

DECEMBER MEETING: Willow Park Recreation Hall, 9th & Fairbanks, 8:00 PM
Monday December 21.

SKIING INFO SNOWBIRD

Nov 21-22

By Nick Parker

Leo Hannan, Dave Meyers and I left Anchorage, Nov 21, on what was going to be a very interesting ski tour. Departure was originally 8:00, but because of snow we couldn't leave until 9:00 AM. Although there were cloudy skies when we left we found none at the Fishhook Road turn-off.

We had several misadventures as we continued on the Fishhook Road. It got narrower and narrower, until there was only room for one car. This created many problems when cars were coming from both directions.

We arrived at Little Susitna Lodge about 10:00 AM. Not knowing whether or not to park the car there or go on, we continued. This was our first mistake! We were forced to drive all the way to Independence Mine as the turn-off to Snowbird was blocked by snow and the road was too narrow to turn around in. Upon arrival at the mine it was decided that Leo would take the car back to the lodge at Little Susitna, and Dave and I would ski down. Dave and I got to the turn-off where we found Leo and the car. He had enough of the road to park the car. (Very convenient!)

Getting into our packs, we finally skied off at about noon. There was about 3 to 3½ feet of snow, but with skis we only sunk in about six inches. We took turns breaking trail to our lunch break at an old mine three-fourths of the way to Snowbird. We got there about 3:00 and left at 3:30. At 4:00 PM darkness set in, and we were still along ways from the cabin. Route-finding became a chore and we ended up in the bushes several times, much to our chagrin! At about 5:30 PM we rested and had a cup of tea. Two hours, and ½ mile later, we were there. (very wet, cold, and hungry, I might add.) We were really glad to be able to walk someplace without sinking to our hips. A cozy fire, compliments of Leo, made us feel right at home.

At 8:30 AM, bright(?) and early, we got ourselves going. It was still clear and very cold. A large breakfast and Leo was off, to be followed by Dave and I in about an hour. Dave and I cleaned up the cabin and took off about 9:15 AM. Two hours of pleasant skiing brought us to a point where Dave and I were going to pioneer a new trail to Little Susitna Lodge. We came across an old ski slope. This made a relaxing little descent at the end of the trail. At the Lodge we met up with Leo and started homeward. This is a very enjoyable trip, if done during the light hours!

CLIMBS IN THE BERING SEA

by Vin Hoeman

The maps are right, Alaska is a far-flung state, and as I sit here on Attu, its ultimate splatter, I have plenty of time while the gales blow to describe the mountains that poke out of the Bering Sea. In June I returned to Alaska from the Central Pacific to look for a place to band birds that would return to those tropical climes for the winter. First at Nome and on St. Lawrence Island where some of those birds scatter in pairs to raise their young on the tundra, I climbed 625' Cape Nome on the mainland and 1550' Kanguksam Mtn. on the island, both easy rocky tundra. The Pribilof Islands, it was decided, were the best place to band the birds since they concentrate there in migration. Another bander and I were sent there in early July. During the summer I found time to climb nearly all the named summits on St. Paul, including Bogoslov Hill 590' which has lava-tube caves in its sides, and Rush Hill, the highest of this island's cinder cones at 665'. I climbed all the named summits on St. George and celebrated the anniversary of the night Dave Johnston and I spent atop McKinley 19-20 July at High Bluffs, 1012', the highest point in the Pribilofs or for over 200 miles in any direction. It was rainy, the birds squawked, blue foxes barked--far more miserable than it was atop the continent!

Besides banding birds, we painted their rumps red. This gave us an excuse to come to the Aleutians to try to trace the birds as they moved through on migration. After a sickening voyage in the sealing ship bound for Seattle, we landed with homeward-bound Aleuts at Nikolski on 9 September. I remembered Marge Prescott's descriptions of Visevidof, and when that 6920' volcano cleared briefly on the 12th, I set out to climb it. Alas, it was 15 miles of sponge-walking with streams to wade,

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and raining, and I reached the base. I started up but the rain came
and snow was sticking up high. Easy climb though it would be in
decent weather, that's too much to ask of the Aleutians. I gave up and
headed home, having to use my compass to find my way in thick fog, rain,
and darkness.

At Dutch Harbor a few days later, I went up 1634' Mt. Ballyhoo, the
highest point on Kruzofsk Island, in about an hour. Ballyhoo sounds like
an MCA name, but only because it's a good one; Jack London named it. A
faint, direct trail comes up from the airfield; old World War II trenches
and bunker carved with soldiers' names grace a subsummit while the real
summit has only an ancient survey-flag base. On 18 September I climbed
2136' Pyramid Peak on Unalaska blueberry picking between rain squalls
en route. Atop the narrow summit ridge I was surprised to find a copper
register box attached to a post, and an Aleut later told me it was up
there before WW II. Unfortunately the lid has leaked for many years and
the papers inside were a sodden mass. I brought down this slimy pulp and
dissembled it with care, but was only able to make out parts of 80 inscrip-
tions out of what must have been several times that number. One date
seemed to be 1933. Two others were definitely 1947, but all the rest
were servicemen during WW II. Officers left hand-engraved calling cards;
others drivers licenses, draft registrations, union cards, social security
cards; there was even a scratched-on poker chip. Anyone returning there
should take my list in a watertight container.

At Cold Bay three times this summer I've wanted to climb 5784' Frosty
Peak, but the fog and rain have never let up when I've been there. So I
flew to Adak to sit out more storms and during a break one morning climbed
2115' Mt. Adagdek, learning the hard way that the northern summit (marked
by a few stones and old sticks) is highest.

Attu, in the same longitude as New Zealand, seemed most interesting of
the Aleutians, but that was largely due to the good weather I experienced
there, climbing Terrible Mtn., 2280; Weston Mtn., 1890;
Artillery Hill, 580; and Cold Mtn., 2300, during that period. Much of
the battle of Attu, the only real WW II battle fought on American soil,
was fought on the slopes of Cold Mtn. and there was so much shrapnel all
the way to the top that a climber has to be careful not to become a WW II
casualty.

As I reversed my direction and returned along the Chain in October, I
climbed 1995' Mt. Reed on Adak and made a bad weather attempt halfway
up Mt. Moffett. My last climb was 1100' Mt. Simeon on the Alaska Penin-
sula for a look at surrounding bigger summits already thickly snowcovered.

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