbed onto tundra and snaked our way past Sugarloaf Cone, an unmistakable landmark that can be seen from a long way off. After skirting the cone, we snaked onto the old moraine landscape at the base of the volcano by side-hilling a small ridge. At that point, we could see lots of elongated snowfields, with strips of bare rock and dense clusters of blooming lupine in between. We reached the highest green patch we could find, and stopped to cache our sleeping bags, pads, bivy sacks, and any other items not needed for the final push to the top. After a long pause to cram as much food in us as we



Erik Rook checking out the fumarole on the summit. Photo by Sam Zmolek.



*Sam Zmolek breaking camp for the return to the beach. Photo by Erik Rook.*

could muster, we turned and headed up for the final three miles, with over 3,500 more vertical feet to ascend.

At this point, neither of us was very hopeful about summiting. We were really feeling the previous 10-mile slog, but what was even worse was seeing fairly dense clouds just above us that did not appear to have any end in sight. Erik basically dragged me out of camp on a caffeine buzz, and we decided to just see exactly how far we felt comfortable taking it. Within the first mile, we were gifted with a sudden, unexpected, and very brief sighting of the caldera rim through an opening in the clouds. This 30-second view was a huge lift to us mentally, but it also allowed us to see a distant landmark that gave us a target to shoot for. We really needed to reach the rocks we saw, which were at the base of a series of spurs delineating a ridge between the glaciers.

We took a line to that sighted position, but the clouds were constantly swirling, and for long periods of time we lost sight of the distant mark. The snow underneath us appeared fine, and we saw no signs of glacier movement beneath us, so we were pretty sure we were still on the snowfield, but it was a tense time. After getting onto the rocks, we filled our bottles with meltwater trickling off the pumice and headed up, dismayed to find that we weren't on the main spur yet, but only on a small rock patch in the snowfield beneath the main line. Undaunted, we slowly probed in the direction we knew the spur to be as the clouds thickened. We kept on slowly, being very careful to test the snow under our feet, and avoid the heavily crevassed glacier that was somewhere to our left.

After a few minutes, we were considering giving up when suddenly some dark rocks came into view, and it became quickly apparent that we had found what we were looking for. Buoyed by this discovery, we kept pushing up the spur. After another 30 minutes or so, we suddenly rode the ridge out of the clouds into the evening sun, which was a glorious sight. We checked our watches, sized up the remaining elevation, and decided we could make it before our turn-around time if we pushed. We tried to forget the previous 10 hours of exertion and haul ourselves to the top.

As the clock neared 8 p.m., we crested the caldera rim to the smell of sulfur and the exhilaration of success. We had enough time to hike to the fumarole in the middle of the icecap on the broad caldera, and enjoy the volcanic and glacial wonderland that was now situated above the clouds and out of sight of any prying eyes below. It was a spectacular finish, and we had just enough time to savor five minutes at the active vents before it was time to head back.

The descent was easy, and we found that we had a reasonable amount of sleep time, so it didn't take us long to climb into the bags, surrounded by misty lupine and the roar of the Makushin Valley River headwaters under the snow. In the morning, we woke up, snapped a few pictures, enjoyed the amazing view, and unceremoniously headed out the way we came, completing the whole trek back to the beach 29 hours after we set out. It was a long way back on tired legs, but all we could do was smile and remind each other what an amazing experience we had just had, successfully pulling off such a rugged and remote summit in such a short period.

I could only smile when one of my last steps to reach the beach resulted in a complete face plant with my head in a hole and my legs in the air. There would be time to sleep, eat, shower, and baby myself as I recovered, but there had been no better use of that time than to push up Makushin.



# Peak of the Month: Longspur Peak

By Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Western Chugach Mountains

Borough: Municipality of Anchorage

Drainages: Longspur Glacier and Pipit Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 61° 1' 35" North, 148° 54' 59" West

Elevation: 5401 feet

Prominence: 651 feet from Pipit Peak (6050)

Adjacent Peak: Pipit Peak

Distinctness: 651 feet from Pipit Peak

USGS Map: Anchorage (A-6)

First Recorded Ascent: Early July 2002 by Steve Butkus

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Via the Longspur Glacier

Access Point: [Winner Creek Trailhead at the Alyeska Prince Hotel](#)

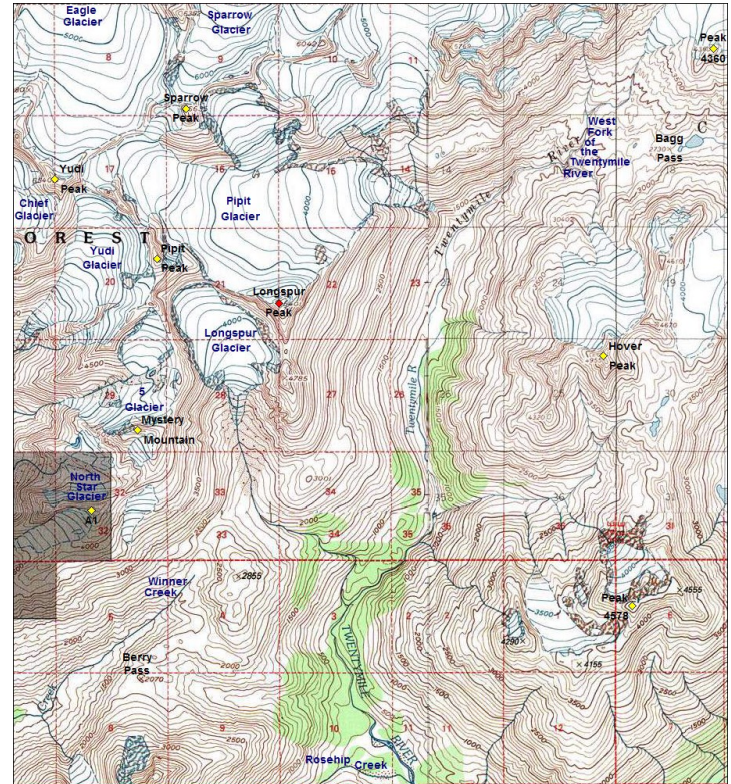
Tom Choate gave Longspur Peak its name in the late 1990s, citing the Lapland longspur's breeding grounds in the vicinity of the peak, the prevalence of geographic features in the area named after a bird theme, and the peak's location on a long spur southeast of Pipit Peak.

In early July 2002 Steve Butkus had planned to join Tom Choate, Dwight Iverson, and me on a long Independence Weekend trip north of Winner Creek, but he couldn't start with us on July 3, so he tried to meet up with us the next day. We had planned to climb A1, Mystery Mountain, Pipit Peak, Longspur Peak, and Sparrow Peak. We reached all of the summits except Longspur Peak. Instead of following us along the ridge on the eastern boundary of the Glacier Creek drainage, Steve approached A1 and descended east to the valley below. From there he climbed the south ridge of Longspur Peak to the summit, where he left a register.

On July 7, 2005, Richard Baranow and Tom Dolan climbed the south ridge of Longspur Peak from a camp on Kelly's Knob (2858) northeast of Berry Pass to make the second ascent of the peak. They did not find Steve's register, so left one in a cairn on the summit. They descended down the west ridge and later climbed Pipit Peak, Mystery Mountain, and A1 before returning to Berry Pass.

On September 2, 2007, after hiking through Berry Pass and setting a camp at about 2700 feet about a mile and a half south of the summit, Ross Noffsinger, Wayne Todd, and Carrie Wang climbed Longspur Peak to make the third ascent of the peak and the first via the southeast face. They found the register left by Richard Baranow and Tom Dolan. Ross reported the route entailed steep hiking with a short fifth-class section near the summit, which they were able to bypass on the descent.

On April 19, 2014, Dave Hart and Ben Still were flown in a helicopter from Girdwood to the southeastern lobe of the Eagle



Map created with TOPO18 ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

Glacier where they set up camp. From there they skied down the Pipit Glacier and attained the northeast ridge of Longspur Peak, which they ascended to the summit to make the fourth ascent of the peak. They then climbed Pipit Peak and the following day climbed Yudi Peak (6540) before skiing to Alaska Pacific University's Thomas Training Center for their return flight to Girdwood.

I don't know of a fifth ascent of Longspur Peak. The information in this article came from the August 2002 *Scree*; my correspondence with Wayne Todd, Ben Still, Dave Hart, Ross Noffsinger, and Tom Dolan; and my personal communications with Jon Evenson, Steve Butkus, and Richard Baranow.



North face of Longspur Peak in mid-April. Photo by Ben Still.

# Regular Membership Meeting Minutes

## September 16, 2014

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:35 by Vice President Carlene Van Tol, as President Greg Encelewski was not able to attend.

There was no treasurer's report, due to the absence of Stacy Pritts.

### Standing Committee Reports

**Hiking and Climbing:** Vicky Lytle reported no upcoming trips on the calendar.

Greg Bragiel said he is planning on doing some maintenance along Ship Creek December 13.

Stu Grenier is looking for members interested in possibly doing a paddle/climb trip of Mount Susitna in October; contact him to discuss in detail.

**Training:** The annual ice climbing festival will be held September 26 to 28 with a sign-up deadline of midnight, September 21. Members were encouraged to sign up for this great introduction to the sport, or at least other members involved in ice climbing, as it is an annual highlight to membership.

**Huts:** Greg Bragiel said Pichler's Perch will be needing a large amount of money in order to be renovated before it falls down. There was discussion about the Dnigi Hut needing a crew to go in on snowmachines this winter to do maintenance, versus moving or tearing down the hut; this was tabled to be discussed at the next board meeting.

**Calendar:** Stu Grenier announced 2015's club calendar will be in vertical format. Members are encouraged to bring photos to next month's meeting where everyone gets to vote on their favorite pictures in different categories.

**Scree:** Steve Gruhn announced the deadline of Wednesday, September 24, for the October *Scree*. He is looking for an assistant *Scree* editor to begin in April 2015 for the May 2015 *Scree*. The position requires the use of Microsoft Publisher (or similar) software and requires approximately six hours each month. Steve's email address is [scgruhn@gmail.com](mailto:scgruhn@gmail.com).

**Parks Advisory:** Cory Hinds encouraged members to attend the Municipality of Anchorage's meeting Tuesday, September 23, to address the Chugach State Park Access Plan. This is an important issue that needs a strong response from outdoors recreationalists in order to keep access/have access in the future. All club members are encouraged to get involved. Chugach State Park is Anchorage's back yard.

Ralph Baldwin is looking for volunteers to meet with snowmachine riders and skiers at the Gold Mint parking lot near Hatcher Pass once the snow flies and users are showing up. The idea is to hand out brochures and maps of user areas, promote safety, and get all users educated on the legal areas to ride motorized versus not. The idea is to help with outreach and education on the new Hatcher Pass user boundaries and to assist rangers by reporting and recording anyone seen traveling outside of the appropriate zones. Contact Ralph for further information on how to help.

After a 20-minute break, club members were treated to a beautiful presentation on kite skiing the Arctic Coastal Plain, presented by Nancy Pfeiffer with husband/photographer Fredrik Norrsell.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.



**MCA Board Meeting Minutes**  
**September 22, 2014**  
**Captured by Matt Hickey, MCA Secretary**  
**Meeting convened at 6:56 p.m. at Guido's Restaurant**

**The board was called to act on two items:**

1. Pichler's Perch Renovation
  - A. Board moved to approve the renovation of Pichler's Perch under the condition that the chairman of the Huts Committee provide a detailed description of the renovations and associated costs. Estimated cost is \$15K.
  - B. At the time of this meeting, allocating that amount would reduce the Club's reserve by 50%.
2. Membership Dues
  - A. The board moved to increase all annual membership dues by \$5 effective January 1, 2015.
  - B. The increase in dues is to help support the renovation and maintenance of MCA huts without significantly degrading the Club's reserve funds.

**Topics Discussed**

1. Dnigi Hut
  - A. The Huts Committee chairman has proposed organizing a team of snowmachiners and carpenters to travel to the hut to evaluate what needs to be done. The board discussed their support of this, but emphasized this is for evaluation and removing the hut remains an option.
2. Mint Hut Toilet
  - A. Composting is not working. An alternative means of disposing solid waste must be created.
  - B. Four barrels of waste will need to be removed via helicopter by 2016.
3. Bomber Hut Condition
  - A. On July 8, 2014, an MCA member found the hut lacking a bear guard, the door not properly secured, and food improperly disposed of in and around the hut.
4. Gear Storage
  - A. Possibly consolidate storage and move MCA gear to the Best Storage facility if there is room to reduce yearly cost by \$600. The storage facility must be vetted before moving gear to ensure it is safe storage for technical equipment and ropes.
5. Certificates
  - A. Greg Bragiel had submitted a request that the board recognize the students that participated in the Summer Mountaineering Trip. He had provided an instruction syllabus and other documentation. A broader deliberation ensued regarding whether certificates should be given to those who complete MCA trainings and/or trips. The board believes that the chairman of the Training Committee (not present at meeting) must provide opinion before moving on the proposal.
6. President's Award
  - A. Possible recipients identified. MCA members are encouraged to nominate someone they believe to be worthy of the award to the MCA's President.
7. Board and Officer Elections
  - A. Two board positions and all officer positions will be available. Nominations and voting will be conducted at the October MCA meeting.

**Next Board Meeting**

Monday, October 27, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at BP Energy Center (if available).

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

# MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA) was formed in 1958 to promote the enjoyment of hiking and climbing in Alaska and the exploration of its mountains. We welcome all who wish to become members.

**Participate and Learn:** The MCA conducts scheduled hikes and climbs led by experienced club members, technical mountaineering and climbing courses, and other instruction throughout the year. The club maintains seven mountain huts in the nearby Chugach and Talkeetna mountains. The MCA's Vin Hoeman Library contains hundreds of books, numerous periodicals, bound volumes of the **SCREE**, and a 'Peak File' with information on local climbs. The club has climbing gear for trips and training, including ice axes, helmets, crampons, snowshoes, and avalanche beacons.

**Stay Informed:** The MCA publishes a monthly newsletter, **SCREE**, and emails it to all members. The **SCREE** contains announcements of upcoming events, the hiking and climbing trip schedule, and trip reports written by club members.

**Monthly meetings:** The third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the BP Energy Center at 1014 Energy Court (in Midtown Anchorage just south of the main BP building). Special events or changes to the meeting will be noted in the **SCREE** and on our website at: [www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org).

- **Complete both pages of this form. Write neatly!** To participate in club-sponsored trips, **EVERY MEMBER** must read and complete the Release of Liability Agreement on the back of this application.
- Please make checks payable to **Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.**
- Mailed **SCREE** subscriptions are \$15 additional per year & are non-refundable. (1 **SCREE**/ family).
- Annual membership is through the 31st of December.
- Memberships paid after November 1st are good through December 31 of the following year.
- If applying by mail, please include a self-addressed, **stamped** envelope for your membership card.  
OR you may pick it up at the next monthly meeting.  
Our address is: **PO BOX 243561, Anchorage, AK 99524-3561**
- **Note: Mailed applications may take up to 6 weeks to process.** Thank you for your patience.
- **To join right now, sign up online at [www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org)**

New		Date	
Renewal		Name	
1 YR. Individual \$15		Family Members	
1 YR. Family \$20			
2 YR. Individual \$30			
2 YR. Family \$40			
How do you want your <b>SCREE</b> delivered? (check one or both)			
Electronic (free)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Email delivery	
Paper (add \$15/YR.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postal Service (not available outside the United States)	
Street or PO Box			
City/State/Zip			
Telephone			
Email Address			

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in joining a committee (Circle which ones: Programs, Hiking & Climbing, Huts, Geographic Names, Peak Registers, Parks Advisory, Equipment, Awards, Membership, Training, or ad hoc committees).

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in leading a trip.

Do not write below this line: \_\_\_\_\_

Pd: \$15 \$20 \$30 \$40 \$15 for paper **SCREE** \$30 for 2 years of paper **SCREE**  
on Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_, Cash or Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Card Issued for Yr: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address Added to Mailing List

Revised 1/10/11



**SIGN AND INITIAL THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY— READ IT CAREFULLY**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) am aware that mountaineering and wilderness activities (including hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; ski mountaineering; rafting and packrafting, kayaking, and use of remote backcountry huts) are hazardous activities. I wish to participate and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. ("MCA"). I recognize these activities involve numerous risks, which include, by way of example only, falling while hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; falling into a crevasse or over a cliff; drowning; 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 or rescue. I also recognize that risk of **injury or death** may be caused or enhanced by **mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct** on the part of either my fellow participants; MCA officers, directors, instructors, or trip leaders; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. 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. **(As used in this agreement, MCA includes its officers, directors, instructors and trip leaders.)**

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

**GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS** I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage is provided by automobile insurance policies) and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. **I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct of others.** I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until I provide a signed, dated, written notice of its revocation to the MCA.

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

**MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE** I will not sue or otherwise make a claim against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except as noted above for automobile accidents); and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, for **injury, death, or property damage** which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or this release shall only be filed in Anchorage, Alaska. The provisions of this release are severable and if any part is found unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

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

**MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY** I agree to release and discharge the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, 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 and wilderness activities.

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

**MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY** I will pay all expenses, including attorney fees and court costs, that the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of **injury, death, or property damage** suffered by me in connection with any MCA activity or the use of any MCA backcountry hut.

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

**MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT** I consent to any hospital or medical care that may be necessary as a result of my participation in MCA activities. I understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue costs.

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

**I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT, AND RECOGNIZE IT IS A BINDING LEGAL AGREEMENT**

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

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

**Revised 2/19/09**

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Greg Encelewski	360-0274	Board member (term expires in 2014)	Andy Mamrol	717-6893
Vice-President	Carlene Van Tol	748-5270	Board member (term expires in 2014)	Elizabeth Bennett	830-9656
Secretary	Matt Hickey	651-270-4492	Board member (term expires in 2015)	Rachad Rayess	617-309-6566
Treasurer	Stacy Pritts	538-7546	Board member (term expires in 2015)	Joshua Clark	887-1888
Past President	Jayne Mack	382-0212			

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 Membership Committee at [membership@mtclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtclubak.org).

*The Scree* is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 21st of the month to appear in the next month's *Scree*.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to [vicepresident@mtclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtclubak.org).

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

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Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MCAK/info>.

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