

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

November 2006  
Volume 49 Number 11

'An alpine partnership is probably  
one of the most challenging things  
in the world'

Steve House

Alaska & Canada top 22  
12 Chugach 5s in 24 hours  
Begich and Maynard peaks  
Pepper and Salt peaks  
More...

Monthly Meeting Wednesday, November 15th @ 7:30 PM  
Program: To be announced.

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

*"To maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering"*

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

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

**Cover photo:** Paul Barry and Dave Hart have shared 12 years and 22 expeditions to get to the top of the 22 highest peaks in Alaska and Canada. On the cover, they are on Broad Peak in Pakistan with K2 in the background.

**Article Submission:** Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can attach a word processing document to an email but please do not submit material in the body of an email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

November 02 Full Moon Hike to Blacktail Rocks

This Class B trip is the first (pre) full moon hike of the winter and we will hike up Mt. Baldy and follow the ridgeline to the base of Black Tail Rocks, about 7 miles roundtrip. Bring appropriate gear and clothing for the weather and snow conditions, including snowshoes, ice axe and crampons if necessary. To sign up or get more information, contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979, 248-2067 or via e-mail: [hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

November 04 Indian Creek Pass

Class B. 12 miles, 2,200 feet of elevation gain, all on a trail. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader Steve Gruhn, [steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com) 344-1219 (h)

November 11 Winner Creek Gorge

Class A. 5 miles, 400 feet of elevation gain, all on a trail. Bring leather gloves for pulling the tram. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader Steve Gruhn, [steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com](mailto:steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com) 344-1219 (h)

November 12 Basher Rd Loop hike

Class A, 5-6 mile loop from the Basher Rd trailhead over to the Prospect Heights area trails and back. Well behaved dogs are welcome.

Please bring a leash and gear/clothing appropriate for the weather. For details and to sign up contact trip leader Margie Goodman at [alaskamarge@gci.net](mailto:alaskamarge@gci.net) or 952-5492

November 12 Mt. Gordon Lyon loop

Ski tour or hike, depending on conditions, Mt. Gordon Lyon loop. Class B; 2,000 elevation gain. Allow for a full day. Required equipment: ice axe, avy gear (beacon, shovel, probe), skis and skins (or snow shoes welcome.) Well behaved dogs okay. Leader: Annette Iverson, 727-2645.

November 18 The Dome

Class B, 8 miles round trip with about 2000ft elevation gain with a few short but steep areas. Well behaved dogs are welcome. Please bring a leash and gear/clothing appropriate for the weather. For details and to sign up contact trip leader Margie Goodman at [alaskamarge@gci.net](mailto:alaskamarge@gci.net) or 952-5492

November 19 Turnagain Arm Trail

Class B. 9 miles. Hike from Potter House to Windy Point. Only if there is a lot of snow will we need snowshoes. Requires spotting cars. Contact Willy 561-7900, [mcak@gci.net](mailto:mcak@gci.net).

**November 23 – 26, Bomber Traverse on Skis**

This four day trip is a classic winter ski tour through the Talkeetna range. We will visit two club huts and one private hut during our three night tour. Class D. Contact the trip leader at [seanbolender@gmail.com](mailto:seanbolender@gmail.com) with questions

**November 24 – 26 Lane Hut or Powder Hut**

Class C, elevation gain 2,100 feet, 12+ miles.  
Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

**December 02 Full Moon Hike to Wolverine**

The December (pre) full moon hike is a Class C trip to Wolverine Peak, about 12 miles roundtrip. Bring appropriate gear and clothing for the weather and snow conditions, including snowshoes, crampons and ice axe if necessary. Contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979, 248-2067 or via e-mail: [hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

**December 16 Ski and Tree Decorating Trip**

Mark your calendars to attend the festive and frivolity-filled annual backcountry ski trip to Williwaw Lakes with a stop along the trail to decorate a tree with Christmas ornaments! Please bring ornaments that are not fragile to hang on the tree. (I remove them after New Year's Eve.) This is a Class B trip that requires backcountry skiing skills on a fairly easy trail. Bring lunch, water, smiles, a cheerful willingness to sing Christmas carols and appropriate clothing for the weather. Meet at the Glen Alps parking lot at 10:15 a.m. Contact Amy Murphy at 338-3979, 248-2067 or via e-mail: [hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com)

**December 16 End-of-Month Traverse:**

Middle Fork Canyon Loop Class B. 9 miles. Ski

from Prospect Hts. past Middle Fork trail to Glen Alps and then back down to Prospect Hts. If there is not enough snow, we will do an alternate trip. Leader: Willy Hersman, [mcak@gci.net](mailto:mcak@gci.net)

**January 27-28 Lane hut or Powder hut**

Class C, elevation gain 2,100 feet, 12+ miles.  
Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

**February 16 - 18**

Women's Ice Climbing Retreat, Women Only Event!! Come explore the ice at Echo Bend while climbing with other women. All abilities welcome. Will spend the evenings around the wood stove in the Rapids Camp Yurt swapping stories, and hike to the climbs. Some camping available. Limited to 6 students. Contact Jayme Dixon, [jaymelmack@hotmail.com](mailto:jaymelmack@hotmail.com), or Carlene Van Tol, [cvantol\\_1@hotmail.com](mailto:cvantol_1@hotmail.com)

**February 24 – 25 Indian to Arctic**

Class D, elevation gain 1,800 ft, 21 miles.  
Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

**March 1 – 5 Resurrection Trail**

Class D, elevation gain 3,100 feet.  
Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

**March 25 – 31 Bomber Traverse**

Glacier travel, Elevation gain 6,100 feet Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

**April 14 – 15 Eklutna Traverse training weekend**

Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

**April 29 – May 5 Eklutna Traverse**

Glacier Travel, elevation gain 6,000, 30+ miles.  
Leader: Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

## MCA members deployed to Iraq



**Nick Gleim on Temptation – Photo by Greg Bragiel**

Nick Gleim [koalagi@hotmail.com](mailto:koalagi@hotmail.com)  
Jesse Lind [Jesse.Lind@gmail.com](mailto:Jesse.Lind@gmail.com)

While we get to go out and play, let's not forget these guys who have to go out and do some heavy lifting. When you get a chance, drop them a note, send them some pictures. You can imagine how much you would like to hear what is happening back home. It can mean a lot.

Here is hoping for their safe return to their family of choice. Thanks for your service guys.

# Roof of the Arctic: Reflections on Climbing the 22 Highest Peaks in Alaska & Canada

By Dave Hart

It was May 1994 and I had just returned from climbing Mt. Hunter's West Ridge. I still had some vacation time saved and the summer was young; I wanted another trip. I then met Paul Barry and we immediately agreed to climb Mt. Bona (16,500') two weeks later. Twelve years and 22 shared expeditions later, Paul and I would stand atop Mt. Walsh (14,787') in the Canadian St. Elias range on June 3, 2006, completing our goal of climbing the highest 22 peaks in the combined Alaska/Canada region. We of course didn't set out with such an

audacious plan; we just enjoyed climbing big remote peaks with good friends. After a half-dozen seasons climbing together Paul and I had managed to sneak up a majority of the highest peaks in the North American arctic. It occurred to us that if our success continued, we'd run out of big peaks to climb, as crazy as that sounded. This was no small task as these peaks range from 14,000' to 20,000' and are all heavily glaciated, arctic and inhospitable mountains each requiring substantial time, effort, expense and luck to climb

Rank	Height	Name	Location	Range	Year <sup>1</sup> Dave Hart	Year <sup>1</sup> Paul Barry
1	20,320 ft	Denali <sup>2</sup>	Alaska	Alaska	'92	('99, '00), '01, '04
2	19,540 ft	Logan	Canada	St. Elias	'98	'98
3	18,008 ft	St. Elias	AK/Canada	St. Elias	'96	'96
4	17,400 ft	Foraker	Alaska	Alaska	'95	'95
5	17,150 ft	Lucania	Canada	St. Elias	'00	'00
6	17,130 ft	King	Canada	St. Elias	('01, '02, '03), '04	('01, '02, '03), '04
7	16,625 ft	Steele	Canada	St. Elias	'00	'00
8	16,500 ft	Bona	Alaska	St. Elias	'94	'94
9	16,390 ft	Blackburn	Alaska	Wrangell	'95	'95
10	16,237 ft	Sanford <sup>2</sup>	Alaska	Wrangell	('93), '97	'94
11	15,875 ft	Wood	Canada	St. Elias	'00, ('05), '06	('05), '06
12	15,840 ft	Vancouver	Canada	St. Elias	'03	'03
	15,700 ft	Good Neighbor <sup>3</sup>	AK/Canada	St. Elias	'03	'03
13	15,638 ft	Churchill	Alaska	St. Elias	'97	'97
14	15,575 ft	Slaggard	Canada	St. Elias	'99	'99
15	15,405 ft	Macaulay	Canada	St. Elias	'99, '00	'99
16	15,300 ft	Fairweather	AK/Canada	Fairweather	'04	'04
17	15,015 ft	Hubbard	AK/Canada	St. Elias	'02	'02
18	14,831 ft	Bear	Alaska	St. Elias	'98	'98
19	14,787 ft	Walsh	Canada	St. Elias	'06	'06
20	14,573 ft	Hunter <sup>2</sup>	Alaska	Alaska	'94	'00
21	14,565 ft	Alverstone	AK/Canada	St. Elias	'02	'02
22	14,470 ft	University	Alaska	St. Elias	'01	'01
28	13,905 ft	Kennedy <sup>4</sup>	Canada	St. Elias	'02	'02
30	13,845 ft	Regal <sup>4</sup>	Alaska	Wrangell	'99	<sup>5</sup>

Footnote<sup>1</sup>: Years in parentheses indicate unsuccessful attempts.

Footnote<sup>2</sup>: Denali, Sanford and Hunter were climbed with other partners.

Footnote<sup>3</sup>: Good Neighbor is a sub-peak of Vancouver; though not included as a separate peak.

Footnote<sup>4</sup>: Kennedy and Regal are included as progress towards the top 30 peaks.

Footnote<sup>5</sup>: Paul has not climbed Regal.

A combined 300 pounds of camping, climbing and survival gear is typical for a 2-week, 2-person expedition to cope with the sub-zero temperatures where snowfall is measured in feet per day, and the closest person or road is 50+ impassable miles away. Still, we set our sights on the 20 tallest peaks (and ultimately 22) in Alaska and Canada. Amazingly, we ended up climbing all but three of these 22 peaks together, the exceptions being Denali, Sanford and Hunter which we climbed prior to our first trip together on Mt. Bona. Along the way, we also participated in a handful of Himalayan, South American and other international expeditions, culminating with a successful 2-month private expedition to the 12<sup>th</sup> highest peak on earth together in 2001- Pakistan's Broad Peak 26,400'.

Of the 22 peaks, 9 are fully in Alaska, 9 are fully in Canada and 4 peaks straddle the border. The resulting list includes the 13 tallest peaks in each of Canada and Alaska. Over the years, we've managed to share our adventures and memories with great partners. Counting our combined 31 joint and independent expeditions needed to reach our goal, we've shared our experiences with more than 40 partners throughout over 350 days of mountaineering each. Interestingly, most of our partners joined us for only one or two trips, a handful joined three trips and only one soul returned for four trips with us. As we worked our

way down to the more obscure peaks, we found it increasingly difficult to enlist partners. In fact, many of our later expeditions ended up being just Paul and me. As we found, there's no trust stronger than that developed year after year between lone partners in the middle of a 24-hour summit day in the remote St. Elias Mountains.

"What's next?" some ask. The great thing about lists like this is they have no lower bound. We still have a lifetime of mountain adventures in front of us. The next obvious goal is completing the highest 30 peaks, which with six peaks remaining is likely five or more years distant, if things go well. What about when we're no longer able or willing to accept the inherent risks associated with arctic mountaineering, including frostbite, altitude, edema, avalanches and crevasses? With all the terrain we have flown over, skied across and seen from our high points, we've fantasized over countless glacier traverses - many already done, some not. The North American arctic, and especially the Wrangell/St. Elias mountains, offers a lifetime of wilderness adventures from the rigors of high altitude mountaineering and the relative comforts of lower altitude mountaineering, to the decadence of non-technical glacier ski traverses. This wonderful region truly warrants its World Heritage Site designation as one of the marvels of the world.



## **Nest Peak (5030')** by Greg Higgins

August 30, 2006, I snuck up the Penguin Creek Trail, eventually scrambling up the steep brush-covered slopes to the left of the creek when the trail ran out. The operative word is "snuck" since I was trudging on the fresh tracks and scat of a rather large bear. He had obviously been up on the slopes as his scat was full of crowberries. On my way out his tracks led down so we had gratefully shared the trail at different times.

Higher up I was surprised to see at least 10 goats. The youngsters were quite cute, like large Q-Tip ends with legs. One old billy let me get quite close as I traversed the ridge that leads toward Bird Peak. The ridge deteriorates before you reach Nest Peak so you are forced to traverse on the right side. Once I got on the ridge, the wind knocked me over several times as powerful gusts drove hail,

rain, and then snow over Bird Peak. It was not a day for relaxing and enjoying the views.

The summit register was a recessed ABS pipe, but it had been placed with the screw top lid up. This allowed water to sit on top, and then eventually leak into the inside. The only legible entry was Ross Noffsinger and Katmai on May 21, 2004. There was one other sheet of paper with at least one entry that was too wet and faded to read. The only name I think I could see on it was Az Sellers. Their sheet correctly listed this as Peak 5030.

Coming out the Bird Creek part of the trail late in the afternoon, I ran into a tour group returning from a four-wheeler trip up that valley. There were also two horsemen just returning from a trip to scout out hunting possibilities. I was surprised at how busy this trail was, given the lack of any activity up Penguin Creek. Bird Peak could be approached by my route, but the step from the summit of Nest Peak to Bird Peak is a healthy one, and does not look like it would be for the faint of heart.

# The Chugach Crippler

## Running the 12 highest summits in the Chugach Front in a day

By Joe Stock

On July 9-10, 2006, Trond Jensen and I completed the first one-day linkup of the 12 peaks over 5,000 feet in the Chugach Front. The Chugach Front are the mountains that rise above Anchorage and are divided by Ship Creek and Indian Creek. Shawn Lyons of Anchorage first completed the traverse in 1990 in 34 hours using a similar route. Our goal was under 24 hours.

We left the Rabbit Creek trailhead at four a.m. with trekking poles, light running packs and our fingers crossed for the fog to lift. After spending an hour lost in the miasma, we found South Suicide and were underway. The most technical section of the traverse, from North Suicide toward Powerline Pass, was dripping with fog and reduced us to crawling above the 200-foot cliffs. By Avalanche Peak, the fog broke and showed us a Spectre of the Brocken—our shadow's cast on the clouds below and a rainbow encircles our heads.

Andrew McCarthy and my beautiful wife Cathy met us on the summit of The Ramp with sandwiches and cheers. After ten hours Trond and I reached O'Malley, the sixth summit and our halfway marker. Over the next ten hours we tagged five more summits and climbed to the summit of Temptation. An 11 p.m. sunset and grinding knees greeted our final summit. Hiking out the bear-infested Snowhawk valley took 3 ½ hours of thrashing

through mud and grass. We made it to the parking lot in 23 hours 13 minutes. Our watches read 19,800 vertical feet. The whole traverse is about 33 miles.

If you're fit, and know the Chugach Front, then beating our time shouldn't be hard. Go give it a shot and let us know.

The Highest Peaks in the Chugach Front—as climbed by Joe Stock and Trond Jensen. The Chugach Front includes the peaks isolated by Ship Creek and Indian Creek.

South Suicide Peak	5,005'
North Suicide Peak	5,065'
Avalanche Mountain	5,050'
The Ramp	5,240'
Hidden Peak	5,105'
O'Malley Peak	5,150'
Mount Williwaw	5,445'
Koktoya Peak	5,148'
East Tanaina Peak	5,358'
West Tanaina Peak	5,200'
Tikishla Peak	5,230'
Temptation Peak	5,383'



# Maynard Mountain and Begich Peak

## Chugach Mountains by Steve Gruhn

The relatively new bridge across Portage Creek near the mouth of Portage Lake has opened up access not only to Whittier, but also to Bear Valley and Placer Creek. I have long had an interest in the Bear Valley area, having first ventured there in the winter during the early 1990s, but the new road has opened up the area to travel when Portage Lake is not frozen.

removed. We continued following goat tracks up the ridge and at one point noticed a snow bridge over a crevasse. Willy marveled at how the goat tracks swerved sharply to avoid the hidden crevasse. It seems that animals have a sixth sense about them sometimes.

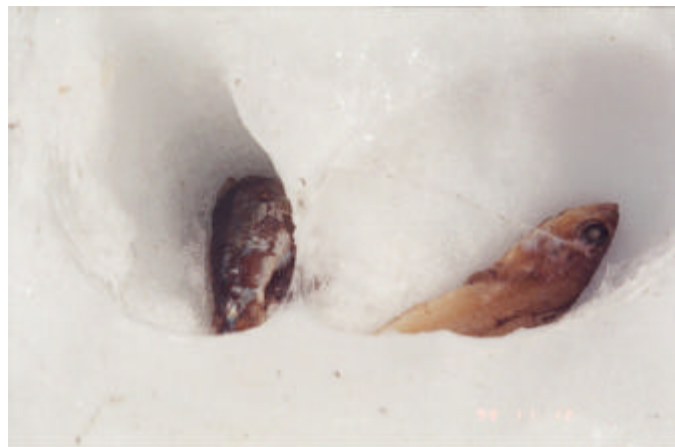


Ridge to Begich peak – Mark Kimerer photo

On May 22, 2004, Kneely Taylor, Willy Hersman, and I found ourselves climbing the south ridge of Maynard Mountain (after having a rude encounter with the Gestapo for the Anton Anderson Tunnel). Maynard Mountain was named for Robert L. Maynard, a U.S. Army helicopter pilot who was killed in April 1964 while helping victims of the March 27 earthquake. (Oddly enough, Anton Anderson had more than a tunnel named after him. Mount Rumble was first unofficially named Mount Anton Anderson, after the man who served as mayor of Anchorage from 1956 to 1958).

The high clouds prevented us from getting too warm on the snow climb. We had ventured up old avalanche debris that terminated at the valley floor south of the western portal of the Anton Anderson Tunnel. Easy climbing brought us to the ridge crest and we hiked northwesterly toward the summit (elevation 4140 feet). We saw the tower that Tim Kelley mentioned in the October 1991 Scree. The batteries that he described appeared to have been

We arrived at the summit uneventfully, ate lunch, and headed down with Willy in the lead. We had wonderful views of a cruise ship docked at Whittier and of the Portage Glacier south of Portage Pass. After we got off the glacier, we unroped. Willy continued in the lead, but at one point he stopped and burst out laughing. “You’re never going to believe this,” he called out. “Guess what I found.” “A light bulb,” came Kneely’s reply. This brought



Snow Hooligan – Steve Gruhn photo



**Kneely and Willy, Maynard Mountain**  
**Photo by Steve Gruhn**

even more laughter. I declined to guess. Kneely and I descended to Willy to see that he had found two hooligan that evidently a raven had stashed in the snow, some 2600 feet above the ocean. These fish were certainly far removed from their natural environment. The rest of the trip to the car was uneventful, but we frequently laughed at the oddity of finding fish on the mountain and the oddity of expecting a light bulb in their place.

With fond memories of such a trip, Kneely and I would return to Bear Valley. In mid-April 1995 we attempted to climb the south ridge of Begich Peak, but we got a late start and rotten snow conditions, combined with general lassitude, caused us to turn around short of the summit. The Placer Creek area, though, had definitely sparked a flame in me.

So, with my smoldering enthusiasm for the area, I decided to lead a Mountaineering Club trip to Begich Peak this year. I knew we would have to have an early start to ensure that the snow would be firm enough for travel. I set the date for May 13, 2006, figuring the weather and snow conditions would be better in May than they had been the previous April. I was not disappointed.

Tim Harper, Mark Kimerer, Matt Nedom, John Recktenwald, and I met at the Huffman Road Cams at 5 a.m. and Tim drove us to the parking lot on the north side of Portage Lake. We left the vehicles at 6:30 a.m., crossed the road bridge over Placer Creek, and began bushwhacking up the east-facing slopes of the south ridge of Begich Peak. Getting

through the willows and alders was a royal pain, but once in the hemlock forest, the traveling was really quite pleasant. Breaking out of the forest onto snow, we headed for a good lunch spot on the ridge. John was in training for an upcoming climb of Mount McKinley, so we graciously permitted him to break trail for the rest of us, thereby ensuring his training did not suffer on this lowly peak (elevation 4623 feet). The snow was just beginning to soften by the time we reached it and we were thankful for the early start. We followed several goats up the south ridge toward the summit. The climbing was rather easy and

by 12:30 we were on the corniced summit, admiring views of Turnagain Arm, the Tordrillo Mountains, Boggs Peak, Isthmus Peak, Prince William Sound, and Esther Island.



**Snowy Begich peak center, ridge route on the right**  
**Mark Kimerer photo**

The sun had softened the snow by the time we were ready to descend, making for a wonderful series of glissades. I had never enjoyed such glissades; there were countless glissades, some only 20 feet, others hundreds of feet. We whooped and hollered and enjoyed the gorgeous day as we frolicked in the snow. Little wonder, I then understood, why the peak had been called Glissade Peak before being renamed in honor of U.S. Representative Nick Begich, whose plane went missing while flying from Anchorage to Juneau on October 16, 1972. Representative Begich was the father of Anchorage's current mayor. Also in the plane was U.S. Speaker of the House of Representative Hale Boggs, from Louisiana, for whom Boggs Peak was later named.





Blue skies in Portage! Road to Whittier, Portage Lake, Carpathian (center) - Mark Kimerer photo

We returned to the parking lot, traveling across the railroad bridge over Placer Creek (there was still auto traffic going through the Anton Anderson Tunnel, so we knew no trains were scheduled). There we sat in the sunshine and admired our glissade tracks for more than an hour. I've spent a lot of time in the Chugach Mountains and this trip certainly rated among the best – the weather was fabulous, the people were joyous, and the phenomenal glissades were memorable.

Merely thinking of the trip while writing this article nearly five months after the trip, the memories have caused a smile to spread across my face. The smoldering enthusiasm has grown to a conflagration. Anyone up for Boggs Peak next May?



## Eklutna Lake Ridge Walk (Pepper and Salt peaks)

by Steve Gruhn

On Saturday, April 15, 2006, I started at 7 a.m. from the Eklutna Lake trailhead and hiked up the Twin Peaks Trail, an old roadbed, to the first bench at an elevation of about 2,000 feet. The temperature was in the teens and the skies were clear. It looked like it would be a good day. I left the old roadbed at the bench and followed a footpath up the southwest spur of Pepper Peak (el. 5423 ± 23, Sec. 33, T16N, R2E, S.M.). There was only patchy snow below about 3200 feet and what snow existed had a firm crust in the morning before the sunshine reached it. Consequently, I was making pretty good time. I followed a set of boot tracks toward the summit. By 9:30 I was on the summit of Pepper Peak. There was a cairn, but no register, on the summit. I had previously climbed this peak in May 1988, but had not ventured to the east. A strong north breeze and a desire to visit some new country kept me from lingering.

I headed southeast down the ridge toward Point 5089. The snow on the ridge no longer had a southern exposure and, therefore, the crust that had allowed me to move quickly on the ascent had vanished and my pace slowed a bit. The boot tracks stopped at the saddle, but once on top of Point 5089, I was able to follow sheep tracks on the south side of the ridge toward Salt Peak (el. 5455, Sec. 35, T16N, R2E, S.M.). The views into both the

Goat Creek drainage and the Yuditnu Creek drainage were marvelous. The hike to the summit was easy, but the descent down the southeast ridge was a little exposed.

I continued eastward on the ridge to Peak 5285 (Sec. 1, T15N, R2E, S.M.). By now the wind was building and blowing snow so that at some times visibility was limited – both by the particles in the air and by the ice pellets that stung my face like a shotgun blast. I put on my goggles. I found that, due to the strong, cold wind, I was no longer in danger of sweating and having the goggles fog. I moved quickly up to the summit of Peak 5285 and continued down the east side without stopping. It was about 2 p.m. by now and I still had a long way to go.

I followed the ridge to the east, at times venturing to the south side, a couple hundred feet below the crest. I hiked up the south spur of Point 5385, thinking I was further along the ridge than I was. After poking around on the north spur of Point 5385, I realized that I was not on my desired peak, Peak 5450 (el. 5450 ± 50, Sec. 32, T16N, R3E, S.M.).

I had set out with Peak 5450 as my goal because there was no previous mention of it in the Scree,

although Tim Kelley's trip report in the November 1991 Scree made me suspect that it might have been climbed previously. Tim's article included a map showing his route as being to the south of Peak 5450, but Tim is a stickler for getting to the highest point and his plotted route could have been a generalization. From Point 5385, Peak 5450 is directly in line with Yudikench Peak (el. 5732, Secs. 4 and 5, T15N, R3E, S.M.) and it was very easy to mistake for a part of the west ridge of the higher peak.

I continued on to Peak 5450 and, from the summit, the gap between it and Yudikench Peak was about 500 feet below me and quite obvious. Satisfied that I had reached my goal, my thoughts turned to an exit strategy. It was about 4:30 p.m. I had originally planned to hike over Yudikench Peak and down Sdaylent Creek and Bold Creek to the Bold Ridge Overlook Trail. The cold wind, the setting sun, and the prospect of postholing up and down more than a thousand feet of elevation caused me to change my mind. The descent to Yuditnu Creek and the hike out that drainage started looking pretty attractive.

So, I descended the south gully of Peak 5450 through a flock of somewhat surprised sheep and traveled southwest along the north bank of Yuditnu Creek. The descent was relatively easy. As soon as I reached the valley floor at about 3400 feet, though, I began to posthole in the sun-softened snow. I would sink to my waist with nearly every step. It was 5 p.m. by now and I could tell that things were going to get pretty grim. I had about 4 miles to hike out and the postholing had greatly slowed my pace. I raced forward as fast as I could

while I still had daylight. But I eventually lost that race. I tried to follow the creek, but at times I was pushed from one side to the other. The creek was open in the lower reaches of the valley and I wasn't really interested in adding wet feet to my circumstances. Exhausted by the postholing, I unwisely tried to take a shortcut where Yuditnu Creek turned to the south. Thinking it would save time and distance, I tried to continue to the southwest. This might have been a shorter distance, but postholing around in a dark forest is rarely considered a timesaving idea. After staggering around in the trees for far longer than I had hoped, I finally emerged on the Eklutna Lakeside Trail. It was just before midnight and I was still almost 3 miles from the trailhead.

I sat down, took off my gaiters, and ate a granola bar and drank some water. I had not been eating or drinking because I wanted to save time when it mattered. Now that I was on the trail I was home free and I feasted. A granola bar and a bottle of water never tasted so good. I trudged out to the trailhead at 1 a.m. Easter morning. There would be no Easter sunrise service in my schedule this year.

Once rested, I contacted Tim Kelley and asked if he had climbed Peak 5450 in 1991. He said that he had, indeed, hiked to the summit of Peak 5450 on September 22, 1991, but had omitted mention of it in his trip report published in the November 1991 Scree. The highest encircling contour line for Peak 5450 is very difficult to make out on the map because it is nearly obscured by the second "A" in "Matanuska" that denotes the southern boundary of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and it had been overlooked while preparing the trip report.



## Rock climbing Kalymnos, Greece

by Martin Ksok

During my trip through Greece I stopped for a few days on the island of Kalymnos, famous for its excellent rock climbs. Once in the village of Misouri I checked into my room, for \$18 a night I got a private bathroom, big bedroom, refrigerator, patio and a small kitchen overlooking the Aegean Sea. You can't beat that! The village itself consisted of about half a dozen hotels, drinking and eating establishments. I relied on the good will of fellow



climbers. I didn't bring any gear except for shoes and harness and my strategy was effective. At eight o'clock I left the hotel for the limestone cliffs, high above the village, along the way I came upon a four-person group of Italians riding their scooters towards climbing area. After a short conversation they invited me for a few rides up their rope. The



scenery was fantastic; we were standing under orange colored cliffs, overlooking white houses of the village perched above turquoise sea. To my surprise we were the only ones there. Cliffs were divided into separate sectors with names like Grande Grotta, Poets, Odyssey. The rock was a lot more brutal than what I was used to. My first time on limestone proved it was much different from smooth, forgiving granite. My fingers got torn on sharp pockets and ledges. Climbing ranged from less than vertical grades of 5.8 to overhanging 5.13 monsters. All routes had their name and French rating painted at the bottom, which caused quite an eyesore and didn't agree with the aesthetic values of the place. Unfortunately my skills only went up to the middle 10's on the Yosemite grade scale, but nevertheless I had plenty of fun tackling the well bolted problems.

To my surprise the Italians announced that it was their last day on the island, and after a few beers in a local climbers' watering hole run by a British guy, Steve, we exchanged phone numbers and wished each other good luck. The next day I went up towards the cliffs again, after wandering underneath a crag for some time, I met three climbers from the Czech Republic: Honza, Zdenek and his beautiful wife Renata. After a conversation in a mixture of Polish, English and Czech I was invited to join them. For the next few days we tackled Greek cliffs, beer and Ouzo at the local Café. Zdenek turned out as an impressive fifty year old, out drinking me every night and out climbing me the next day, an Eiger veteran with a positive outlook and a head full of climbing stories. Unfortunately my stay was running long and I still wanted to see more of the mainland, so with limestone torn finger skin and scraped knees I caught a ferry back to Athens.



The rock of Kalymnos proved to be a great climbing destination due to warm, calm weather, great views, lack of crowds and close proximity to the sleepy Mediterranean village. Because of a good bus system, getting around the island was easy and the local people proved nice and helpful despite the language barrier, a climber's paradise.

# Garden Wall – Glacier Nat’l Park, Montana

By Amy Murphy



The stunning Garden Wall hike in Montana’s Glacier National Park is rated as the premier hike in the park. After attending a conference in Whitefish, Montana, I took a few extra days off to go backpacking in Glacier and invited Ron Ramsey to go with me. We were there near the end of September so there wasn’t any problem getting backcountry reservations, but in the summer you have to make reservations well in advance. I have previously gone hiking through Glacier’s incredible fall colors at the end of September and eagerly anticipated seeing them again.

We learned that the scenic Going-to-the-Sun Highway was closed for the season up at Logan Pass due to recent snowstorms and the highway had been closed that morning until 6” of new snow could be plowed off the road and parking lot. Unfortunately the Garden Wall trail starts at Logan Pass and the area we planned to hike to had received a foot of snow.

That news caused some concern as we originally planned to park our rental car at Logan Pass and we were afraid the car might get snowed in. We planned to do a four-day trip ending at a different trailhead known as The Loop. The hikers’ shuttle buses weren’t running any more so we had planned to leave our car up at Logan Pass and hitch a ride

back up to the pass after completing our trip. Because it snowed in the higher elevations every day we were there we changed our plans and started a day later, hoping the weather would improve (it didn’t). And we parked at the lower-elevation Loop trailhead instead of up high at the pass.

We got permits to spend our first night at the Granite Park Chalet campground, which is about 8 miles in. The rangers told us the trails were well marked and easy to follow so

we shouldn’t have any problems finding the trail(s) if it only snowed 4” or 5”. (Ha!) On our second day we planned to hike another 12 miles up the Continental Divide Trail and sleep at Fifty Mountain campground. From there we would hike about eight miles to Flattop Campground and either spend the night or hike out another eight miles to the parking lot.



**The Garden Wall**

Our first day didn’t start off very promising. After parking our car we stood around in the rain awhile before some really nice young folks felt sorry for us

and picked us up. On our drive upwards the rain turned to sleet, then snow and the road became really slippery. After arriving at Logan Pass it was snowing so hard that the young folks offered us a ride back down if we didn't feel like hiking. We considered it briefly, but shouldered our backpacks and headed out, while numerous tourists stared in disbelief.

The trail is cut into the sides of some steep, sheer, daunting cliffs known as the Garden Wall, which form part of the peaks of the Continental Divide. I was a little leery as driving up the highway it doesn't look possible to safely hike through those sheer cliffs, especially in slippery, wet snow. But the trail is generally at least three feet wide, albeit with steep drop-offs on the other side. In some of the narrower sections, cable was installed to hold on to.

We hiked along the cliffs in the snowstorm wishing we could see the scenery, which is supposedly fantastic. The snow finally ceased after about an hour, as we started to ascend to the top of a pass. The warm sun felt great and allowed us to actually see some of the stupendous scenery surrounding us! Looking back we noticed some recent slides on the steep mountainsides, warning us to watch out for snow and rock slides as we journeyed farther into the backcountry.

After ascending the pass, the trail continued to skirt the steep cliffs and slopes of the Continental Divide. Unfortunately the clouds moved in and it commenced snowing again. The trail is heavily used and easy to find when it's not snow covered, but we didn't see any trail marker signs or cairns as we made our way to the Granite Park Chalet campground. We finally saw our first sign, letting us know the Chalet itself was .8 mile ahead.

During the summer folks stay at the Granite Park Chalet, but it is expensive and was already closed for the season. It was snowing heavily by the time we arrived at the Chalet and the wind was blowing fairly strong. We hung out on the front verandah for a while, out of the wind, contemplating setting our tent up right there. However, we decided to continue to the campground, about ½ mile away. We set up camp and turned in early as it continued snowing.

It snowed all night long and we kept knocking snow off the tent. We woke up to discover it had snowed so much that our tent was caving in and when we

looked outside we saw at least 7" of heavy snow and it was still snowing! Since we realized it would have snowed at least a foot up at the higher elevations of 50 Mountain (obscuring the not-so-well-marked trail) and one ranger warned us about one potentially dangerous section, we decided to pack up our gear and bail out.



Amy

It was about four miles down to our car and we dropped out of the snow (and into the rain) after less than an hour. It was a relief to return to the car and take off some of our damp gear! We checked in at the ranger station to let them know we came out early and they said that was a wise decision as backpackers have gotten lost in the snow up there. Some rangers had planned on camping at Granite Park that evening but canceled those plans after seeing all the snow.

I bought postcards highlighting some of the extremely beautiful area we hiked through but didn't get to see. It provides stimulation to return some day when the weather is better and we can hike up to Canada!

## Geographic names and Calendar notes

Matt Faust informs us that the name Tiehacker Mountain was made official by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names in 2002. Tiehacker Mountain is in the Kenai Mountains near the Bear Lake Glacier, South Fork of the Snow River, and Bear Lake. According to Matt's father, Harold Faust, long-time local resident Pat Williams, the daughter of L.V. Ray (for whom L V Ray Peak near Crescent Lake and Upper Trail Lake in the Kenai Mountains was named), worked with Senator Ted Stevens to make the name official. Tiehacker Mountain had been called South Andiron by Vin Hoeman in 1960 (see August 1986 Scree). A tiehacker is a nickname for a person who fashioned railroad ties from trees. Many tiehackers worked for the Alaska Railroad in the Moose Pass area in the early 1900s  
[http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/f?p=135:3:5536527109378425177::NO::P3\\_FID:1958447](http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/f?p=135:3:5536527109378425177::NO::P3_FID:1958447)

Steven C. Gruhn, P.E.

MCA 07 calendar sales will start at the Nov 18 general meeting. Get them while you can. We probably will have some at the December meeting but I cannot promise it. Other sales locations have yet to be decided depending on how fast they sell.

Stu

## Board Meeting Minutes

MCA Board Meeting Minutes - Sept. 13, 2006

In attendance: Hans Neidig, SaraEllen Hutchison, Greg Bragiel, Steve Parry, Sean Bolendar, Annette Iverson, Julie Perilla, Willy Hersman, Randy Howell, Steve Gruhn, and Jayme Dixon

Membership - Greg announced that Yukiko and Randy will be taking over the Membership committee as co-chairpersons.

Huts

-- Greg will be taking over Huts committee.  
-- Discussed what to do about the hut near Winner Creek built and used by Chugach Powder Guides. The huts was checked out by Greg and the board is

waiting for the results of the structural analysis to make a decision.

-- Discussed what to do about the Snowbird Hut. Motion for the club to not acquire the Hut. All in favor.

Paypal - Willy discussed concerns with Paypal, but said we should be able to have it up and working soon.

Ice Climbing Festival

-- Jayme Dixon and Steve Parry purchased Ropes and Crampons for use at the Ice Fest. The board approved a budget of about \$1700-1800 for the equipment.

-- The Mandatory Pre-meeting is Sept. 27th and the board members will arrive early to help out.

Church - Rental was raised from \$90 to \$100 a night. They also reminded us that alcohol is not permitted at meetings.

Parks - Discussion of Denali National Park's proposal to increase the climbing fee. The board decided to write a letter to the park opposing the increase, and to encourage members to make comments and send letters.

Hiking and Climbing - Jayme Dixon agreed to help Randy Howell out as co-chair. The committee has a list of the qualified trip leaders, but needs to classify them by the highest trip they are allowed to lead based on experience.

Elections - all officers need to find a replacement or nominate someone by the October meeting if they do not want to serve another term.

New Business

-- The board reviewed the list of instructors for the Ice climbing Festival.

-- The library at AMH is now organized.

-- The board reviewed a list of organizations that get sent a free Scree every month.

-- Greg Bragiel reviewed options for toilets at the huts.

Next Meeting October 4, 2006

## Adze

### For Sale

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

For Rent: Iridium Satellite Phone , solar charger and  
waterproof pelican case. \$2/min + \$10/day field time only.  
Discount for extended trips.  
Dave 244-1722, david.hart@pxd.com

For Sale: Alfa Mordre Extreme ski boot. Size men's ~11 (euro  
sizing). For very cold, dry conditions. Wool liner, 3-pin Vibram  
sole. Make offer.  
lisa\_ferber@yahoo.com

For Sale: "New" Fusion Ice Tool \$150  
Joe at 250-6053



Mt. Natazhat (13,435'). Harry Hunt & Dave Lucy  
during the first ascent of the North Ridge. April 1996. Photo by Dave Hart

## American Alpine Club

### Fall 2006

### Slide Show Series:

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2006 – Climbing in Patagonia by  
Charlie Sassara

Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2006 – Alaska Climbing and Skiing by  
Professional Photographer Tom Evans

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2006 – Climbing in the Wrangell & St. Elias Ranges by  
Dave Hart

All slide shows start at 6:30pm at the BP Energy Center  
Admission is Free!

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Steve Gruhn 344-1219  
Vice-President Sean Bolender 333-0213  
Secretary Julie Perilla 222-6939  
Treasurer Debbie Arens 688-4606

Board member Eric Teela 240-9693  
Board member Annette Iverson 222-0581  
Board member Randy Howell 346-4608  
Board member Steve Parry 248-8710  
Board member your name could be here

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

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

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

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

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

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant 243-1438  
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell – 346-4608, Jayme Dixon – 382-0212  
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008  
Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127  
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 346-2589  
Web: [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) (change your address here)  
Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoo.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoo.com)

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