

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

November 2013

Volume 56 Number 11



*It isn't the mountain ahead  
that wears you out; it's the  
grain of sand in your shoe.*

- Robert Service

### Contents

Peak 6940

The Citadel

Broken Tooth

Reality Peak

MOWLI Traverse Attempt

POM: Spectre Peak

Monthly meeting:

6:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 20

Program: Clint Helander will present on his ascent of Mount Hunter's Moonflower Buttress and descent down the West Ridge in 2013.



# 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 November 20 at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, Alaska.

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

## **Contents**

Peak 6940

The Citadel

Broken Tooth

Reality Peak

MOWLI Traverse Attempt

POM: Spectre Peak

## **Cover Photo**

Carrie Wang and Cory Hinds on Peak 6940 high above  
Glacier Creek in the Chugach Mountains.

Photo by Wayne Todd.

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## **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 25<sup>th</sup> 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. 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.

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## **Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, November 20, at 6:30 p.m.**

Program: Clint Helander will share stories and photos of his 2013 ascent of Mount Hunter via the Moonflower Buttress and the descent down the West Ridge.

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## **Club Trips this Winter and Spring**

If you are interested in leading or participating in club trips this winter or spring, please plan to come to the November meeting early - at 6:00 pm (rather than 6:30). We will do some brainstorming, meet other people interested in future trips, and put together a wish list of trips. If you are unable to attend, but want to be involved, contact Vicky Lytle ([victoria.lytle@gmail.com](mailto:victoria.lytle@gmail.com)). See you Wednesday.

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## **Climbing Note**

Ben Weiler emailed to report that Kai Cuerette and he had climbed Peak Number 1 (8268) in the Russell Glacier drainage of the Saint Elias Mountains. We look forward to a detailed report in an upcoming issue of the *Scree*.

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## **Hiking and Climbing Schedule**

⇒ **December 7: The Wedge (4660).** Contact Steve Gruhn at [scgruhn@gmail.com](mailto:scgruhn@gmail.com) or 344-1219 for details.

⇒ **December 21: Flattop Sleepout.** No leader.

Online? Click me!



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

## Peak 6940: Birds and Berries

*Text and photos by Wayne L. Todd*

Another successful MCA Ice Climbing Festival, which had additional members of swans flying overhead and overnighting on the lake, concludes. Four official MCA members climbed Mount Wickersham in 2008 after that festival, vowing to make another climb after every festival. After five years, we are finally taking our second jaunt up Glacier Creek. The original four of Carrie Wang, Cory Hinds, Richard Baranow, and I and Kaupo and Nene (the dogs), are joined by Galen Flint.

The Matanuska River crossing is as brisk as ever (ice cold, I'd say), especially when the water reaches crotch level. We wade in sneakers. The huskies get plenty of coaxing to persuade them across. Over

the ridge (eating the prolific blueberries) and across the beaver pond to Glacier Creek Valley we go, crossing Glacier Creek a few extra times this go around. Glacier Creek flows forcibly, and levels above the knee keep one focused. This year I experiment with Wiggy's Waders. They work well if you are sure the water stays below the tops,



*Wayne Todd, Richard Baranow, Carrie Wang, Galen Flint, and Cory Hinds (left to right) on a Glacier Creek gravel bar.*

though they get rather mucky from repeated silty boot insertions. Warm, dry feet and boots are worth the inconvenience (considerable suffering and whining was reported from the rest of the crew; the repeated crossings not allowing sufficient time to re-warm the toes).

We find a nice, level campsite before dark, partly as a respite from the whining about cold legs and feet. Yellow leaves still cling to their branches, adding nice color to the white-capped dark mountains and grey skies. Ravens are heard and glimpsed in the distance.

Cory tries various inventive fire-starting methods, and the plastic wrapper method succeeds, keeping the beasts away. Large bear tracks are common and we hope to avoid the close bear encounter of our previous trip.

An 8:30-a.m. start seems reasonable to allow a return before dark. Creek crossings and short bush forays eat some time, but we luck out and find a moose trail (there are quite a few of them) that travels up into our destination valley. This is the same valley we used to exit from Wickersham, but 'shwhacked out on that trip.

The über-abundant, and tasty, blueberries attempt to sway us from our climb but we only graze en route. The blueberry leaves have dropped, leaving only the berries, making them much more visible. A large flock of chickadees pirouettes around us. Richard and Galen decide to hike the nearby ridge

while Cory, Carrie and I continue the upvalley south-side traverse (Cory's good side; short right leg). Despite the slope angle, the tundra provides good purchase and minimizes slips. Mixed-plumage ptarmigan burst into flight from the ground.

With snowline approaching and still no views of surrounding mountain-tops, we decide to try Peak 6940 because of proximity and lower altitude. We hike up a creek ravine that segues from

water to snow. A thin rain crust tops deepening snow, making for loud travel as the myriad ice pieces from our trailbreaking bounce down slope (ice-crackers, like firecrackers). I stop to don gaiters and when almost ready to follow, drop my gloves, which quickly whiz down the gully (rookie move!). I'm sure we'll return this way, so dig out my fleece mittens, being more careful with their placement.

Entering cloud level, visibility drops rapidly and we soon see only the next 10 feet of snow, except where rock is not fully covered. The snowpack teases us with a few shin-deep steps, but mostly knee-deep trailbreaking awaits. We trade off for rest and to avoid vertigo. It is disappointing to navigate with GPS and "upslope inclination." We top the ridge, altimeters reading high, but see a higher rime-covered rock away to our





*Richard Baranow and dogs crossing the Matanuska River.*

left. It's actually just 30 yards away and we are soon on top. Our limited southerly windward view is quite steep, so we boot-shovel standing slots just out of the wind on the north side, as we can only see 5 feet in that direction. I boot-dig in the snow, unsure of a cairn, and leave a register.

Descending a bit faster, we make even more ice-cracker noises. I find my gloves, not even filled with snow. Our black-and-white world segues to color as we exit snowline and the cloud ceiling. Plenty of blueberries sacrifice their berry-hood as we traverse out the valley (now my good side; angled right leg).

Upon catching up to Galen and Richard, I can't resist a loud whoof. "You scared the SH\*# out of me," reports Richard. Despite the myriad moose tracks, poop, and trails, we surprisingly don't see any of the large critters. Headlamps are needed in the valley, but it's relieving to see tent reflectors at 9:30 p.m. A fire burns the clouds away and we have full view of the starry sky.

We have an easy, cloudy exit with lots more blueberries to pluck and a camp robber to escort us back to the parking lot. The ridge that Richard and Galen climbed is clearly visible from the Long Rifle Lodge as we enjoy our warm lunch.

September 29 to October 1, 2013



*Carrie Wang and Cory Hinds en route to Peak 6940.*



## Hypa Zypa Couloir, The Citadel

Text by Ben Erdmann; photos by Kristoffer Szilas

It's 3 a.m. in the parking lot of the Anchorage Wal-Mart Supercenter and we all feel trashy. Taking turns guarding the mountain of duffel bags stacked in the open bed of my pickup, one watching stumbling drunks as the other two spun neurotic logistical circles of provisions piled into shopping carts. I feel guilty for the suspicious looks peering over pallets of processed food from the night-shelf stockers, only imagining what they thought of us. A sloppy way to throw together a trip, but the high pressure had just settled of the western part of the great Alaska Range and it was time to go.

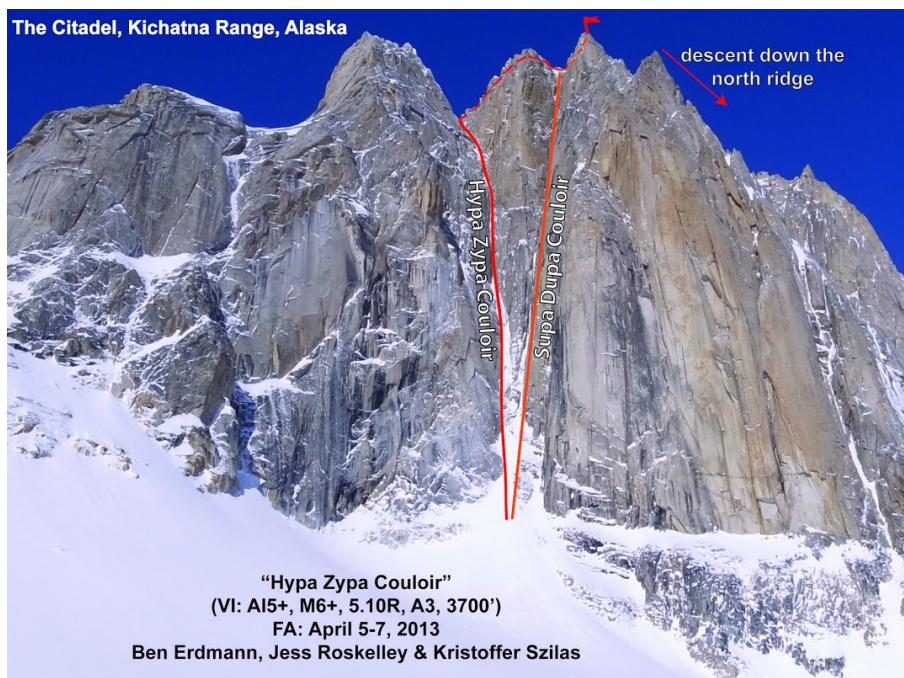
The three of us had met at the base of Cerro Torre six months earlier, Jess Roskelley and Kris Szilas having just been waterboarded off the Exocet line up Cerro Standhardt. Under oncoming apocalyptic skies I am invited on their next trip to Alaska, my home. How appropriate that a Kichatna Mountains expedition is formed in Patagonia, for any climber that has been to both romanticizes of the similarities between these particularly pissed groups of granite spires.

We load the 700 pounds of gear, food, and fuel in the DeHavilland Beaver on the runway in Talkeetna. The clear sky and stable forecast have us twitching with energy as we fly across the wide, desolate expanse of the Susitna Valley. Paul Roderick of Talkeetna Air Taxi has enabled the dreams of countless missions in Alaska, his skill as a pilot and composed personality are well known throughout the community and highly sought after. Four weeks earlier I was flying the same route in a lightweight cloth-skinned Super Cub on a reconnaissance. The wind tore through the spires, trailing shreds of ice plumage off lonely summits, and tossed us around with violent indifference. Contradictory feelings of nausea and excitement filled the cramped space inside the plane as my camera cataloged the vertical potential.

In 2003 Twid Turner, Stu McAleese, and Olly Sanders established the "Supa Dupa Couloir" at ED4, WI6+, 3,700 feet on the east face of The Citadel. We had contacted them and received a one-line beta hint at possibilities to the left of their line.

Within an hour of landing and unloading on the Shadows Glacier this was confirmed.

We stared up at the line where a thin ribbon of ice in a tight recessed corner disappeared into clean, golden rock halfway up the wall. It was apparent that every tool of the alpinist and trick of the big-wall climber would be necessary to climb the feature to the summit. There is an irony that surrounded the logistics of this line. We each had lightweight sleeping setups, packs stripped of features, and were taking a short three days of food and fuel . . . and all this was buried under a pile of machined aluminum and forged iron. This spread a sobering grin across my face . . . for when was "heavy and fast" a practiced style?



That night we began stacking pitches of unconsolidated ice below us. The rotten medium steeped to vertical in sections and several times only two screws took between the leader and followers. Belays of equalized loose pickets and specters reminded us not to fall. With the daylight came a look into the deep corner above us. Blue ice fired skyward and became more compact, reliable, and leaned beyond vertical.

John Roskelley established numerous high-altitude technical climbs throughout the Karakoram and Himalaya. In an era before I was born when hardmen made ascents into unexplored realms of human ability, these heroes of the climbing lineage sent in a way that cannot be repeated by my generation. The skill of the alpinist and head for the sharp end was passed from father to son and Jess led fluidly through the ice crux. The dreamlike channel of steep ice continued to take our leads, each one finding the walls constricting toward us as the gap narrowed. At the height where the pure medium gave way to mixed terrain, a single needle of ice rose, recessed into a cut wide enough to accommodate both feet with heels touching, but no more.

We stopped below the first rock wall and carved a bench from the ancient stubborn ice, just deep enough to sit upright. Stuffing three men into a two-man tent on a ledge big enough



*Ben Erdmann arrives at the col at the top of the couloir while Jess Roskelley belays him.*

for one, we waited through the night wrapped in this awkward cocoon. The morning dawned cold and clear. Taking the lead and the rock gear, I aided through the wall that separated the couloir from the south col. Fixing our two lines, Kris and Jess jugged to our stance a mixed pitch below the dry south ridge.

The granite there became interesting. Large, coarse, poorly-bonded grains tapered into shallow seams. The corner I led up was shaded and ice filled its features. My ice tool flicked back and forth from excavating placements with the pick to driving in pins with the hammer. I eased onto a cam in a verglas-painted pod and blew the piece, taking a daisy fall onto the small nut below. There wasn't the familiar sound of the grit of stone giving out, but rather the soft rejection of the piece by the placement. Switching to free climb had my aiders dangling from the daisy chains attached to the belay loop on my harness. I delicately dug mono-points into soft seams and stepped wide stances around the cluster of rope and webbing hanging between my legs. A logical belay appeared at the dwindling end of the rack; I clipped to a piece and yelled down for a crucial wide cam from the anchor below. It was hauled up and the ropes were tied in hard so Kris and Jess could ascend with the packs. Both men juggling at the same time hardened my resolve to build solid anchors from the questionable rock.

Dry granite stretched into the skyline above us and I continued up, this time removing the crampons and leaving tools behind in anticipation of freeing the wandering corner. With bare hands exposed to the bite of the cold and smearing in double boots, I led into the pitch. Solid protection was infrequent, my last piece somewhere far below and out of sight as the rope went taught and ran out of length.

The rock buttress began to relent to a snow ridge that wove toward the summit. Kris traversed out of sight and, as the rope followed him, then tugged on us below, we heard a faint "Follow me!" from up and to the left. Simul-climbing through rock outcroppings and alternating sides of the ridge, Kris brought us to a notch where the west face fell into the Shelf Glacier below. It was here we found the first sign of humans that traveled this ground before us, just 100 meters below the summit. The soaring amber shield that dominates the east face tops out at this place, the remnant tat of a wall line established years ago had been preserved through the seasons. A single loop of webbing protruding from a crack stood upright, frozen in place, slightly leaning down the opposite side of the mountain we ascended. Silently, it suggested where we should go.

A front of clouds had begun to push its way up the Susitna Valley toward us. As the sun hid behind sharp peaks cutting the horizon,

the temperature dropped rapidly and we settled into a frozen bucket-seat bivy even more cramped than the first. The morning revealed our world held in suspended animation, bitter clouds clung to the range. We welded a stopper next to that lonely piece of webbing, equalized them, and rappelled to the ends of our ropes. An hour later we stood on the summit.

Just below and to the north, the first proper flat spot offered the first adequate brew stop. We rappelled, down-climbed, traversed, and reversed the north ridge, covering unfamiliar terrain known only by an aerial photo in Kris' pocket and the images in our mind. Our final rap to the bergschrund was on a single spectre deftly slammed into a seam, it flexed and torqued sideways as I jumped down the slope toward the end knots of our rope that lay on the uphill side of the yawning crack. We settled into a plod through the basin where a tongue of the Shelf Glacier spit calving blocks of ice onto the shadows of the spires that formed our momentary alpine sanctuary. It was dark and cold as we circled around the mountain back to our camp, everything you'd expect from chasing early spring weather windows in Alaska.

In humorous respect to the gents, we named the route the "Hypa Zypa Couloir." From April 5 to 7 Jess Roskelley, Kris Szilas, and I sent the line in alpine style at VI, AI5+, M6+, A3, 5.10R, 3,700 feet in 70 hours camp to camp, and when the DeHavilland Beaver picked us up two days later, the thermometer on the instrument panel inside the plane read -25°F, in the afternoon sun.

[Ed. Note: For Kris Szilas' blog post, video, and photographs of the same climb, see <http://www.kristofferszilas.com/apps/blog/show/25625238-first-ascend-of-the-hypa-zypa-couloir-ed-ai5-m6-5-10r-a3-1100m->.]



## First Ascent of Broken Tooth West Ridge Variation

*Text by Jay Rowe; photos by Peter Haeussler, unless otherwise noted.*

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013, Peter Haeussler and I, both from Anchorage, reached the summit of Broken Tooth in the Alaska Range via the first ascent of a major variation to the West Ridge route.

Starting May 30<sup>th</sup>, we climbed three long ice pitches in the left of two parallel ice chimneys located approximately 200 meters north of the original route that went up the crest of the flying buttress leading up to the west ridge. Climbing difficulties were up to WI4+, M6+. This was followed by three pitches of 60- to 70-degree snow with mixed rock and ice sections. This led to the crest of the West Ridge, where we excavated a tent site and slept for five hours before continuing onto the summit via the West Ridge route. Upon arriving back at the high camp, we waited 12 hours for cooler temperatures before finishing the descent.

The crux of the route came on the third pitch. Warm temperatures had turned the ice to running water and slush through two overhanging sections, and I took a 20-foot leader fall while wet tooling. Running water soaked us both, but the warm temperatures made it tolerable.

While I was seconding the next pitch – a 65-degree snow slope – I was hit by a wet snow avalanche. I heard Peter yell, and had just enough time to go in to the fetal position. The wall of snow hit me hard, everything went white, and I felt myself tumbling. Then the rope came tight and pulled me into a

back bend. The snow pummeled and bent me as it crashed by. I thought my neck was about to break, but then it was all over.

A bivy on top of Pitch 6 allowed for much needed time for us to dry out and nap. The West Ridge and summit dish climb went smoothly compared to the first day. The last two pitches leading up to the dish were particularly enjoyable, and they consisted of a shoulder-width ribbon of ice in a sunny corner with perfect granite. We climbed to the summit and back to the bivy in a 23-hour push with warm temperatures and deep wet snow persisting. From our bivy, the first rock step was avoided by climbing out onto the north face, where good alpine ice led to the final obstacle, a 60-meter rock tower. This was overcome by a short 5.9 rock section, followed by the best pitch of the entire climb, a steep 50-meter, shoulder-width runnel of ice in a left-facing corner with perfect granite. This led to the summit dish, which was climbed in four low-angle pitches on kitty-litter-quality granite.



*West aspect of Broken Tooth as viewed from the east pillar of the Eye Tooth. The left line depicts the Rowe-Haeussler 2013 West Ridge Variation. The right line shows the original 1987 Thomas Bauman-Jack Lewis West Ridge route. Photo by Jay Rowe.*

longstanding project for me. My first attempt on Broken Tooth was in 1993, and was then followed by 10 additional attempts spread out over the next 20 years. I tried to climb this mountain from every direction, and was turned back by everything imaginable. This time the pieces fell into place, and it feels really good to be done.



This ascent also completed my personal quest to climb routes on all five major peaks of The Mooses Tooth group. They include 1) Sugar Tooth – first ascent South Buttress, second ascent of the peak, with Peter Haeussler; 2) Broken Tooth – first ascent West Ridge variation, fifth ascent of the peak, with Haeussler; 3) Eye Tooth – West Pillar route with Haeussler; 4) Bear’s Tooth – White Russian route with Micha Miller; and 5) The Mooses Tooth – Ham and Eggs route with Micha Miller. We were able to reach the true summit on all of these peaks except for Eye Tooth. On that climb, Peter and I reached the summit of the West Pillar of Eye Tooth, but the snowy ridge and cold rock shoes prevented us from reaching the true summit, some three to four pitches further. I would like to thank all the partners that shared this journey with me. They include JJ Brooks, James P. Sweeney, Kristian Sieling, Cody Arnold, Micha Miller, and Peter Haeussler. It should be noted that Peter Haeussler has completed four of the five peaks, and has been a great partner through the years. Lastly and most important, I would like to thank my wife Kathy for supporting my multiple trips to the Alaska Range.



*Jay Rowe leads the second pitch.*



*Jay Rowe skis under the South Face of Broken Tooth on the approach to the West Ridge.*



*Peter Haeussler (left) and Jay Rowe on the summit of Broken Tooth.*



## The Reality Face

*Text by Seth Timpano; photos by Jared Vilhauer*

In late May I left Seattle early in the morning and flew to Anchorage. From there I hopped a shuttle van to Talkeetna, and was on a ski-equipped plane by late afternoon. The flight into the Alaska Range was as memorable as the previous dozen, and my excitement for alpine climbing was high. Paul Roderick with Talkeetna Air Taxi flew by the impressive Mount Hunter and Mount Huntington and spiraled down into the West Fork of the Ruth Glacier. There I met my friends Jared Vilhauer and Jens Holsten who had been skiing around for a few days scoping out different lines and route conditions. Our initial plan was to climb the north buttress of The Rooster Comb and although the route looked to be in fine condition, their reconnaissance showed that a newly formed serac on the summit pyramid would threaten the route. However, Jared had an idea for a new route and the two of them scoped it out earlier that day. The line appeared big, aesthetic and reasonably safe from overhead hazard. Over dinner the three of us agreed to attempt this unclimbed route on the east face of Reality Peak. We got up the next day and sorted the rack and packed our bags.

We wanted to start climbing in the late afternoon so that the sun was not directly hitting the face. We roped up and skied to the base of the route and started climbing around 5 p.m. Jared was able to find a reasonable way through the bergschrund and we got established in the main couloir shortly thereafter. Jens and I followed Jared's steps, as the three of us simul-climbed



*A foreshortened view of the east face of Peak 13100 with the Holsten-Timpano-Vilhauer route shown.*

for nearly 2,000 vertical feet. At that point we hit the first bit of ice and started to pitch the climbing out. Jared led a pitch of thin bulging ice and then two more pitches of 50-degree ice and rotten snow. This got us to the head of the couloir, where our route cut right; snaking its way up through 1,500 feet of soaring granite walls. We stopped there for a quick brew and some food just as twilight was upon us and I took the next block. The ice was in perfect conditions; one-stick swings most of the way; with the upper half being beautifully sustained AI4. After four long pitches, I passed the rack to Jens and he took over the lead. Another stellar long ice pitch led to a small snow bowl and the base of a two-pitch curtain of AI5 on slightly rotten ice. Climbing through the night was starting to take its toll and fatigue was setting in, but the new day's sun shined brightly on us, and we charged our way upward. At the top of these difficulties, Jared took over and powered us to the top of the couloir on steep snow and calf-burning ice. We topped out and gained Reality Ridge 17 hours after crossing the 'schrund and were rewarded with a massive bivy spot where we melted snow, ate some much needed food, and then the three of us piled into a Firstlight tent. After a quick nap we woke up to find deteriorating weather. The winds were light, but it was snowing with very limited visibility. We decided to hold off our attempt on the upper part of Reality Ridge to the summit of Peak 13100 until the following day. Waking up groggy from a restless night of sleep, we packed our summit bags and were charging by late morning. The terrain

Waking up groggy from a restless night of sleep, we packed our summit bags and were charging by late morning. The terrain



was complex and I popped into a crevasse up to my waist three minutes out of camp. The ridge to the summit was typical Alaskan climbing – bigger, harder, and scarier than expected. Due to extensive cornicing I was forced to climb well below the ridge, fighting through sugary flutings, although the occasional good screw would keep things from feeling too desperate. It was hard work and we swapped leads; we eventually stood on the summit of Peak 13100 on the Southeast Spur of Mount McKinley eight hours after



*The upper part of the ridge with beautiful flutings.*

leaving our bivy. We were stoked, but we also realized we had a lot of work ahead of us. Tediously down-climbing the ridge back to our camp seemed to be the crux of the route, getting there just after midnight. Again we all piled into the tent, brewed up, and ate our last dehydrated meal. It was evident we had to keep heading down before the intense Alaskan sun hit the face, subjecting the route to rock and ice fall and many precarious-looking snow mushrooms. Jared led the descent as we rappelled through the night; the sun nipping at our heels with each 200-foot increment. Twenty-seven double-rope rappels, mostly on V-threads, found us crossing over the 'schrund. A few hundred feet of easy plunge-stepping, and we were safely back to our skis. We skied, tired but satisfied, back to camp, four days after we had left. We dug up our cache of Single Engine Red beers and a bag of Kettle Chips, psyched to have experienced a great adventure. Later that afternoon we were on a plane flying out of the Alaska Range and back to Talkeetna. We called the route The Reality Face (AI5, 5,300 feet, May 21 through 24, 2013).

[Ed. Note: To read Jens Holsten's account of the trip, visit his blog at <http://jensholsten.blogspot.com/2013/06/the-reality-face-new-route-in-alaska.html> and to download the video (featuring artwork by Jessica Campbell) that Max Hasson compiled of their climb, visit <http://vimeo.com/74319724>.]



*Jens Holsten, Seth Timpano, and Jared Vilhauer (left to right) on the summit of Peak 13100.*



# Escape from MOWLI

## Anchorage, Alaska

### August 2013

*Text by Matthew Hickey and Cory Hinds; photos by Cory Hinds*

It was a simple question, but producing an answer was complicated. Should we continue up, or start our way down? For the past 10 hours we had been foiled by the sharp, undulating ridge connecting The Mitre with its sister peak, Ovis Peak, or at least that's what we thought. Low clouds obscured our view and rain relentlessly precipitated making a mockery of our expensive Gore-Tex. We were soaked to the bone, didn't know where we were, didn't know where we were going, and didn't know what lay ahead. The MOWLI Traverse was about to become "Escape from MOWLI."

The MOWLI Traverse is not a mountaineering objective privy to popular talk in the local climbing circles. In fact, it's not chatter amongst many climbers at all. MOWLI is an acronym derived from the first letters of The Mitre and Ovis Peak and the prominent letters of the third mountain along the ridge, White Lice Mountain. Richard Baranow or Wendy Sanem might have coined the term 20 years ago. The mountains unto themselves are stout climbing objectives – string them together and attempt them in one consecutive push and it becomes an extremely formidable task worthy of the catchy name. If we were to successfully complete the traverse we might well be the official authors of a new mountaineering challenge for Alaska climbers to test their mettle. A day and a half after beginning the task we were no longer intent on finishing the route, but rather escaping from it in one piece.

Our adventure began on a soggy Saturday morning.

"MOWLI!" Cory shouted as he exited his car and walked up to mine.

"Let's launch!" I replied. Neither of us mentioned anything about the weather. Rain or shine we were apt to give it a go.

By 8:30 a.m. we were at the Eklutna Lake Trailhead. It was raining when we began peddling our bikes along the lakeside trail and it was still raining two hours and 11 miles later when we

reached our bushwhacking launch point. Any Alaskan backcountry enthusiast knows that almost every great Alaskan adventure includes a bushwhack. Our adventure certainly qualified. We left the comfortable and consistent stroll of our bikes and ventured into an uphill, scree-slogging, alder-whacking, moisture-mucking bushwhack. Our packs included all the necessities for alpine camping

and that weight was increasing as the pack's fancy fabrics achieved complete saturation whilst frolicking through the alpine forest. Three hours later we emerged on the alder-less upper slopes of the MOWLI Ridge relieved to have the whacking behind us, but readily fatigued by the full body effort. Our sadistic Saturday stroll was just beginning, though.

It took only an hour of gentle hiking and minor scrambling to gain the ridge after emerging from the alders to the north of The Mitre. We found the terrain to be quite pleasant. We moved un-roped across easy rock and flat mossy plateaus. Occasionally we'd uncoil the rope and tie in to protect ourselves from the 3,000-foot fall down the west face of the ridge. The



*Matt Hickey heading south on the MOWLI Ridge from the lower Mitre. Ascent route is the left skyline ridge.*



rock was loose and in certain places the mountain was crumbling all the way from the top of the ridge and careening straight to the valley floor. We learned how those huge scree fans near the Serenity Hut are formed: sections of the ridge fall off and break into a million small pieces on their way to the bottom. The views back toward Eklutna Lake, down into the West Fork of the Eklutna River and Serenity Hut, up the West Branch of the Eklutna Glacier, and up the East Fork of the Eklutna River were stunning. We both treaded carefully, ensuring that at least one hand was solidly secured to a well-attached rock in the event our footholds blew, which they often did.



*The East Fork of the Eklutna River from the MOWLI Ridge below The Mitre.*

After seven hours on the MOWLI's spine we'd traveled two miles and maintained our elevation at about 5,000 feet. We were climbing and down-climbing the route at a comfortable pace. By 7:30 p.m. we reached the col on the north side of The Mitre and contemplated ascending the peak that evening hoping to find a suitable bivy site near the summit, but we were out of water and the only certain supply was 500 feet below us on the eastern side of the ridge where a large open basin held patches of snow. We'd had a long day, one we deemed sufficient for phase one of the MOWLI. We descended to the snow and established camp. It had rained all day, but we persisted and our reward was a calm, dry evening with a stunning view of the Chugach Mountains' famous "B" peaks – Bashful Peak, Benevolent Peak, Baleful Peak, and their brethren – all basking in a magnificent beam of late Chugach summer twilight. After Day One we were confident about our chances of success.

I have the tendency to romanticize about the victorious completion of a mountaineering objective long before a trip even begins. Earlier that week I glistened at the glorious feeling that would engulf Cory and me when we completed the MOWLI – an accomplishment we thought no one had done or even tried. Each difficult step, move, hold, and belay was fluid validation of what's assuredly to come: completion, success, and possibly even some small notoriety. Each move was one move closer to the end. The end brings celebration in the form of Jim Beam and official MOWLI naming rights. Unfortunately, my premature mental celebrations did nothing to inform the mountain of

our intentions and we soon learned that the MOWLI was not going to come easily.

We were both wide awake when Cory said, "Well, it's five o'clock."

"We ought to start moving," I grumbled in response.

Forty-five minutes later, after a soothing snooze period, we officially woke and began our slow, soggy preparations for the day. Despite sauntering off to bed with saturated clothing the cramped confines of the tent allowed for rapid drying. Everything except our socks and boots achieved wet-free status. Cory, ever the optimist decided to don his fresh pair of socks. I, on the other hand, boldly barricaded my feet inside the wet wool cocoons, assuming rain was coming. And it did. Drops began to fall as soon as we had packed up camp.

We slogged up a 500-foot scree slope – a slow and frustrating beginning to what was assuredly going to be a long day. We eventually gained a rib trending off the east face of The Mitre and planned to follow it until reaching the summit or the ridge leading to The Mitre's apex. The night before we noticed that this rib ran directly toward the highest point visible from our lower location – a point we believed to be The Mitre's summit, but low clouds not only obscured our view of that same high point, but also its surrounding points and the few crux components of the route. It was therefore not surprising that three hours after accessing our intended track we were aimlessly

wandering about the east face of the mountain desperately trying to gain altitude.

Cory was leading across exposed third- and fourth-class terrain while I concentrated on maintaining my composure by carefully placing each foot and hand onto the semi-stable sediment comprising the mountain. The Chugach are famous for their crumbly crags. The MOWLI and The Mitre, at this particular moment, were fulfilling that reputation. It would take three or four attempts to find a hand placement that didn't wither away. Footholds would fizzle from below even before our full weight was applied. Rocks ranging from pebble sized scree to boulders hundreds of pounds released from their positions and tumbled into the misty abyss below. Even this low-grade climbing was challenging because of this extraordinarily unstable rock.

We finally found a weakness after scrambling about the loose slopes for two hours. A low-angled gully wound its way up the east face. We picked our way across mossy slopes and onto crumbly micro-buttresses. One moment we'd find ourselves exposed to the foggy void; the next moment we'd be deep inside a near vertical chasm with nothing but featureless wet walls on either side. Somehow we made our way back to the MOWLI Ridge.

Upon surmounting the ridge we noticed a high point to our north silhouetted by the fog and another dark pinnacle to our south looming in the mist.

"Looks like we've come up on the ridge between The Mitre and Ovis. Let's just drop our packs here and run up The Mitre and then head back towards Ovis," Cory said.

I didn't refute. I dropped my pack and looked northward toward The Mitre. The final portion of the climb looked quick and manageable. I then turned my gaze toward Ovis. It looked steep. Very steep. The murkiness around it only served to dramatize the task that eventually laid before us. "Concentrate on The Mitre first," I told myself, "then worry about Ovis."

Happy to be moving without packs for the first time in a day and a half, we moved speedily northward toward The Mitre. I carried the rope and Cory some gear in the event the climbing became difficult or exposed. Twenty minutes later we stood on the highest visible point.

"This must be the summit," Cory said while I nodded in agreement. We pounded fists in affirmation of finishing the "M" of MOWLI and took a token summit photo. We then gathered ourselves for a short moment while having a snack and scouting the route up Ovis. I had stored a Milky Way bar in my chest pocket the entire day vowing to not eat it until reaching the first summit. I could now redeem my reward. I pulled the chocolate bar out and ripped open the wrapper. I stared at the savory treat and mentally applauded myself on a job well done. I brought the bar toward my mouth and then, suddenly, half the treat spontaneously detached itself and fell to the rocky ground. I quickly bent down to save the runaway portion, but it



*Matt Hickey struggling on the east side of the MOWLI Ridge somewhere below The Mitre, searching for a way back to the ridge crest.*

was too late. The gooey goods dove into a tiny hole on the bouldery summit before I could reclaim my prize. I desperately continued to stick my hand into the hole, but found nothing. I disappointedly settled for half the bar.

With the wet rock and intimidating towers on the ridge heading toward Ovis, we immediately dropped off the ridge on the east side and started jumping ribs. There is usually an easier way if you poke around a bit, and we had been successful so far in avoiding the technical climbing. So, we figured we would do it again and put the sneak attack on Ovis from the east side.

"You think that'll go?" I anxiously asked Cory again. We were trying to negotiate a safe rerouting around



a large gendarme that was pushing us out onto the mountain's face.

"Yeah, I think this'll go," Cory replied.

For the past three hours I'd been happily following Cory as he suavely sliced his way through sketchy and scarily exposed terrain. He'd find the way and then I'd find the courage to follow. We continued to slither our way in, out, around and over gullies, ribs, and mossy hummocks, helplessly hoping the next rise would feed our eyes with the way the up. But each time we raised our hopes that the next gully would allow for safe passage toward the summit tower looming in the mist above, we'd be met with disheartening disappointment. The east face of the mountain was too steep, too exposed, and too wet to climb. Even the *milder* terrain we were climbing exposed us to long, unstoppable falls while scrambling on un-protectable rock. The conditions were low fifth class at the hardest, but a 40-pound pack, heavy mountaineering boots, and wet, chossy rock quickly increased the difficulty and the chances of a fall.

When we came to a steep section on our final attempt to regain the ridge I couldn't help but think of the awful tumble that awaited me when my foot slipped and I careened down toward the East Fork of the Eklutna River. I watched Cory carefully as

he stemmed his way up the small chimney. I replicated his moves smearing with my feet and then shimmying my hands all the way up the narrow passage. We finally crested the ridge and were delighted to find that waiting for us on the west face was not a sheer drop but a pleasantly flat piece of ground. We had successfully passed the first major gendarme on the ridge, but it had taken what felt like a heroic effort. Just a scramble to the summit from here, right? Wrong! Our hearts sank as even higher gendarmes loomed out of the fog on the ridge to the south. Well, we'll try staying on the ridge proper this time.

Immediately we were exposed to a long fall again and there appeared to be places for protection. Cory tied in and took lead. He scrambled up a few feet and disappeared out of my sight. Shortly after his disappearance he returned.

"I can't go either way around this one. There's nothing," he said. "We need to go down again." Our efforts to regain the ridge were for naught. We were heading down.

Initially, our second descent off the ridge was only to re-stage our next sneak attack, but as we continued to lose elevation, our further recon did not show an easy way to move south and back up to the ridge. We would need to go WAY down to the



*Matt Hickey on the MOWLI Ridge north of the lower Mitre. The confluence of the East Fork and West Fork of the Eklutna River is shown at lower left and Eklutna Lake is beyond.*

east, then make southern progress lower on the mountain, and then climb back up.

There comes a moment during mountaineering trips when doubt descends into defeat. It is at this moment that summit success is gone because your soul has rendered it impossible. A climber usually carries on anyway in order to pass enough time to warrant a more proper retreat, but the time that passes between internal defeat and audible admission is usually meaningless meandering. So, when Cory said, "I think we ought to start heading down, as in bailing off the mountain," it was not the first time the thought had crossed my mind. Cory's recommendation of descent may have been the first verbalization of retreat, but it had come to my mind ever since our wayward wandering to the summit of The Mitre earlier that morning. We had vastly underestimated the time and effort required to surmount the two summits we had camped beneath the night before. We fumbled our way over loose rock and malicious moss the entire day, expending a great deal of effort to only gain the same ridge we'd so easily negotiated the previous day. We were now well beneath the ridge and a long way from where we needed and wanted to be.

We had pushed our limits as far as we wanted; the wet rock, exposure, and route finding all took their toll, and so the decision to escape came easily. The decision on where to escape TO was another matter.

One option was to return the way we had come. But all the convoluted climbing up and down and around made our heads hurt just thinking about it. We would re-trace back to the "summit" of The Mitre then have to down-climb that entire loose, wet ridge? Even if we made it to the basin under The Mitre, we would then need to rappel into the notch (there is a fixed yellow sling around a couple boulders at the lip) and was our rope long enough to reach the relatively safe slope somewhere below? We didn't like that option.

The other option was to simply continue downhill into the East Fork. We could see the river 5,000 feet below, so how hard could it be? Well, we found out.

Over this rib into that gully. Too steep, try another; look around, what about that one? Looks better, try it; is that a drop? Does it go? Should we rappel? What if we get stuck and can't continue down and can't climb up? Looks OK, our rope will reach. Rap, down-climb, scree, another drop, will this one go? Looks OK, rap off a piton, sling a block, walls of the gully getting taller. Down we go. Maybe six raps total. Smooth walls with algae make climbing out impossible now. Starting to get really nervous; we are committed to the descent. There are steep walls on the East Fork, what if this gully ends in a thou-

sand-foot cliff? Nobody knows we are back here! We should have brought a Spot! I knew we should have brought a Spot. Finally a broad rib and some recon shows the gully sweeping way down, continuous and to the south, toward a large scree fan. No thousand-foot cliff is seen. This just might go. Some old snow patches. Crampons are used. The river gets closer. The butt-scoot technique is perfected on the shorter drops.

Finally we reached a wide goat trail and were able to pop out of the gully and over to the fan, sooo happy to be out. The exit was none too soon as the gully takes a hard left over many other drops. But we were out, and we were treated to a nice sighting of Mr. Mountain Goat himself just few hundred feet off. As I raised the camera he realized that we saw him and he dropped out of sight.

We made relatively quick work of the last 2,500 feet and Matt waited for me at the river, watching a large black bear headed toward us on the riverbank. The bruin eventually saw us and bolted uphill and out of sight. Across the river from us was the low knob. The East Fork Trail ascends the north side of the knob. We needed to get across the river to that trail. But how to cross the river?

The river was high from glacier melt. We looked hard, but quickly saw that crossing at that location was not an option; we would have been swept off our feet immediately. So, we bushwhacked along the bank. Wet brush quickly soaked us again and we were starting to tire. We looked at more sections of water; no good. Starting to get nervous about our escape now; are we trapped here on the west side of the river? Do we have to bushwhack for six miles to the bridge? Should we try to camp on this side and see if the river goes down overnight? We finally came to an area where the channel splits. We quickly crossed the first channel, ankle deep, to a long rocky bar. The next channel was maybe 25 or 30 feet wide and still moving fast and would still sweep us off our feet. But that needed to happen; the escape was across the river. It was obvious we couldn't cross with packs, so we would swim then throw a rope across and haul the packs across. I quickly dropped my pack, threw a quick look at Matt, indicating that this was it, and took a running leap off a boulder into the current. My momentum carried me almost halfway across and I pushed off with my feet a couple times and it was done. I was completely soaked, but unscathed. As I wrung out my shirt, Matt tied an ice axe to the end of the rope and tossed it across. He tied the other end to my pack and I quickly pulled it across, hoping my sleeping bag did not get wet. I had trouble throwing the axe and rope back over; an old shoulder dislocation prevented optimal release as I fished the axe out of the river many times before completing the toss. Matt tied the rope to his pack and I pulled it across,



also. Matt showed me how to throw and launched his axe like Thor's hammer. The axe cut a high arc through the air, spinning end over end, hit the rocks several yards away, and bounced cleanly into the next river channel never to be seen again!

I prepared an emergency throw rope as Matt launched off the boulder, but he didn't need it and was across quickly. Unfortunately, his hip landed on a rock mid-channel; it's a deep bruise, but thankfully only a bruise. We quickly walked the third channel and completed the crossing. In what seemed like no time at all, we were in the woods and picked up the trail. The trail was like an old friend. We got loud with bear prevention noise and made quick progress out to Stivers Creek, where we stopped to camp.

A dinner of ramen, instant potatoes, and tuna tasted great. The bags were damp, but not too wet, and Matt pulled out the Jim Beam as we relaxed. We were tired and happy to be off the mountain and safely across the river. The next day Matt's hip was stiff, but not significantly worse. We dropped packs at the road, retrieved the bikes, and were back at the trailhead by noon or so. We escaped from MOWLI.

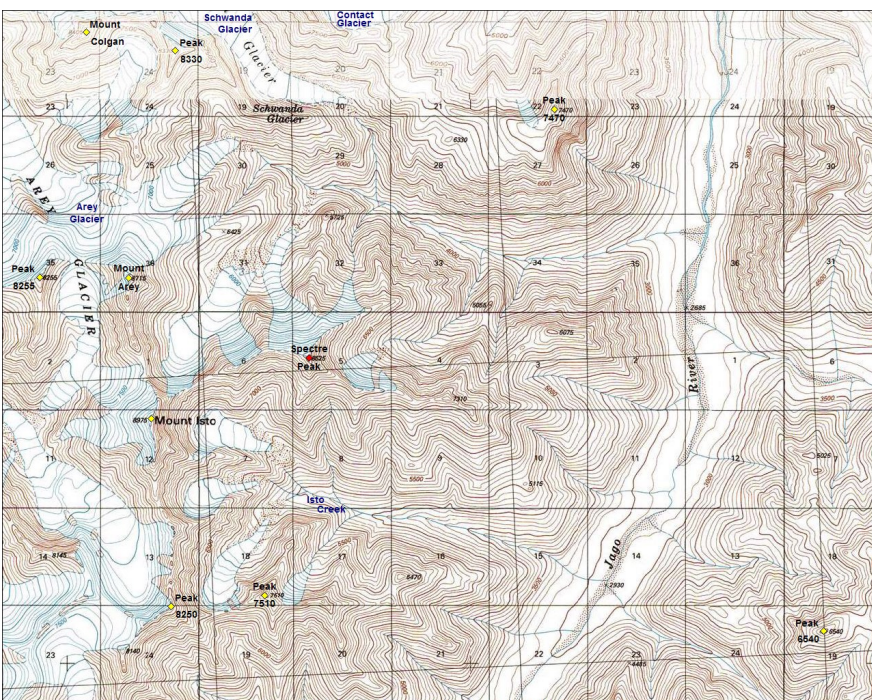
I badly wanted to complete the MOWLI. I wanted to look behind Eklutna Lake and know that I'd traversed the entirety of the prominent ridge comprising the skyline, and I was selfishly excited about staking claim to the MOWLI name. Ultimately,

Cory and I ventured into the mountains that weekend looking for adventure. We aimed at the MOWLI, got blown way of course, and found ourselves in an unexpected geographical location, but exactly where we figured in the adventure category. What we completed was hardly half of what we wanted, but we got way more than we ever could have hoped for in terms of adventure. In the end, things have an ironic way of working themselves out. We staked claim to "Escaping from MOWLI," and more technically speaking, traversing The Mitre and we were happy with that. But then MOWLI struck again. Cory provided the perfect conclusion to the tale in an email he sent to me the day after:

*"Looking at the map yesterday, it is pretty clear that we summited the lower summit of The Mitre. What I thought was the ridge between Mitre and Ovis was really the ridge between lower and true summit of Mitre. No wonder it wasn't as hard or loose as I remembered! That cirque we looked down into is what feeds the Mitre Might and other ice climbs on the east wall of the canyon at the toe of the glacier. So, we spent all that banging around in the fog chasing the summit of Mitre, not Ovis. No matter, of course: it is what it is. Simply an adventure of no consequence to anyone but ourselves, and maybe an amusing story for others."*

## Peak of the Month: Spectre Peak

By Steve Gruhn



Mountain Range: Brooks Range; Romanzof Mountains

Borough: North Slope Borough

Drainage: Isto Creek

Latitude/Longitude: 69° 12' 42" North, 143° 44' 9" West

Elevation: 8625 feet

Prominence: 875 feet from Mount Isto (8975)

Adjacent Peak: Mount Isto

Distinctness: 875 feet from Mount Isto

USGS Map: Demarcation Point (A-5)

First Recorded Ascent: Mid-summer 1992 by Walt Rogers and Dennis Schmitt

Route of First Recorded Ascent: South ridge

Access Points: Kongakut River, Okpilak Lake, and Jago River

In mid-summer of 1992 Dennis Schmitt led a seven-member Sierra Club party on a trip through the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. They were flown in a Cessna 185 to an elevation of about 2000 feet on the Kongakut River. They hiked westward to the West Fork of the Sheenjek River. From there they climbed Peak 7245. Continuing up the West Fork of the Sheenjek River, Rogers and Schmitt climbed Pan's Peak (7675). The entire party continued northward, crossing the Continental Divide at its most northern point and entering the Jago River drainage. Five members of the party were then flown out, but Rogers and Schmitt continued with meager rations up Isto Creek and ascended the south ridge of Spectre Peak to its summit. After experiencing a peculiar feeling of isolation and shadows east of Mount Isto, Schmitt called the peak Igiq Tatqoq — Inupiaq for Shadow Peak — but didn't publish the name. Rogers and Schmitt descended to Isto Creek and the Jago River. Heading upstream, they ascended a narrow glacier and crossed into the Okpilak River drainage by descending a steep glacier two miles southwest of Mount Isto. They hiked upriver to the East Okpilak Glacier, ascended that glacier to Okpilak Pass, and descended to a campsite on the upper Okpilak Glacier. From that campsite, Schmitt climbed Peak 8860 in the East Okpilak Glacier drainage. The two then descended the Okpilak Glacier to the Okpilak River and followed it downstream for three days until reaching Okpilak Lake where they were flown out of the refuge.

Seven years later, beginning on July 24, 1999, Don Hansen led Pam Bell, Tom Choate, Fred Kampfer, and Ernie Kriese on a MCA trip up the Jago River. The party chartered a flight with Wright Air Service from Fairbanks to a landing area at about 2150 feet on the east side of the Jago River. They explored Hubley Creek the next day and then over the next couple days moved camp upriver to Isto Creek. They explored the slopes above their camp and on July 31 Tom Choate resigned from the party to make solo climbs of Spectre Peak and Mount Isto. Starting at 6 a.m., Tom hurried up the east ridge of Spectre Peak, racing clouds that were blowing upvalley. His ascent took him from the gravel bars of the Jago River to a flower-studded tundra basin that gave way to small ridges covered in mountain avens, through some small cliffs, to a ridge with talus blocks. A sheep trail led him on the south side of the ridge, but he lost the trail before reaching Point 7310 and returned to the ridge. As he climbed the numerous pinnacles on the ridge he noted that a breeze from the south kept the clouds on the north side of the ridge, just below the crest. Looking down at the clouds to

the north he saw a Brocken spectre, his shadow on the cloud below surrounded by a halo of rainbow colors. He saw this apparition four times as he made his way up the east ridge. He encountered a little steep rock, some of which was rotten and some of which resulted in hard and pleasant climbing, en route to the summit. Arriving at the summit at 1:30 p.m. and finding no sign of previous human visitation, he left a cairn with a register and suggested the name Spectre Peak to remember the Brocken spectres he had seen along the way. Tom descended west-southwest along the ridge, traveling atop the cornice on the north side of the ridge to avoid the talus and pinnacles and ascending Points 8450 and 8350 en route to the pass. He continued up the northeast spur of Mount Isto and slowly made his way along the north ridge of Mount Isto. He departed from the ridge the last 50 feet in order to avoid a cornice and to leave a register in the highest rocks east of the summit cornice. He retraced his steps to about 8,000 feet. There he descended to the southeast, down a steep gully and the northernmost of the four glaciers at the head of Isto Creek, and followed that valley to the Jago River where he camped for the evening at 10:45 p.m. The next day he hiked three miles upstream and rejoined the MCA party on the west side of the Jago River where they explored both forks of the Jago River. The party then turned downstream to return to their landing strip. Pam and Tom went ahead so they could climb Mottled Mountain (5750). As they climbed the ridge, Pam and Tom met John Dunn, a photojournalist who had been camping at the landing strip. Together the three ascended Peak 5345. Pam and Tom then ascended the talus of Mottled Mountain's northwest ridge and climbing over Points 5350, 5650, and 5645 to reach the summit. They descended the southeast-facing scree and gullies of Mottled Mountain to the tundra and returned to camp at the landing strip, from where Wright Air Service flew them to Fairbanks on August 5.

The information for this article was obtained from Dennis Schmitt's report titled "Romanzof Mountains, 1992," which appeared on page 128 of the 1994 *American Alpine Journal*, from Don Hansen's trip report titled "Jago River, ANWR MCA Trip," which appeared in the October 1999 *Scree*, from Tom Choate's trip report titled "Mount Isto and Spectre Peak, Brooks Range," which appeared in the February 2000 *Scree*, and from my correspondence with Dennis Schmitt and Tom Choate.



# 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 Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the BP Energy Center at 900 E. Benson Blvd (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)		Email delivery	
Paper (add \$15/YR.)		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	Matthew Hicks		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 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

Mailing list/database entry: Seth Weingarten and Stacey Pritts - [membership@mtclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtclubak.org)

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Vicky Lytle - [hcc@mtclubak.org](mailto:hcc@mtclubak.org)

Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 or [huts@mtclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtclubak.org)

Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127 or [stugrenier@gmail.com](mailto:stugrenier@gmail.com)

Scree Editor: [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com) Steve Gruhn (344-1219) assisted by Elizabeth Ellis ([elizabeth.anne.russo@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.anne.russo@gmail.com))

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Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoogroups.com)

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