

SCREE

December 1969

mountaineering club of alaska box 2037 anchorage, alaska vol. 12, no. 12

DECEMBER MEETING... Monday December 8 at 8:00 P.M. ... Ben Crawford Memorial Park, 3rd and Eagle... The program will be a slide show and discussion of Chugach Park planning... Information on the Winter Mountaineering School will be discussed and made available.

#### CLIMBING AND HIKEING SCHEDULE

December 6-7 (Saturday and Sunday)- GOAT MOUNTAIN 6380'. In area of Crow Pass. Tentative plans are for Dec. 6. Leader: Steve Hackett, 344-6215, eves; 277-1481, days.

December 13-14 (Saturday and Sunday)-INDEPENDENCE MINE. Climbing, skiing (IH & X-C) camping - whatever is your thing. Coordinator: Karen Courtright, 277-3843, eves.

December 17 (Wednesday) - THEORETICAL SESSION for winter mountaineering and survival techniques. Sign up at December meeting.

December 20-21 (Saturday and Sunday) - ANNUAL FLATTOP SLEEP-IN combined with introductory Winter Mountaineering School. This will be the 4th annual winter sleep-in on Flattop. MCA makes two annual trips to Flattop - on the longest and shortest days of the year. Leader: Nick Parker, 279-6611 days, 277-2030 eves, before 9:00 P.M.

January 10 (Saturday) - ESKA MOUNTAIN 5680' near Sutton. Leader: Peter Vlasveld, 754-4119 days; 272-8326, eves.

No hikes or climbs are scheduled for the holiday weekends.

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CASTLE MOUNTAIN 5530' (South Face) Sept. 28, 1969 Bill Babcock & Karen Courtright

About a mile past Kings Mt. Lodge a left turn takes you to the Chickaloon Rd. This road follows the Chickaloon R. for about another mile, then swings left. A short distance after the left turn, another turn to the right takes you up to an abandoned coal mine. This can be driven by any car in summer. West of the

mine a deep gully running from the south face of Castle can be seen. We started climbing slightly to the left of this gully as the base of it is a vertical waterfall. We went up a steep scree slope and through a steep chute to the right of the scree slope. This got us above the waterfall. The rest of the climb is favoring traverses to the right. Always choose to seek a way around obstacles rather than climbing over them. The rock on Castle is sediment and offers very little security; it will not hold a piton and crumbles underfoot. We found that time and again our traversing to the right brought us to the massive southeast buttress which is not climbable. We then backed off and tried to find a way upwards with minimum exposure. There is not any route on the face that does not have considerable exposure and should not be attempted with beginners. However, throughout the whole climb there was only one pitch that needed a secure belay, which of course we didn't have. Fortunately for us we had reached the summit and were descending before it began to snow and rain making the descent quite hazardous in spots.

TEMPTATION PEAK 5350<sup>+</sup> 50'October 18, 1969  
(Anchorage A-7 quadrangle)

Grace Hoeman

Ah, this was going to be a second ascent, I thought. Puddles in the Oilwell Road prevented our car from advancing to the birch marked by three blazes (some years ago, that is) leading to Chester Creek and we (April Allen, Chuck Pease and I) parked and charged up a gully and a ridge north of Chester Creek instead. Soon a black bear mama and two cubs ran fast as they smelled us, laboring trio, and a small flock of willow ptarmigan followed suit in the air. Over the ridge and down into Ship Creek's west fork, we went, across the creek and up Temptation's west ridge, allowing ourselves few stops to fuel these hard efforts. Kickstepping up Temptation, an unmapped lake became visible at the foot of Temptation's gendarmes and enchanted us and cameras clicked. On the top we stood shortly after midday, emptying an oversized register bottle that told us that Spurr, Hauser, Seiler, and Sullivan were here first in 1966, but that Pettijohn really was here first in 1956 and shot a ram right here and was back in 1967, but no ram then.

A gendarme traverse being too treacherous this time of year, and daylight hours too short, we slid back into the valley, up the ridge, down into Chester Valley (a mistake) and around to our car. After miles of marching tank trails, left-right, up-down, right-left, we found the car just before we collapsed. Ah, what exercise, we should be in good shape for Rainier!

(I checked Vin's records, a bit late perhaps, and adding Pettijohn x 2, they showed that April, Chuck and I were 6th. Hoeman was tempted in 1953, but defeated by muskeg and mosquitos and named the peak Temptation - an official name now - in 1963.)

"PTARMIGAN MOUNTAIN"

October 25, 1969

Ned Lewis

After being left off at 7:15, I began walking from below the cabins near Flattop to the base of the north ridge. I arrived there at 8:45 and took a brief rest, noting the exceptional warmth and blue sky. In a slight wind I strolled up the ridge, eyeing a few small faces, which offer some nice upper 5th and aid climbing. After passing over a few chosen pitches (5.4) and a bit of snow, I lay on the summit in warming sun at 11:00. A hot cup of jello and a pop-tart found me moving upwards towards Flattop. I traversed all high points and came to my let-off point at 3:30, strolling shirtless. A beautiful view of McKinley, Hunter and Foraker was presented from the summit.

POPOCATEPETL 17,887'

June 13-16, 1969

Bill Babcock

From Mexico City one can reach the National Park and drive to the base of Popocatepetl in a few hours. A modern autopista speeds you to the turnoff to Amecameca all on paved roads. From Amecameca a good dirt road travels 28 km to a parking lot and a large stone edifice somewhat suitable for base camp. One or more men assist climbers by protecting their gear, providing water, and giving advice. These men do not generally climb the mountain. From January until late June climbing is at its best in Mexico as it is the dry season. Arriving with my family we set up a tent and spent several days just walking around and acclimatizing. I feel that unless one lives in Mexico City or at 7,500 ft more or less it is best to feel acclimatized before one attempts the volcano. The mountain is climbed frequently on weekends but seldom during the week. On the 16th, feeling quite acclimatized at the 10,000ft level, I started up alone at 5:00 AM. The route is called "Number 3" and consists of a good trail to the base of the volcano and a somewhat well-marked scramble up to the first hut at about 13,500 ft. Keeping on the rock above the glacier at the base of a steep cliff to the right called Castillo, one ascends to 15,500 where a second hut has been constructed. Just in case anyone gets overconfident about the relative walk-up nature of the mountain, numerous crosses bear witness to deaths for one reason or another. From the high hut a direct route to the glacier can be attained easily. The problem is that this shoulder is only a few hundred feet across and the approach to the glacier considerably less. In a storm or bad weather there is no other easy return to the high hut, as in many places the glacier overhangs and makes descent impossible. With crampons and ice axe one climbs straight towards the summit. The water forming rivulets was not drinkable due to the sulphur taste. Occasionally sulphur fumes are so strong that one can hardly keep from vomiting. It is best to sit and wait until the ill wind stops blowing rather than persist under these conditions. Keeping a slow but steady pace, I reached the summit quite exhausted and cursing myself for not bringing good water with me. The crater is estimated to be more than 1,500 ft deep average and considerably more in other places. Whitish-green fumes continually poured forth; neither snow nor ice remained for long down there. Completely exhausted, I returned to the tent at 8:00 P.M.

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#### More on "Ptarmigan Mountain"

In reference to Rod Wilson's article on "Ptarmigan Mountain" in the November SCREE, Bob Spurr offers the following comments: "For the record, Bill Hauser and Scott Foster made a prior winter ascent of the north couloir Feb. (?) 1966, however, only to the east summit (4880'). In fact, Bill's climb inspired me to organize ours the next winter. Our routes coincided until high on the face where Bill and Scott had followed a line which took them east of the east summit, while we followed a direct line to the saddle between summits (being intent on both). They did not leave a register - obviously I left the plastic register during the intervening summer and forgot to enter their names. No doubt this point had been climbed previously. One sorry note: on that July 10 climb a high wind tore several entries from Bill Hague's hand when he opened the register on the west summit and they were lost, so the record is slightly incomplete. See SCREE, February 1967, p. 5.

#### MCA Profile: Vice President STEVE HACKETT

Born in Monterey, Calif., raised in National Park Service - Rocky Mtn., Everglades, Tetons, Yellowstone, calls Estes Park, Colo. home...holds degrees in geophysical engineering and master's in engineering (geology) from Colo. School of Mines...now a geological engineer with Union Oil Co...worked in Alaska the past 3 summers and decided to move here this summer...has hiked and climbed as long as he can remember...Devil's Tower, as a teenager...has rock climbed in Rocky Mtn. area...hobbies include skiing...water skiing...scuba...archery-hunting...soccer...raising St. Bernards.

## BITS AND PIECES

MCA'ers might be interested in reading Dave Johnston's beautiful tribute to Vin Hoeman which appears in the 1969 American Alpine Club Journal (p. 501-503).

FOR SALE: (cheap!) - 2 pairs of hiking boots, with good soles; one pair has good water-proof job, the other needs minor repairs. Roughly size 41-42 (women's 9-9½; men's 8½). Call April Allen, 333-7231, or come to the December meeting to see them.

Art Davidson's dramatic story of the 1967 winter Mt. McKinley expedition "Minus 148<sup>0</sup>" is now on the bookstands. It was just published by the Norton Co. of New York and costs \$5.95.

Grace Hoeman informs us that the Federal Board on Geographic Names approved the following: Mt. Alpenglow, Arkose Pk., Byron Pk., Cul de Sac Glacier (Cathedral Spires), Bogsled Pass (up Craigie Creek), Matanuska Pk., Resurrection Pks., and One Shot Gap (on Don Sheldon's route to the Kahiltna Glacier expedition landing site). Future map revisions should show these in print.

A new membership list will (hopefully) be printed with the February SCREE. Please make sure that your dues are paid and that your address and phone number are up-to-date.

A typographical error in the November SCREE said that family membership dues were \$7.40 - that should read \$7.50!

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