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Mountaineering Club of Alaska
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Christmas Meeting of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska will be held on Thursday, Dec-20th at 7:30 p.m. at the Willow Park Recreation Hall. Hans Gmosher's film, "Vagabond of the Mountains" will be shown and refreshments will be served by the W.E.C. (For unfamiliar with the abbreviations of the MCA committees, and indeed, in this case, about everyone since the W.E.C. was invented for this meeting, the initials stand for Women's Emergency Committee. It is the hope of the Editor that by now the other members of the Committee have been informed of this honor.) The meeting will be closed to general public since the Recreation Hall is small, but members and their guests are cordially invited.

SYMPOSIUM

Several members of the Alaska Alpine Club, Fairbanks, including at least two who climbed Denali this past season, will be in Anchorage over the Christmas vacation. The Executive Board of MCA has arranged to hold a symposium on Denali utilizing the slides and experiences of the visitors, the Paul Crews party and Hans Metz. Any other McKinley climber will be warmly welcomed as part of the program. This meeting will be held in the City Recreation Building (the old Central Jr. High) in Room 403 at 8 p.m. on Friday, December 28th. This is open to any interested Mountaineering Club member or guest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Climbing and Hiking Committees will hold a joint meeting on Thursday, December 27th at 8 p.m. at Dave DeVoe's - 311 So. Park St. (south of the Bowling Alley in Mt. View, off 14th Ave.).

Ski Tour from Independence Mine, west on Willow Road - on a weekend between December 29th and January 11th. Contact Steve Ross for details: BR 5-4802.

A potential member of the W.E.C., born November 15th, Kari, daughter of Jill and Jon F.

CLIMBING

by Dave DeVoe

A five-member party left Anchorage, Sunday morning, Nov. 18th for a hike-climb of Mt. Sp (a well known Anchorage area mountain). Wheeled transport carried the party to a reasonable distance of the Clarke's residence before all passengers had to bail out to brake the sliding car. On our way past her doorstep, we assured the ever-hospitable Clarke that we would return before dark, cold and thirsty. The day was overcast with a light wind at the base of the hill. A flock of ptarmigan materialized around us, only their black beaks, eyes and toenails betraying their presence in the snow. There were a few squeaks and chuckles, but otherwise they showed no alarm. A confident soul, certain of his camouflage, allowed himself to be stroked upon the back of the head with the point of an ice axe! Some drifts filled boot tops, but mostly the snow was wind-packed powder. The rock faces were filigreed with snow, tamped in by the wind, the smoother pebbled tundra looked like well-designed mosaics. We climbed up the rock ridge on the left side of the mountain's west face. Gusts of wind by now were filled with dry stinging snow. There were a few spots with enough exposure to keep us preoccupied with the work at hand - and foot. The last bit before the ice-like summit was 45 degree packed snow, easy to kick steps in. The top itself was a stately bare of snow a 50-60 knot wind was hurrying it right on across into the valley over Rabbit Creek. We staggered over to the rock cairn and looked in vain for a trail register. We swallowed our disappointment with our lunch in the lee of a rock. The snow was hardly noticeable until someone stood up. Then it sounded like the demons were upon him, trying to tear his clothes to shreds. We relinquished our original idea of a reconnaissance of the ridge that leads to the Suicide group. *Ptarmigan* Our retreat was made down a more gradual slope toward Rabbit Creek, then back toward the saddle where the old caribou trail is. (We were accused of telling a Paul Bunyan story when we explained about that little ditch worn by Kenai-bound caribou many years ago.) Of course we paused (for three hours) at the Clarke's for coffee and stories and to wait out the snow storm and early night cover Turnagain Arm.

I think it is interesting to note that four of the five people on this outing, Sue Bell, Marie Lundstrom, Bob Bartley and Dave Kimball had never been on this particular

like before. My own trips up Flattop (3 in the year I have been here) have varied widely in experience with weather, routes, climbing conditions and opportunities to observe the flora and fauna of alpine Alaska. That's the beautyand the dangerof outdoor life in Alaska. So if I hear, "Oh, FlattopI've done that", I'll be tempted to ask, "What's been done?" And I hope that I can never forget the pure delights and new challenges of each trip I've made on all the "Flattops" I have ever set foot upon.

SOUTHWEST RIDGE OF WOLVERINE MOUNTAIN

by Rod Wilson

On Thanksgiving Day, November 22, Dave Kimball (A visitor from Colorado) and I climbed to the top (about 4000 ft) of a ridge just southwest of Wolverine Mountain, which is the broad, triangular peak on the skyline east of Anchorage between Mt. Elliott and O'Malley Peak. The secret of our success was the general lack of snow and the discovery of a trail through the woods and alder to the open upper slopes. Leaving Tudor Road at the Campbell Firstrip turnoff, we drove 3 1/2 miles toward Basherville and left the car where the powerline from the South Fork of Campbell Creek crosses the road. We walked only two poles' length before striking off to the left into the brush and immediately onto a trail leading along the north rim of a canyon (North Fork?) about one-half mile to a down-in-the-wood trap-ber's cabin and on beyond to a short cut of road above Basherville and finally to more trail up through the trees and brush. On the ridge above and to the right we followed wolverine tracks in the light snow to the top where there was a frame and tattered red cloth sitting structure. We didn't make the peak to the northeast because of the shortness of the day. It shall hereafter and even for evermore be called Wolverine Mountain, unless someone wants to argue with me about it.

THE COFFEE CIRCUIT

Driving into the South Fork of Campbell Creek valley, Helga Bading and Gwynn Wilson began to climb at the bottom of the first peak just beyond Flattop. There was scarcely any brush and we climbed directly up to where the rocks approximately 200 ft. below the top began. Traversing along this section of the long ridge of peaks we walked to the rectangular shaped ridge, the second protrusion east of Flattop and crossed onto the Rabbit Creek side of the hills. Traversing under the rectangular ridge we reached the west side of the 3rd peak beyond Flattop which we estimate is Suicide 4 or 5. It was any easy scramble on rocks covered with 3 inches of snow to the unmarked top where we left a clean peanut butter jar duly inscribed. The descent was simple. After scrambling down the rocky part we slid, carefully avoiding the rocks, on the seats of our jeans down a lovely steep slope and then walked along the road to the car.

This is written (the trip was on October 6th) because we feel the peaks called "Suicide" are grossly misnamed and would like to suggest renaming them the Ptarmigan Peaks. We stopped for coffee with the Clarks.

On Sunday, October 28th, Ruth Schmidt, Irma Duncan, Gwynn Wilson, Tom Kiester and Ted Shohl started out to climb FLATTOP. This was a "rare" day when there was five inches of snow on the Rabbit Creek Road so we climbed up the Clarke's road being grateful for the car tracks which made the trail easier. After coffee with the Clarks we attempted Flattop but there was a wind which had drifted the snow and made the going both wet and unreliable. On the return toward town, we had coffee with the Kiesters.

Having discovered a good thing, we decided to investigate somebody else's coffee pot and decided on the Wolves of EAGLE RIVER VALLEY. On November 4, Irma, Ruth, Gwynn, Dave Kimball left Anchorage and picked up Tony Bockstahler en route. Because two of us had been there before, one had worked on the maps of the area and one lived in the vicinity we got lost! Finding ourselves high on the side of a mountain at the end of a road which gave us no view of the Wolfe's we plunged into the brush walking east and descending until by intuition we managed to find the proper road. The novelty of the day was not that we found where we were going but that the women had packed in a Surprise Baby Shower for young John Wolfe which explained what they were doing on a simple hike with those odd looking packs. Dusk having descended, we ended the day with coffee, of course, but riding down the road to the car. We avoided the COFFEE which was being held for a political candidate in Eagle River that day.

On Sunday, November 11th, the Wilsons with children and accompanied by Betty Clement and Hank Thillson went to the mine below the CLUB CABIN. The intention was to inspect the spot which Rod Wilson did, finding the going brisk from the Old Mail Trail up to the cabin site. The Wilson children took one hour to go from the mine up the slope to the trail - it was slippery! However, none was lost. Unfortunately the only coffee available was for sale.

RIDDLE: What is big at the bottom,
small at the top,
round all over,
and has ears?

ANSWER: A mountain - Don't forget it has
mountaineers

Well! I was afraid you might feel that way about it.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, anyway.