

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

October 2021

Volume 64, Number 10



**"You won't find reasonable men at the top of tall mountains."**

**– Hunter S Thompson**

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October 6, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.  
Chad Hults will be presenting  
Muldrow Glacier.**

**"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."**

*This issue brought to you by: Editor—Gerrit Verbeek assisted by Dawn Munroe*

## Cover Photo

Matt Green about to cross the snowbridge and ascend Jokulhlaup on the southeast ridge (on right).

Photo by Wayne Todd

**OCTOBER MEETING** — Wednesday October 6, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Join us for the MCA General Meeting, officer elections, and a presentation on the Muldrow Glacier Surge with Chad Hults, Alaska Regional Geologist for the National Park Service.

Chad Hults has been working in Alaska as a geologist for 20 years. Come join us to learn about his work studying the Muldrow Glacier surge this year.

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/tZcrcO2vrj0pHNRTBeTM4z.../ics...>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83674706360...>

Meeting ID: 836 7470 6360

Passcode: 033973

One tap mobile

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 836 7470 6360

Passcode: 033973

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/km5207kWZ>

## Trips

**October 2, 2021 (starting at 9 a.m.)** – Bold Ridge Overlook Trail Clearing – Trip leader is Marcin Ksok (928-380-2995, [marcinkok@netscape.net](mailto:marcinkok@netscape.net)). "Volunteers are needed to clear out the very overgrown upper part of Bold Ridge Trail off the Eklutna Lake Trail. There might be ATV support but most should plan to bike the 5 mile approach. Anyone who could bring an ATV would earn a gold star." Permitted by Chugach State Park, text or email to RSVP.

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit <http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?useaction=members.form>.

**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 11th of each month to appear in the next issue of *the Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. Send high resolution file photos separately, including captions for each photo. 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 don't forget to submit photo captions.

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Online? Click me!



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



## Approved Changes to MCA Membership Categories and Dues

At the September 1, 2021 General Meeting, membership voted to accept the Board's recommendation to change the MCA annual membership categories and dues, taking effect with the 2022 membership year.

The approved changes in MCA annual membership categories and dues are:

**(new) Basic ("Dirtbag") Membership: \$20.00**

**(changed) Regular Individual Membership: \$30.00**

**(changed) Family Membership: \$40.00**

**(new) MCA Life Membership: \$60.00** one-time payment for long-term members.

**(unchanged) Honorary MCA Lifetime Membership:** No annual fee.

Hard-copy monthly Scree newsletters for each of the four membership categories above is at an additional yearly fee of \$45.00, at the member's option.

## Thank You – Bomber Hut Renovation Team

The MCA Board would like to thank everyone involved with the Bomber Hut reskin and expansion. Thank you to the Hut Committee for the planning work involved, and to the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation for a generous grant which enabled this work.

Huge thanks to Stan Olsen, Sally Balchin, Dave Staeheli, Brad Nelson, Sean Ashmore, Andy Milauskas, Jeff Sauve, Wayne Todd, and Ray Koleser for the skilled labor, and to the entire support crew involved in funding, pre-fab, and logistics.

Also thanks to Humdinger's Gourmet Pizza Co. of Palmer, Alaska, for a food donation to the work team.



## Upcoming Elections—October

The October 6th General Meeting will include votes on new Officers and Directors to join the MCA Board for a two-year term. If you would like more information or to express interest in running, feel free to contact a current Board member.

### High turnout is critical

Attendance of the virtual meetings has been much lower than the in-person meetings prior to the COVID pandemic. In order for a vote to reflect the interests of club membership, the Board would like to see at least 40 members attend the October meeting. We will take nominations for candidates for 2 officer positions and 3 director positions. You may nominate yourself or another person, although they must accept the nomination in order to run. If they wish, candidates may make a short speech about their priorities and motivation for joining the Board before voting. The current positions up for election are:

President - Mike Meyers

Treasurer - Katherine Cooper

Director – Andy Kubic

Director – Heather Johnson

Director – Tom Meacham

### **MCA Board Roles**

#### President:

(a) To preside at all regular and executive meetings.

(b) To coordinate the efforts of the officers and committees.

#### Treasurer:

(a) To receive and disburse all club dues, fees, and other monies.

(b) To maintain complete financial records of the organization.

(c) All other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.

#### Directors:

(a) To act as an advisor to the Executive Committee concerning matters of policy.

(b) All other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.

**Congratulations** to J.T. Lindholm for completing the 'Chugach 120' list of recognized peaks in the Chugach State Park, finishing with Grey Jay Peak on August 29, 2021.



## Trident Peak Adventure - Trident Peak (6050 feet), Jokulhlaup Peak (5520 feet), and Mile Pile Peak (5280 feet), Kenai Mountains

Text by Kiska (with assistance), photos by Wayne Todd (except where noted)

With Matt Green, Wayne Todd, Niko and Kiska, July 16-18, 2021



60.397, -149.075



*Trident Peak from our camp.*



*Wayne Todd on the summit. Photo by Matt Green*

Half an hour into our adventure we are at a four-way intersection on the ATV trail with helpful signposts pointing each way. Thought we were heading up Falls Creek to the left, but after some debate, instead we take the Falls Creek Mine trail straight ahead. Great – not a lot of confidence in you people right now, especially since you keep checking the GPS. We take a left turn up near the mine too. If it was me, I would've gone straight ahead, but this Wayne guy has been here before and seems to know what he is doing.

I'm kept on a leash for most of the first day. I know – I did break my foreleg last year jumping off a 12-foot retaining wall down in Homer. The leg feels pretty good, but don't want to do anything too crazy. Good thing too – Wayne said we covered 10 miles that first day hiking up the Falls Creek valley, over the pass at the end, and down to our camp at 3000 feet on the other side. Niko probably covered at least 15 miles roaming all over the hillsides. He paid for it later. Niko is a nutcase rolling over and sliding downhill on his back on some of the snow slopes up near the pass – maybe he's trying to rub the backpack off. It's nice of him to carry our food. I hate my backpack – but I'm given a break on this trip.

We set up camp on a bench next to a small stream, just below a ground squirrel village. It drives Niko crazy as he chases them all over the hillside. I join in occasionally, but mostly leave it up to him. He'll never learn that there is no way that he will ever catch one. I am definitely the smart one in the litter. It is interesting to hear the squirrel's squeak change as Niko approaches, becoming

higher and higher pitch, until it stops as the squirrel ducks down a hole.

While eating dinner, we watch some serac fall from a glacier on the west flank of Trident Peak. The camp has an excellent view of the summit ridge of Trident with its 'horns' – so that is how it was named! Not sure what the plan is, but I hope that we can navigate them tomorrow.

2 a.m. Niko and I can't resist – those ground squirrels are driving us nuts. We sneak out under the edge of the Hex Nest tent and spend the next few hours chasing ground squirrels in the twilight across the slopes. The best. On return, we did get leashed up to the tent pole though. Totally worth it.

We are up moderately early and leave camp by 8 a.m. after putting our food in a critter-proof container and tucking it under a snow roof in the creek. We head up the valley further east, up to a pass at 4000 feet, then on to the Trident Glacier. The glacier looks benign, then halfway up Matt punches through a small hole and the next thing we know they have harnesses on and are roped together. What about us, people? Do we get tied in? No. It's OK, it is really easy to tell where the crevasses are.

For some reason, instead of continuing to head up this nice mellow glacier to the saddle at the end with a gentle ridge up to the summit, we take the direct route and start heading up a snow chute on the northeast face. The snow is isothermic and loose, and transitions to steep, loose scree and rocks. We make it to the

ridge, but on the wrong side of a big gendarme. We back down a few hundred feet to try to cross over to the next gully. The only option, without having to descend back to the glacier, is a short, steep climb on sketchy rock, ice and snow. Wayne tries first; direct route – nope, over the top – nope, back to direct – one step on snow covered ice to start, then – swish, he slides past and stops on some scree-covered rocks 30 feet below with a slight lacerated palm. He should have four paws with nails. Wait, now Matt’s going to try that? Matt spends ages trying to place a few nuts – more for psychological protection if anything – of the few moves up to the belay point. Next thing I know, I am being rigged with an improvised harness with some webbing and being hauled up. Not my most gracious moment. Niko did slightly better and actually tried to help a bit by scrambling.

From the belay was another steep snow slope, followed by some more scrambling up to the summit. Except, hang on, there are two more blocks further along the ridge, and the middle one looks to be bit higher. Out comes a water bottle to use to compare heights. Yep, this isn’t it apparently. The next section is not fun. A knife-edge ridge with certain death on each side. Forget that, I’m going to go low. Next thing I know I’m being screamed at for crossing this sloping slab with loose pebbles on top of a cliff – it looked like a better way to go to me. More scrambling around the west side of the ridge and we reach the true summit. Awesome views all around, but I just take a quick nap while Matt and Wayne take photos.



*Continuing on past the technical pitch.*

It’s not over yet – we really don’t want to go back the way we came. If we can just get over to the third block on the ridge, then after that we should be able to descend to that nice mellow ridge at the head of the glacier. Improvised harnesses are back on again and we get to be belayed/hailed up to the next block. There, we find some cord for a rap anchor (not well positioned by the way), move it, then use it to rap down 50 feet or so. Niko gets to ride in Matt’s lap over the rope, while I get to be in Wayne’s lap for the vertical section.

Whew. After that, the technical climbing is over. Now why on earth didn’t we just come up this way? We could’ve just waited (tied up if you like) below the summit block while you guys did your thing. Thought that was the plan the whole time. Whose idea was the direct approach and summit ridge traverse anyway?

Wow it is 4 p.m. now. That took a while. Perfect day though – no wind, few clouds, and hot! We descend quickly down the glacier. The soft snow is super nice on my paws. Niko’s paws definitely took a beating on all that scree and sharp rock. Mine aren’t too bad. Back down at the pass with some welcome water from a stream,

then, hang on a minute, camp is that way to the left. Instead, we start heading up a long snow/scree ridge to the right, up Jokulhlaup Peak. Pretty straightforward climb. I’m a bit concerned right near the top on the southeast ridge as it looked like another gendarme adventure, but we find a way around to the right and summit shortly after. Impressive views of the Snow Glacier. There was a summit register in a Nalgene bottle – our entry is just the second in there since 2015.

Down the ridge to the west now, including a glissade that dropped us 1,000 feet in a few minutes. To a pass, then a steep climb up loose scree to Mile Pile Peak. Bit of a slog. Horrible on my paws – this loose, sharp scree is not pleasant at all. No register here, but a small cairn. It’s getting late, so we don’t hang around. Just after leaving the summit, we look back and three goats appear there – where did they come from? They would have been fun to chase. The plan was to descend the glacier to the northwest, but there is an icefall blocking our way. Instead, we check out the direct route back to camp and find a way down steep scree and snow filled gullies back to the valley floor, then quickly back up to our camp up on

the bench by the stream in the sunshine. 10 p.m. A 14-hour day. Worth it though. Didn’t want to have to climb back up to the pass tomorrow to bag those last two peaks.

We retrieve our food from the creek – the snow roof hiding it has completely melted out – and eat a late dinner checking out how the “Snow Patch Dinosaur” on the opposite slope changed shape during the day. We retire to bed when the sun goes down. Pooped. That was a big day. Another

10 miles and 5,900 feet of elevation gain. No chasing squirrels tonight. We are still tied up to the tent pole though for some reason. Don’t you guys trust us at all?

Up late, with a leisurely breakfast in the morning sun. Except, where’s our food? Was that all you packed for us? Not enough treats either. Lucky that we are not staying out another night or you would be in big trouble. Those extra fig bars are pretty good though.

We start the day with a steep hike out up to Falls Creek Pass through a prolific wildflower garden and then enjoy the snow slopes down on the other side. A fairly uneventful hike out. We do spook a medium black bear in the brush not far from us at one point. No chasing for us though – learned that lesson. We take every opportunity to have a nap on the way out. We hardly move the next day – tired and sore – in a good way. Back at it the following day though, with an evening hike up Falls Peak (3809 feet) southwest of Indianhouse Mountain. Felt good. Can’t beat a dog’s life.



## Peak 7270, Central Chugach Mountains

Text by and photos by Kaleb Notte

61.269,-145.637



*Peak 7270 from the glacier.*

I was stoked to get back down to Valdez again for some peak goodness. I hit the road at 4 a.m. to start the day at a decent hour. I parked between Mile 33 and 34 and crossed the small bridge that gets you across the Tsina River.

The dirt road last for a very short time and soon the shwhack begins. Shwhack is just a fun mental game at this point. I just shut my brain off and know it's a part of the gig. I was introduced to a new kind of shwhack as there were three cliff bands that went at Class 4 in the middle of the Alaskan jungle. Which was kind of funny because this was the crux of the entire climb.

Though the first section was quite horrendous, getting to the alpine in this zone is epic. Across the valley Mt. Dimond and Cracked Ice loom high in the sky. Once above brush I dropped camp near two alpine lakes and a small stream.

Getting into the valley to access the glacier was quick work from camp and travel down this valley was easy. There was a cool feature halfway down the valley where the walls rose 15 feet above the glacial stream, which provided a fun scramble to get back down to the valley floor.

Arriving at the glacier Peak 7270 was finally in sight along with plenty of fresh snow. On the glacier plenty of crevasses along the middle of the glacier.

At the base of the peak, I started up the south-southwest gully. Fresh unconsolidated snow on rocks made for tedious work. The gully was never hard climbing, it just required some route finding and weaving left and right. Exiting onto the east-southeast ridge was easy, and the first half of the ridge was in sight. The first few hundred feet was the crux of the ridge, having to slide across it like riding a moose.

The ridge never exceeded Class 3 and was a super fun ridge and very scenic. I was super happy to have crampons as the snow became solid along the ridge. You always know it's a big day when you go from shwhack to strapping on crampons and snow climbing. After strapping up I made quick work of the ridge and the views were unreal. Meteorite Mountain, some awesome '7kers,' and glaciers were everywhere in view.

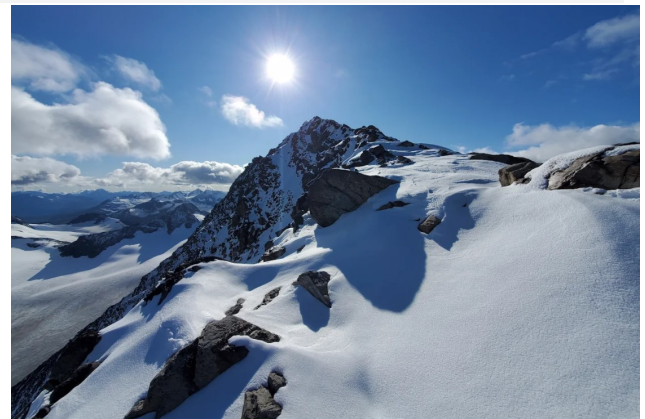
Summit stoke didn't get to last long as I still had a haul back to camp. I ended up arriving at camp with just enough light to set up my tent without a headlamp. I cooked dinner and started to process driving from Eagle River and climbing a '7ker' in Valdez in the same day. I passed out after supper and awoke to a beautiful alpine glow on Mt. Dimond in the morning.

I made a cup of coffee and made my way down the cliffy shwhack. Heading down was worse than heading up. I was going through thick trees then suddenly I would arrive at a cliff trying to piece together ledges. Heading down the cliffs I would use alders to lower myself where I could. This is what I like to call "Class Tree Climbing." Two hours after leaving camp I was back at my car and thankful I was done.



*Top: Start of the ridge.*

*Bottom: Summit 7270 in sight.*



## The Watchman (6410 feet), Western Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Andrew Holman

61.292,-149.018



*Low on the ridge, looking forward to bushwhacking our way back to the airstrip at this point*

Finally, some good weather on the weekend!

I gave Abbey Collins a handful of options and she settled on The Watchman. The crux for me on these Eklutna Glacier summits is that I don't have a mountain bike, but Abbey helped me out by renting one for me downtown ahead of time, so we could go right to the trailhead after work on Friday.

We cycled in and set up our tent. There was a man and his dog plane-camping there, something I've heard happens at the Bold Airstrip, but that I've never witnessed.

We decided to get an early start and wakeup around 4:30 a.m. At around 5:30 we were crossing the braids of the Eklutna River. I learned my mountaineering skills in the Pacific Northwest where you walk across bridges, so every time I cross these in Alaska... it kind of feels like the first time.

It was extremely cold and unpleasant. Lucky for us, we had some uphill bushwhacking just ahead to clear our minds and warm us up.

I've heard there might be some sort of "trail" up to the ridge of The Watchman, but we didn't find one. I was in front, following weaknesses in the trees. Initially it wasn't that bad but before I knew it we were hopping over rubbery tree branches stabbing at us from the slopes.

In maybe 3-4 hours (it actually felt even longer than that) we were gaining the summit ridge. (Beta note: while I can't vouch for our

bushwhacking route-finding, I can vouch for our ridge top-out. Once you can start to see up towards the ridge again, aim for ~61.3160, -149.0299. There is a big grass bench there, great for napping. The slope leading to it is quite moderate.)

Once on the ridge, it's pretty straight forward Class 2 hiking. At about 61.3126, -149.0290 we left the ridge and started sidehilling to the climber's right (west). The side-hilling eventually turns to a wide grass bench with very comfortable hiking. This would be an amazing spot to make a high camp (if you enjoy crossing rivers and bushwhacking with overnight gear, that is). There were ample streams for water here, but they seemed like they might be seasonal only.

Eventually the grassy bench ended (~61.3002, -149.0275) and we had to start picking our way up a series of choss gullies and rotting snow tongues. From here, the summit of The Watchman looks close (spoiler: it ain't) and there are great views of Point 6530 (which I stupidly thought was Benign Peak when I first saw it). That creatively-named peak (there's another peak with the same name, less than a dozen miles from this one) looks like it has some great couloir routes on its north aspect.

After ~1,000 feet of gain we were on the ridge proper. From here, it's mainly 3rd Class ridge scrambling. You just have to be mindful of the runouts and not climb up anything that feels harder than that (unless you want to).



After a few false summit top-outs, we eventually reached the summit proper. The summit area is how we all imagined the tops of mountains were before we actually started climbing them: it's the narrowest, steepest part of the climb with the scariest runout. We stayed on a ridge of increasing narrowness.

Finally, we were looking at the last ~80 feet. It was a slabby-looking slope off to our right with a thin (maybe 3-5 inches) layer of snow. In front of us, there was gravelly rock spine snaking up to the summit. Abbey mentioned that she didn't feel like going all the way to the summit and, even though I'm the one with the higher risk tolerance, I definitely agreed with her on this one. It seemed like there wasn't a non-slippery way to the top. Either you go on ball-bearing gravel on top of rock or you go on a thin layer of snow of dubious quality.

Abbey mentioned she read some people had gone "around" at this point. I started looking for another way. I found a sensible, short downclimb off of the ridge (climber's left, or north). And then we sidehilled around looking for a less-terrible way up. I spotted some tat (the "summit anchor") around a horn and thought that was probably the summit. In front of us was something halfway between a shallow chimney and a narrow gully. It was very chossy, but it looked more secure than the ridge we had just bailed off.

After testing holds repeatedly, and breaking many, we were back on the summit ridge about 10 feet from the summit. From there it was an easy crawl/scramble to the summit.

I was a little anxious on the summit and didn't get to take in the views as much as I would have liked. I wasn't looking forward to downclimbing on broken rock. I surveyed some other ridges from the top, and it still looked like our way was the "best" option.

Apart from an ominous storm cloud forming near Thunder Bird Peak, the views were sunny and incredible! Abbey signed us into the summit register, and then we started picking our way down.

In a surprise twist that rarely happens in the hills, downclimbing from the summit area was actually easier than going up! However, the dread of the bushwhack and the river re-crossing hung over our descent the entire time.

We decided to try a different way down and more religiously follow a line we found on [www.peakbagger.com](http://www.peakbagger.com) from Lee Helzer. This line descends lower down on the ridge than where we came up (61.3196, -149.0295). While the slope shading looked very similar to our top-out earlier in the day, the downclimbing here was firmly 4th Class (5th in spots if you're Abbey's height) and we weren't fans of it. However, once off the cliffs, the bushwhack in this area was much smoother than the one we took up. Abbey did a great job improvising through the vegetation on the way down. It was nice to turn my brain off and just follow the color of her jacket.

We weren't cautious about the creek crossing on the way out, we just marched straight through with our boots on this time. The rigidity of the mountaineering boots made it much easier, despite the flow coming up maybe a foot higher (mid-thigh now, instead of knee-high earlier).

We got back to the Bold Airstrip and hydrated meals at Eklutna Lake. In our tent, we watched TV on a phone, and Abbey fell asleep with a nine-tenths of a beer in her hand. We slept in late on Sunday and the ride out was beautiful and uneventful, with the exception of near-misses from droning ATVs.



*Abbey working her way down the summit ridge*



*Abbey gets an invisible belay up to the summit*



## Peak of the Month: Gorgon Spire, Coast Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn; photo by Scott McGee

**Mountain Range:** Coast Mountains

**Borough:** City and Borough of Juneau

**Drainages:** Matthes Glacier and Vaughan Lewis Glacier

**Latitude/Longitude:** 58° 48' 7" North, 134° 15' 38" West

**Elevation:** 7057 feet

**Adjacent Peaks:** Peak 6820 in the Elmore Glacier and Gilkey Glacier drainages of the Heritage Range and Typhoon Peak (7650 feet) in the Storm Range

**Distinctness:** 1147 feet from Peak 6820

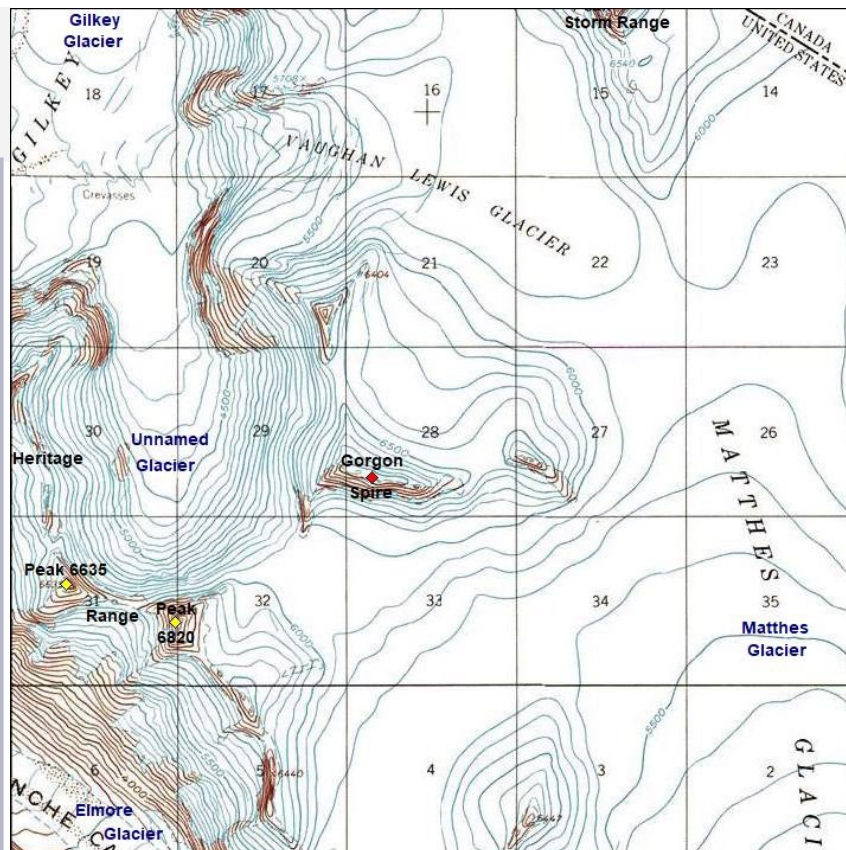
**Prominence:** 1197 feet from Typhoon Peak

**USGS Maps:** 1:63,360: Juneau (D-1) and 1:25,000: Juneau D-1 SW

**First Recorded Ascent:** July 4, 1971, by Harte Bressler, Bruce Haley, William Lokey, and Alfred C. Pinchak

**Route of First Recorded Ascent:** South face

**Access Point:** Lemon Creek Trail



In August 1946 with support from the American Alpine Club, the American Geographical Society, and the U.S. Forest Service, William Robertson “Bill” Latady and Maynard Malcolm “Mal” Miller surveyed the lower southeastern reaches of the Juneau Icefield. Thus began the Juneau Icefield Research Project, a long-term study of the Juneau Icefield. In 1959 after completion of the multi-year project the prior year, Mal Miller decided to continue the long-term study as the Juneau Icefield Research Program (JIRP) for which he would serve as the Director, with support from the Foundation for Glacier and Environmental Research. Fieldwork for the JIRP continued annually (with the exception of 2020, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic) through 2021 and there are plans for additional fieldwork in 2022. While mountaineering often accompanied the JIRP scientific investigations, the documentation of climbing was not a primary concern. As a result, the records of JIRP toponyms and ascents remain confusing, and at times contradictory.

On August 1, 1969, Harte Bressler, Bill Lokey, Louis Miller, John Schutt, and Wayne Smith made the second ascent of 7856-foot Mount Bressler. Mal Miller subsequently documented the ascent in a report for the 1970 *American Alpine Journal*. However, his report confused the ascent with the July 1969 attempt on the same peak by Bressler, Andy Miller, and Smith. Making matters even more confusing, Mal Miller’s report incorrectly stated that three JIRP members – Lokey, Andy Miller, and Alf Pinchak – climbed a

previously-unclimbed peak. The inaccurate report might have been of little consequence, except that Mal Miller assigned the unclimbed peak a name – Gorgon Spire. Kenneth A. Henderson relayed the incorrect report in the 1970 *Alpine Journal* and used the same name for the unclimbed peak. In Greek mythology a Gorgon was an ugly female monster whose hair was comprised of living, venomous snakes and who would turn the flesh of anyone who gazed at her to stone.

In 1971 the JIRP members began their work by hiking up Juneau’s Lemon Creek Trail to JIRP Camp 17 northeast of 1383-meter (4537-foot) Cairn Peak on the ridge between the Lemon Creek Glacier and the Ptarmigan Glacier. From Camp 17 the team hiked, skied, snowshoed, and snowmachined to JIRP Camp 10 above the Taku Glacier southwest of 5180-foot Mount Unity and west of Icy Basin. From Camp 10 the party rode a Thiokol snowcat to JIRP Camp 18 south and west of 7780-foot Mount Ogilvie and north of the Vaughan Lewis Glacier at an elevation of about 5500 feet.

On July 4, 1971, a party of four JIRP members – Bressler, Bruce Haley, Lokey, and Pinchak – left Camp 18 and descended the cleaver to the Vaughan Lewis Glacier and traveled to JIRP Camp 19 west of the Unnamed Glacier at an elevation of about 4200 feet. They departed Camp 19 and headed southeast up the Unnamed Glacier to a pass between the Gilkey Glacier and the Matthes Glacier, and then to the south face of a 7100-foot peak northwest of the divide. This was the peak that Mal Miller had called Gorgon

Spire. They climbed the south face of the peak. Leading the party to the summit, Bressler had to punch through a cornice that overhung the south face. After reaching the summit the four then descended via their ascent route, traveled eastward to a pass between the Matthes Glacier and the Vaughan Lewis Glacier, and thence northwest to return to Camp 18 to complete the day's trek. At the time Lokey thought Mal Miller had called the summit Mount Beschel in honor of Roland Ernst Beschel, a lichenologist who had been a member of the JIRP in 1966 and who had died in January 1971. The party held a remembrance for Beschel on the summit.

In 1990 Dee Molenaar published a map of the Juneau Icefield that labeled the peak as Mount Herrigstad in honor of Irving Herrigstad, a radio operator for the JIRP.

The summit elevation of the peak was depicted on the 1960 USGS *Juneau (D-1)* quadrangle as being between 7100 and 7200 feet and as between 7000 and 7040 feet on the 2017 USGS *Juneau D-1 SW* map. Some of the apparent elevation discrepancy might be attributed to deglaciation in the intervening 57 years as a result of the changing climate. In 2018 the JIRP conducted a survey to determine the summit elevation.

During an unusual two-week period of clear weather in late July 2018, some 45 members of the JIRP skied up to the col on the north ridge of the peak as part of a five-day surveying and climbing effort that began at Camp 18. At the col they roped up, donned crampons, and began to hike up the north ridge to the summit. Eight to ten people climbed it each day of the five-day onslaught that occurred from July 26 to July 30. Scott McGee, a JIRP research faculty member on the ascent, described the north ridge as mild-to-moderate snow slopes interspersed with flatter areas and hidden crevasses. McGee termed the climb "easy" and stated that it took six to seven hours round-trip from Camp 18. On July 29 the JIRP party surveyed the summit elevation and found it to be 7057 feet.

On January 12, 2019, McGee submitted an application to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to officially name the peak Sunstorm Peak in reference to the weather phenomenon encountered during their 2018 ascent. On February 11 upon learning of McGee's proposal, I emailed him to point out that a name for the peak had been published in the 1970 AAJ. McGee contacted Lokey to confirm that they had indeed climbed the same peak, and by February 13 had subsequently retracted his proposal. On February 15, McGee submitted an application to the BGN to officially name the peak Gorgon Spire. On June 26, the MCA's Geographic Names Committee endorsed the second proposal. At its November 14, 2019, meeting, the BGN's Domestic Names Committee unanimously approved the application to name

Gorgon Spire, thereby making it the official name of the peak.

Over the span of a couple days in the summer of 2019, two JIRP parties, each comprising four or five people, climbed the north ridge of Gorgon Spire.

In the summer of 2021, a group of about 20 JIRP staff and students climbed the north ridge of Gorgon Spire.

The information in this column came from Joel E. Fisher's, Weldon F. Heald's, and Mal Miller's report titled "American Alpine Club Research Fund, 1946," which was published on pages 328 through 343 of the 1947 AAJ; from Mal Miller's report titled "Juneau Icefield," which appeared on pages 116 and 117 of the 1970 AAJ; from Henderson's report titled "Summary 1969," which appeared on pages 206 through 209 of the 1970 AJ; from Molenaar's 1990 *Pictorial Landform Map, Glacier Bay, Juneau Icefield Region and the Glacierized Ranges of Alaska-Northwestern Canada*; from Calvin J. Heusser's 2007 [Juneau Icefield Research Project \(1949-1958\): A Retrospective](#); from the February 8, 2019, proposed Geographic Name Report for Sunstorm Peak prepared by Joan Antonson and McGee; from the May 23, 2019, proposed Geographic Name Report for Gorgon Spire prepared by Antonson and McGee; from Nolin Ainsworth's article titled "'Dreadful' mountain on Juneau Icefield gets official name proposal," which appeared in the May 31, 2019, issue of the *Juneau Empire*; from Jacob Resneck's June 7, 2019, article titled "Juneau icefield researchers resurrect 'Gorgon Spire' – a name nearly lost in obscurity," which had been posted on the Alaska Public Media website at <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2019/06/07/juneau-icefield-researchers-resurrect-gorgon-spire-a-name-nearly-lost-in-obscurity/>; from the minutes of the DNC's November 14, 2019, meeting; and from my correspondence with Antonson, Bressler, Lokey, and McGee.



*Juneau Icefield Research Program party cramponing up the north ridge of Gorgon Spire on July 27, 2018.*



# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2021, at 6:30-8:00 p.m., conducted online via Zoom

## Roll Call

Mike Meyers (President) - Present  
Nathan Pooler (Vice-President) - Absent  
Curtis Townsend (Secretary) - Present  
Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Present  
Tom Meacham (Director) - Present  
Heather Johnson (Director) - Present  
Andy Kubic (Director) - Present  
Luke Konarzewski (Director) - Absent  
Brenden Lee (Director) - Present  
Josh Pickle (Director) - Absent

**Scribe:** Curtis Townsend

## Committee Reports

### President (Mike Meyers)

- Gerrit Verbeek's rappelling class went well
- Tiered membership payments Board approved. Members will vote on September 1st.
- Vicky Ho's mug is ready to be presented
- President, Treasurer, 3 Directors up for elections.
- David Roberts passed away (Honorary MCA member), message to be in the Scree.

### Vice President (Nathan Pooler)

- Nathan to do some outreach on Facebook to educate folks on hut usage
- September 1st meeting will be online and have 5 calendar photographers to speak
- October 6th meeting will hopefully be Chad Hults on the Muldrow Glacier.
- November 3rd meeting will be Andrew Holman
- December- what venue for the annual party?

### Secretary (Curtis Townsend)

- BP Energy Center is closed through October 4, 2021

### Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- 2022 Budget/ Draft to the Scree by October/November to be voted in January.

### Liability Committee (Tom Meacham)

- Nothing to report.

### Awards Committee (Tom Meacham, Charlie Sink, Max Neale)

- Nothing to report.

### the Scree (Gerrit Verbeek, Dawn Munroe)

- Nothing to report.

### Trips Committee

- Jayme Mack is organizing IceFest for September 17 - 19
- Serenity Falls Icefest normally happens in February, we decided to consider this.

### Training Committee

- Nothing to report.

### Huts Committee (Jonathan Rupp Strong, Greg Bragiel, Cory Hinds, Vicky Lytle)

- Bomber remodel to happen 8/30/2021 - 9/9/2021. Windows will not be delivered in time.

### Mentorship (Lila Hobbs, Katherine Cooper)

- Nothing to report.

### Communications Committee (Andy Kubic, Heather Johnson)

- Active memberships can't be transferred directly to the new website, Board is discussing options
- Discuss moving membership to the new website
- Review the description for the Holden Hut to be included on the new website.

### Calendar Committee (Vicky Ho, Lila Hobbs, Heather Johnson, Mike Meyers)

- Heather Johnson: 5 photo contest winners will present at September general meeting. Heather also has a receipt from Woobox to submit for reimbursement.
- 2022 Calendar photos have been loaded to the MCA Board Google Drive (photos folder).

## Date and Location of next Meeting

- General Meeting September 1, 2021 at 6:30pm via Zoom.
- Next Board Meeting on September 29, 2021 from 6:30-8:00 pm.

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Mike Meyers	<a href="mailto:president@mtnclubak.org">president@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 1 (term expires in 2021)	Andy Kubic	<a href="mailto:andy.kubic@gmail.com">andy.kubic@gmail.com</a>
Vice-President	Nathan Pooler	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org">vicepresident@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 2 (term expires in 2021)	Heather Johnson	<a href="mailto:hjohnson2211@gmail.com">hjohnson2211@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Curtis Townsend	<a href="mailto:secretary@mtnclubak.org">secretary@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 3 (term expires in 2021)	Tom Meacham	<a href="mailto:tmeacham@gci.net">tmeacham@gci.net</a>
Treasurer	Katherine Cooper	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mtnclubak.org">treasurer@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 4 (term expires in 2022)	Luke Konarzewski	<a href="mailto:lukekonarzewski96@gmail.com">lukekonarzewski96@gmail.com</a>
			Director 5 (term expires in 2022)	Brendan Lee	<a href="mailto:brendanlee718@yahoo.com">brendanlee718@yahoo.com</a>
			Director 6 (term expires in 2022)	Josh Pickle	<a href="mailto:joshuampickle@gmail.com">joshuampickle@gmail.com</a>

Annual membership dues: Basic ("Dirtbag") \$20, Single \$30, Family \$40

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@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.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). Material should be submitted by the 11th 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@mtnclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.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.

Mailing list/database entry: Katherine Cooper — 209-253-8489 — [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org)

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Vacant—[training@mtnclubak.org](mailto:training@mtnclubak.org)

Mentorship: Katherine Cooper and Lila Hobbs—[mentorship@mtnclubak.org](mailto:mentorship@mtnclubak.org)

Huts: Greg Bragiel—350-5146 or [huts@mtnclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtnclubak.org)

Calendar: In transition

Librarian: Gwen Higgins—[library@mtnclubak.org](mailto:library@mtnclubak.org)

*Scree* Editor: Gerrit Verbeek — [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com) assisted by Dawn Munroe (350-5121 or [dawn.talbott@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn.talbott@yahoo.com))

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

Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.io/g/MCAK>.

*Abbey Collins taking a post-bushwhack rest on the start of The Watchman's north ridge.  
Photo by Andrew Holman*

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