

Scree

which mountain?

Matterhorn

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
Vol. 9, No. 2
December, 1966

EVENTS TO COME

DECEMBER MEETING: Christmas party time! Meeting will be at Willow Park Community Center, 9th and Fairbanks, December 19, 8 p.m. (please be there at 7:45, so you can hear Hans pound the gavel on the dot of 8!). Bring a small Grab-Bag giftie--it can be funny or serious--some item of equipment or whatever that you have no use for, but which may be just the thing someone else has been looking for! Dig in the far corners of a closet for something appropriate for hikers and climbers -- a "survival" food item (e.g. fireweed sprouts), piece of gear (e.g. unmatched gaiters), or other bit that strikes your fancy (if you have to buy something, don't spend over \$2). Wrap said "gift" in proper Grab-Bag fashion (old sock, brocade) and come prepared to find just what you wanted in your Grab-Bag gift. Not only will there be refreshments, but the evening's program will feature Vin Hoeman, who will take everyone on a climbing adventure in South America. The "Five-Minute Session" this time will feature emergency gear--food, equipment, etc., and a short talk by Bill Babcock. He will bring samples but he wants other members to bring things too.

FIRESIDE SESSION, January 6 to start off the new mountaineering year. Gary Hansen, 272-1145, will host this part social, part informational get-together for members and nonmembers. Focus will be on emergency gear as noted above for the "Five-Minute Session" at the meeting, and people should bring samples if they can. The place for this fireside has not yet been set, so call Gary after January 1 to find out where to go.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: January 3, 8 p.m., 3104 W. 30th.

O'MALLEY PEAK, January 14, Gary Hansen, leader. This will be a one-day climb requiring the following:

- (1) Physical fitness -- 12 hours hard work ahead
- (2) Warm winter clothing -- possible 0° F. temperatures and wind
- (3) Food and drink for the day
- (4) Skis, snow shoes, shank's ponies, optional -- choose your poison
- (5) Ten Essentials -- Do you know what they are?

Call Gary at 272-1145 or inquire at MCA meeting about other details.

Nordic Ski Club Trips. Bill Hauser presently is working on a year-long calendar of trips by MCA, Nordic Ski Club, MCA McKinley Group, and others. Hopefully a winter-spring portion will be available to send out to MCA members with the January Scree. In the meantime, here are some Nordic trips coming up which MCA members who like ski touring might wish to participate in. Anyone wishing to go should know that before each two-day trip, Nordic has a meeting Thursday evening at Barney Seiler's Sports Chalet at 906 Northern Lights Blvd. Call him at 277-9018 to find out the time of meeting.

JUNEAU LAKE, December 17-18. There is a cabin available for the overnight stay. The tour will go from Cooper Landing to Juneau Lake (7 miles) and Swan Lake (11 miles). Those who tire first may stop at the first cabin and the rest may continue to the second. LEADER: Ken Flanigan 272-1813.

EARTHQUAKE PARK, Turnagain, December 18. Short tour beginning at 10 a.m. Meet at Massey's Chevron, 2800 Northern Lights Blvd.

O'MALLEY TRAIL, December 26. Meet at top of O'Malley at No. Hillside 9:30 a.m. LEADER: Pete Blewitt 277-6881.

EARTHQUAKE PARK, December 28. Moonlight tour. 7:30 p.m. Massey's Chevron.

CHUGIAK HIGH SCHOOL TRAIL, January 2. Meet 8:30 a.m. Safeway lot at 9th and Gambell. LEADER: Terry Fleming 272-2167.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS, January 7. Meet at 12 noon, East High School.

ARCTIC VALLEY AREA, January 8. Meet 8:30 a.m. Safeway, 9th & Gambell.

JOHNSON PASS TO MOOSE PASS, January 21-22. Overnight tour. LEADER: Barney Seiler, 277-9018.

JOHNSON PASS SKI DAY, January 22. Meet 8 a.m. Safeway, 9th & Gambell.

GRAND LAKE AREA MOONLIGHT TOUR, January 27. Meet at Dick Spils home, 7:30 p.m. For directions call 344-1440.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS, January 28. Meet 12 noon, East High School.

McKINLEY EXPEDITION TRAINING TRIPS. Training trips are being held by this group every 2nd and final weekend of each month. The 2nd weekend trip is instructional, and the final weekend trip is a climb in the Chugach or Talkeetnas. These trips leave Friday night. People interested in accompanying this group must have experience comparable to group members. Please call Bill Babcock at home, 277-4933, Monday or Tuesday evening. A three-day trip is planned over New Years, as well as the scheduled trips on 7-8 January and 28-29 January.

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, December 6, discussed trip planning and decided upon one trip per month during the winter. The status of the CA huts is in question because of native land claims and other claims.

BYRON PEAK, 4545' (?) June 25-26 Nick Parker

In the afternoon of 24 June Yoshio Inukai and I drove to Portage on our way to Byron Glacier and the peak at its origin. We stopped at the lodge and visited Shiro Nishamae and his wife. Yoshio was able to exercise his Japanese with them, which was nice because his English was limited to about three words. We walked in to the glacier and camped for the night.

On Saturday we arose at eight, greeted by a brilliant sun and windless, blue skies. We hastily devoured our seaweed and noodles, packed our sacks, and left. An hour's walk brought us around the first icefall and to the point where the rope was donned. Kicking steps up the 35-degree snow slope which leads to the lower ridge proved to be really tiring in the hot sun. Our work was soon rewarded by the panorama that was unfolding as we gained altitude. When we rose above the surrounding ridges, we could see clearly for many miles along the Turnagain Arm, and also watch smoke rising out of buildings in Whittier. We gained the rock ridge, and after several short pitches, followed it to within 100 feet of the lower summit. From the lower peak, an easy ridge flattened out into a short scramble up the rotten east face. We were afforded magnificent vistas from the summit and we lingered for over an hour on our lofty perch.

We contemplated various routes of descent and decided the icefall on the west side glacier side of the ridge separating Portage and Byron might prove a challenge. How right we were! We found the terrain very difficult, and after several pitches of highly technical ice, reached a point where a rappel of great duration was necessary. Having no pickets, we were forced to climb back out. After trudging up to the ridge, we thought the headwall below the summit might prove easier. It did, and two days later, we were in our tent cooking...and also very sunburned!

Sunday was also excellent, and we spent the day walking up, and skiing down, Byron Glacier. The snow was tremendous, and there were also some hair-raising jumps (probably concealed crevasses). We left when we ran out of food and light.

EKLUTNA TRAVERSE

August 16-21 (extended thru 26) Dave Meyers

Tuesday, August 16. At 5:30, Art Davidson deposited Nick Parker and me near the snout of Eklutna Glacier. This was the uneventful beginning of a six-day trip to Girdwood. The weight of our packs prohibited our establishing any speed records, but after eight hours of slow walking, and several naps, we reached the cabin at 1:00. Dinner tasted very good.

Wednesday, August 17. The weather was unsettled, so we scrapped a planned trip up Bellicose (7640'). We ferried our skis and the tent to snow line and cached them, so our loads would be more bearable when we proceeded again. We erected a plaque dedicating the cabin in honor of Joe Pichler.

Thursday, August 18. Our estimate of the wind was that it was in the neighborhood of 60 mph, gusting very frequently to 90. We stayed put. Occasionally the cabin shook. Attempts to get water proved hazardous.

Friday, August 19. This day the weather was better. We gathered our cache and proceeded to elevation 4900' of the left fork of Eklutna Glacier. It was snowing rather heavily, and during the snowfall, 8-10 inches were deposited. We named this "Camp Comfort" (in retrospect), as it was dry and warm.

Saturday, August 20. Today the weather was good! We saw the sun and had a view of the mountains around us. Camp was broken with haste, and we made good progress. We left at 8:00 and arrived at the top of the north fork of Eagle Glacier by 12:00. Then the weather showed signs of worsening. We got mixed up in a maze of crevasses on our descent of this glacier, and two miles of progress took six hours. On the main bowl of Eagle Glacier, we pitched "Camp Soggy" at 3600'.

Sunday, August 21. The wind was with us again, along with driving rain (instead of snow). We were due out this night, but had food for Monday if need be. We had to move, as our tent was in a bad location anyway. Our progress was slow, and after we had started up the southern fork of Eagle Glacier, we experienced very strong winds. Twice they knocked us down. This convinced us that to persist was to die. We pitched the tent. Once the wind snapped it from under 60-100 lbs of rock. An ice ax was in a peg loop, luckily. We retrieved the tent and anchored it more securely. Our situation was by this time very dangerous. We had food for one more day, no more than two. Our clothing was all soaked, as were our sleeping bags.

Monday, August 22. The blizzard still howled. We guyed the tent more securely. Today we ran out of food and fuel for our stove. The day was spent reading Roughing It by Mark Twain. It passed very slowly, that day.

Tuesday, August 23. Today it snowed, with some wind, but not as bad as Monday. For breakfast we had a bite of cheese each and "the last raisin." At 5:15 p.m. we heard a plane. We were out of the tent in no time. He saw us! I frantically tried to make an X (unable to proceed) out of our rope and some skis. The plane circled twice and left. We were very surprised to see planes today, as flying weather was of the worst imaginable.

Wednesday, August 24. The day dawned clear. We moved everything out to dry. No planes, and we were beginning to wonder where everyone was. We were guessing they think we are walking out. At 2:00 p.m. we attempted to get to Raven Glacier or Crow Pass, but we were too weak (we made 200 yards in 20 min). We returned and re-pitched camp in a dryer place. The night was partly comfortable for the first time in three days.

Thursday, August 25. Clear again! We proceeded to finish drying out. No planes. We prayed for one tomorrow, as we were very hungry and rather weak. We slept well the night as we were dry.

Friday, August 26. We awoke to one of the most beautiful sounds on earth--the drone of a plane! At first it didn't register. Then, after we were sure it was a plane, we were out of the tent. Paul Crews Sr. dropped us some food and many messages inquiring about our condition. We were across that we were in no shape to walk out. A little later, another

beautiful sound greeted us--a helicopter. The ride down the Eagle River Valley gave us a good view, but we were too tired to enjoy it much. In town, Nick and I found that we had each lost about 15 lbs.

We wish to thank Paul Crews Sr., Lowell Thomas Jr., and the USAF (Rescue Coordination Center and 21st Operations Sqdn) and all others who participated in the search and rescue efforts.

The most important things we learned from this adventure...or misadventure...were (1) we should have had more food, at least 4-5 days extra food and fuel (we had extra food for one day); (2) we needed a polyethylene sheet for the inside of the tent as protection against rainwater; and (3) we needed waterproof bags for our clothing and sleeping bags, as these got wet and therefore made us even more miserable and fatigued. We had too little sleep in wet sleeping bags. Also, perhaps for a traverse of this length, we should have had a party of four--two ropes--for greater strength.

O'MALLEY PEAK, NORTH RIDGE

October 16

Dale Hagen

The north ridge is an interesting route up O'Malley Peak, which Bill Hauser and I climbed and recommend to others. In my opinion, it is a touchy class 3 in winter, requiring a good lead, but the rock appears solid and there should be plenty of holds in summer. There is also opportunity for short pitches of class 4 climbing over some of the garnets, although these (you'll pardon the expression) can be skirted if you choose.

HELGA MOUNTAIN (not the official name) November 12

Carol DeVoe

On Saturday morning, November 12, after saying goodbye to brother Don who is now in the Navy, Dave, Lee, and I took off for a one-day climb up what is often referred to as Helga Mountain. This peak is midway between McHugh Peak and Indian.

We parked the car by the old log cabins at Indian and started up the Homestead road until we came to a gully that would lead us up toward the peak and get us through the brush. The skies were clear and the temperature around 20°.

As we approached the first ridge above timberline, we spotted some Dall sheep peering down on us. We got close enough to them to get a good look and for me a real thrill.

The last part of the climb was crossing a steep snow-covered slope and then the rocky ridge to the top, so we roped up. The wind was about 10-15 mph. By the time we reached the top, the sun was about to set, so we signed the register, looked at the sunset, and made a hasty return to get past the more difficult part of the trip before darkness set in. After unroping, we glissaded down until we reached the trees. We were thankful for Dave's headlamp to get us through the brush and back to the car safely.

This is a good one-day trip and not too difficult. We had a late start and ran short of daylight.

ESSENTIALS:

- 1) extra food
- 2) extra clothing
- 3) knife
- 4) map
- 5) flashlight
- 6) matches
- 7) compass
- 8) first aid gear
- 9) sunglasses
- 10) candle (or mittens)

...What additions do you favor?

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KENAI RANGE SUMMARY

Vin Hoeman

The Kenai Peninsula has a land area of about 10,000 square miles, larger than that of several of our eastern states, and well over half that area is mountainous. Well spread along the Kenai Range are 36 peaks exceeding 6000 feet elevation, the highest being 6612. Surrounded, except for a 9-mile-wide isthmus, by the northern end of the Pacific Ocean, the Kenai is Alaska's mild and wet "banana belt" of moderate temperatures, but the Kenai Range on the southeast side catches most of the precipitation, producing America's westernmost glaciers that reach the sea (the Dinglestad Glacier presently has that distinction) and two large, mountain-burying icefields.

The Indians and coastwise Eskimoid peoples had lived on the Kenai for many generations before the first Russian-Siberian promyshleniki (fur traders) visited about 1760. Not much is known of these earliest contacts, but when Captain Cook sailed the "Resolution" and the "Discovery" up the inlet that would bear his name, in May 1778, the natives already had beads and knives they'd gotten in trade. Captain Cook was forced to "turn again" when he discovered the site of present Anchorage where he hoped the Northwest Passage would be, but he sent Lt. King ashore on the Kenai side at what he named Pt. Possession on June 1, 1778, to bury a bottle with coins and a note claiming this land for England.

The Russians had a more valid claim and pursued it with a settlement at the mouth of the Kenai River about 1791. Here in 1842 Ilia G. Wosnesenski of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences learned that the Indians' name for the Kenai Range was Truuli (also written Truuli). Settlement was very slow until the minor gold rush of 1895 to the area around Sunrise and Hope and the consequent establishment of the seaport of Seward. Gold in the mountains and miners hunting sheep undoubtedly sparked the first Kenai mountaineering, but we have no record of it, and it was too utilitarian to be classed as sport. Dora Keen's 1911 ascent of Cooper Mountain, 5270, was probably the peninsula's first mountaineering for its own sake, but when Alaska's third and most important railroad to the interior was begun at Seward. In that sea-rail center of 1915, a barroom bet turned into a 1000-foot-elevation-gain mountain race that continues yet on Mt. Marathon each 4th of July, with the record time now 45 minutes for the round trip. In 1936, a Swiss immigrant, Yule F. Kilcher, got off a boat at Seward, and, hearing about the Homer area, he tried to get there by crossing the Harding Icefield alone. Saved from a crevasse only by the skis tied to his pack, he gave up the idea and walked around.

The first real mountaineering trip was a group including Bob Goodwin and Paul Livingston that flew in to Bradley Lake near the head of Kachemak Bay in July 1951. From there the two mentioned made the first ascent of a mountain believed to have been the 5850[±] highest point of that whole area. Iceworms were noted on the Dixon Glacier, and MCA has recently named this mountain Iceworm Peak.

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska came into being in 1958 and in August of that year challenged the nearest of Kenai's 6000 footers for the first time. Mat Nitsch, Keith Hart, and Ted Barrett didn't make Mt. Carpathian (the European-born Mat named this spectacular 6050[±] foot peak behind the head of Turnagain Arm) on that occasion, but on 7 May 1959, they did, coming by skis from Portage Lake, so perhaps it was the first first ascent made in the STATE of Alaska. Paul Crews Jr made three major attempts to make a second ascent by a new route, the short SW ridge, before finally leading a successful ascent with Kim Degenhardt, Jim Phelps, and John Fisher on July 1964.

On 22 July 1962, I made what was apparently the first ascent of Wolcot, 6250[±], perhaps the easiest of Kenai's 6000-ers just east of the Kenai River inlet of Kenai Lake. From this mountain I examined Peak 6210 immediately to the north across Victor Creek. Previously I'd admired its west side from Ptarmigan Lake in April 1961. Returning with Dave Johnston, the Robinson, Cliff Ells, Don Stockard, and Scott Hamilton on 18 May 1963, but Scott made the summit by the west ridge and, taking note of nearby Goose Glacier on the map, we called it "Big Bad Wolf Peak." However, the Committee on Geographic Names was a month from formation, and someone named this one Andy Simonds Mountain before we could act.

These are the only four ascents of the only three named 6000-ers of the Kenai, but presently our name, Truuli Peak, for the 6612' high point of the Kenai is being approved and a group of us soon hope to report on its ascent.

Besides these highest mountains, the traverses of the Harding and Sargeant Icefields are major mountaineering goals. The Sargeant was virtually crossed by a military group led by Hans Wagner and supported by helicopters in April 1965. Don Stockard led a group attempting to cross the Harding in 1963 and made the first ascent of a 5155-foot mountain we've named Phoenix Peak (after the "Phoenix" a ship built by the Russians in Resurrection Bay in 1794) at the edge of the icefield on 23 July. Winter ski ascents such as the first ascent of Kickstep Mtn, 4660, done by Helga Bading, John Dillman, and me on 4 March 1962, also deserve popularity.

The best climbs and traverses are still waiting to be done!

Cantata Attempt 2

THANKSGIVING WINTER MOUNTAINEERING
TRIP -- SOUTH FORK OF EAGLE RIVER

November 24-26

Dave Meyers

Thursday November 24. The morning dawns stormily. After meeting at 5:00 in the Safeway lot at 9th and Gambell, Bill Hauser, Hans Van der Laan, Nick Parker, Ed Boulton (a visitor from the Seattle Mountaineers), Dale Hagen, and I go to Flapjack Jim's to decide upon an objective. We decide upon the original one and soon are off up to "Throggs Neck Bridge" on the Highland Drive road into South Fork.

Shortly after we start, Dale turns back because snow is almost absent, and the rocks are tearing up his skis. Camp is reached about 3/4 mile from the smaller lake at near four o'clock.

Friday November 25. Dawn is clear and beautiful (a red sunrise). We begin skiing across a moraine to the small lake mentioned previously. After crossing, we head up toward Peak 6410 via the col between 4710 and 4755. We ski to the col, but advanced time forces a turn around where the fog has invaded (result of red sunrise), and our run down is a poor visibility. > Cantata

Saturday November 26. We have a clear morning, but no possibility of obtaining Peak 6410--at its upper 2000' is a steep and probably fourth class ride. We decide to return home, as several sleeping bags are becoming quite damp. The run out is good, and we are very spread out upon arrival. I arrive first at 12:30, Bill at 1:30, Nick at 1:45, and Hans and Ed at 2:30. The latter two experience ski difficulty; and sometime between Bill's and my descents, one of the homesteaders blows his road, so Nick throws his skis (Army surplus) away.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT ON FLATTOP

Gwyn Wilson

As the days grow shorter and the winter solstice approaches, one is reminded of the long days of June and the happy memory of mid-summer night. Prompted by Kerstin Pettersson and launched by Gary Hansen, it was announced that MCA would climb and hold a rendezvous on Flattop. All participants were urged to bring a log for the bonfire and firecrackers for the celebration.

While it was not a perfect June day, at least it did not rain, and this brought a large turnout. We started with a Land Rover full: 8 children, Grace Jansen, and me. The Ed Fishers with offspring were descending as we approached the half-way mark. As we neared the top, it was possible to watch the David Duncans pick their way down. We were greeted by "Plolets," Kerstin's doughty mountaineering dog, and on the chilly Flat-tops. Soon the DeVoe family appeared, followed later by the Wolfes. A goodly number prepared to spend the night.

Our descent we met Barney Seiler starting up. It was a lovely social event chattering with climbers all over the mountain. We could see the networks being lit on top, and below, a homesteader set off some in response. Over 35 people, by our count, took part.

Ready it is fun to look ahead to June of '67 and the "second annual MCA mid-summer night" on Flattop.

MISCELLANIE

MCA patches are available to members for \$1.00 each. See MCA treasurer Steffen Maagoe at the next meeting.

Art Davidson, Dave Johnston, Pete Meisler, and Vin Hoeman are currently working part or full time for various parts of the Institute of Arctic Biology, U of Alaska. Among other things, they are test subjects in an altitude chamber, having done tests at simulated elevations as high as 21,600. They live in an increasingly snow-covered one-room log cabin 28 miles away that serves as a northern outpost of the MCA hut system, and might, as such, be designated "Raven's Roost" (considering the treacherous occupants). Any MCA members passing through the Fairbanks area are invited to partake of their hospitality, but Bill Babcock and John Wolfe, who have already done so, might advise that you bring your own bedroll, food, water, and transportation, as these luxuries are in uncertain supply. It's the first place on the right beyond the KPAR transmitter on Farmers Loop Road.

MCA first aid cards are available from MCA secretary Helen Wolfe.

John Bousman is at 250 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass., but plans to move to Seattle or Anchorage come summer.

CORRECTIONS TO NOVEMBER SCREE: The Mitre-Ovis traverse by Bill Hauser and Vin Hoeman was made August 27, and Ovis Peak, 6350', was named after Chris dalli, the Dall sheep. Nick Parker and Yoshio Inukai were successful in their attempt at a new route on Peril Peak.

Gayle Nienhueser, John Wolfe, and Helen Wolfe have recently hiked the South Fork Eagle River Road to Bill Long's homestead and report that the region has good possibilities for snowshoe trips and cross-country skiing.

Mountain silhouette on page 1 of November Scree is Peril Peak in the Klutna Glacier region, Chugach Range, first climbed by Gregg Erickson, Olga Bading, Hans Van der Laan, and Jim Fraser.

Bob Hansen, Bob Spurr, Gayle Nienhueser, and Grace Jansen climbed Karmigan Peak December 4.

NEWS ON THE NEW VICE PRES: Frank Nosek...attorney...from Highland Park, Illinois...member Calif & Alaska Bar Assoc...he and wife Janet have one child...BA from U of Idaho...came to Alaska in 1960...has been climbing since 1956 in Bitterroots, Idaho, Tetons, Chugach.

The AMU-Alpine Journals matter has been settled satisfactorily.

CURRENT MEMBERS. Treasurer Steffen Maagoe reports that the following persons are paid up members of MCA and therefore will continue to receive Scree after this issue as will those who get their dues paid before January Scree is sent out (about January 10): Mr/Mrs Gene Angell, Bill Babcock & family, Jeff Babcock, Ruthanne Baird, Bud Bergman, Tony & Betty Beckstahler, Eric Bode, John Bousman, Lawrence Brown, Bob Byhre, Kayleen Cassidy, Lee Chandler, Paul Crews & family, Roger Crosby & family, Mr/Mrs DeVoe, Dr/Mrs David Duncan, Werner Egloff, Ray Genet, Lois Gunther, Pat Hackney, Dale Hagen, Donald Haglund, Bill & Sally Hague, Leo Hannan, Bob Hansen, Gary Hansen, Bill Hauser, Vin Hoeman, James Hughes, John Johnston, Grace Jansen, Dave Johnston, Bernie Kazmierczak, Tom & Harriet Lester, Carrie Lewis, Ron Linder, Marie Lundstrom, Dick & Betty Lyons, Steffen & Marge Maagoe, John & Joanne Merrick, David Meyers, Malcolm Peters, Gayle Nienhueser, Frank Nosek, Kerstin Pettersson, Ruth Schmidt, Edward & Elinor Schuck, Barney Seiler, Clarence & Judith Serfoss, Ted & Callie Shohl, Bob Spurr, Hans & Callie Van der Laan, John Walker, Rod & Kenneth Wilson, John & Helen Wolfe, James Tesch,

WHAT IS THE OUTING THAT WAS... A certain chairman of Alaska Rescue Group was to be rescued. He was shipwrecked with a girl on a deserted island on the coast of British Columbia in mid-November. After spending a night on boughs, they spent the next day signalling all air and sea traffic. They finally were rescued in the evening by a fishing boat.

The Executive Committee decided to dispense with membership cards from now on, as the supply is about gone, and their value is limited compared to their expense.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!