



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

DECEMBER 1972

VOL. 15, No. 12

IMPORTANT: CHANGE OF MEETING DATE

DECEMBER M.C.A. MEETING - ONE WEEK EARLY

DECEMBER MEETING IS DECEMBER 14, 1972...Thursday, 8:00 PM, Central Junior High Multipurpose Room

PROGRAM: Mini-show: Ski Touring Film by Bonna of Norway  
Main Program: Climbing in Korea by T. J. Bruce

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Since this is the time of year when climbing activity and related outdoor sports are at a minimum (witness this month's dearth of climbing reports!), as MCA'ers wait for the weather to stabilize and the snow to build up, perhaps a few observations concerning the present Mountaineering Club are appropriate. The MCA has always been primarily a climbing club, with its purpose the enjoyment of the mountains in our backyard and throughout the State. The focus of the Club has been on the summits, but many of its members don't go beyond the valleys and ridges. Does the Club adequately meet the needs of these middle-altitude enthusiasts? Does it, for that matter, meet the needs of the climbers?

The MCA experienced a big jump in membership in the years 1968-1970. Since then, membership has been fairly stable. Most of the newer members and a majority of the pre-1968 members also, seem to be vicariously interested in winter, expedition, or technical climbing. Attendance at meetings has been fairly good and most MCA'ers seem to enjoy the slide shows and accounts of trips to the higher and more remote peaks. But most of our membership doesn't participate, either in one-day climbs or longer assaults. Our meager climbing schedule and our present difficulty in scheduling future climbs (and locating a climbing chairman!) emphasize this fact.

Should the MCA then formally raise hiking to the status of an acceptable outdoor activity, by promoting a hiking schedule and a hikes chairman? This basic concept was proposed at the last Board meeting and was mentioned at the November general meeting. I personally believe that the time is ripe for this approach since many of our present members restrict their own outdoor activity

to hiking, or x-country skiing in the winter. In addition, the publication of 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA can only enhance the hiking membership prospects for the future.

The MCA is the only self-propelled outdoor organization in the Anchorage area which tries to promote year-round outdoor activities. But winter climbing seems to attract only a hard core at the present time, due to the cost of specialized equipment and the unknowns of a hostile environment. And summer climbs seem to draw only a handful of participants. I believe that some scheduled cross-country ski tours in the winter and equivalent hikes over similar terrain in the summer would reach much of our membership, especially those anxious to meet other members and to "circulate" among the people who are knowledgeable about the area and familiar with good places to hike to. This has been an important function of the climbing schedule, and a hiking schedule could serve a similar purpose.

Certainly the MCA should not turn into a "hiker's" Club exclusively. But who can claim that it is presently only a "climber's" club, either? The Club should serve the needs of its membership, and there is more than enough room for both species in our outfit. We might hope that some of the hikers would become interested in climbing, but if they do not, what other organization than the MCA is available to stimulate their interest in the Alaskan out-of-doors?

- Tom Meacham -

#### C O N S E R V A T I O N   C O M M E N T A R Y

Input into the five-year plan for operation of trails in Chugach National Forest is needed. It is planned to use heavy equipment to construct about 150 miles of new trails and I believe this could be done more effectively by teenage students brushing out already existing trails. For example, there are plans to relocate Gull Rock Trail using heavy equipment. Another example is the planned relocation and widening of Bench Lake Moose Pass Trail using mechanized equipment. This contract has not been let yet, but we feel pressure should be applied to the Forest Service to use the existing trail which is presently in good condition and only requires brushing out and a couple of foot bridges.

Also, the Conservation Committee needs people. If you are interested, please contact me at the MCA meeting or by phone - 344-0458.

- Barbara Winkley -

#### W I N T E R   M O U N T A I N E E R I N G   S K I L L S   C L A S S will be

held near Anchorage during the latter part of January. It will be a one-day school with knots, belaying, ice axe arrest and avalanche safety. Final details will be in the January SCREE. It is not a hard ice school but a snow school.

BOARD MEETING - January 9, Tuesday, 9:30 PM at Mari Lundstrom's, 1601 F Street.

#### H I K I N G   A N D   C L I M B I N G   S C H E D U L E

ANNUAL FLATTOP SLEEP-IN, Dec. 30 - 31 - Sat & Sun. Celebrate New Year's Eve one day early! Leader to be announced at the meeting in December. As always, bring a log for the fire.

CONDENSED MINUTES of the MCA meeting held on November 16, 1972

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Meacham. Treasurer Gil Todd gave the following financial report: Income - \$111.70, Expenses - \$18.00, Balance-cash - \$34.85, Checking - \$185.49, Savings - \$157.97, Brooks Range Fund - \$200.00. Art Davidson, MCA member has been chosen to be a member of the Land Use Commission. The MCA Board believes hiking should continue to be emphasized as well as climbing and that there should be no separate sections for either at this time. 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA is available by mail from Gil Todd: \$7.15 plus 50¢ postage for members; \$7.95 plus postage (50¢) for non-members. Joanne Merrick described the new tent now available for rental. It is a 2-man Sierra Design, Glacier model with alcove and cook hole. Barb Winkley reported that the Conservation Committee needs people. She especially wants input into the 5-year plan for operation of trails in Chugach National Forest. It is planned to use heavy equipment to construct about 150 miles of new trails and Barbara believes this could be done more effectively by teenage students brushing out already existing trails. As an example, she pointed out that there are plans to widen the Gull Rock Trail with heavy equipment. Charles Rigden from Alaska Rescue Group asked for volunteers for that organization. Potential members must be at least 21 years old and have a fairly good background in mountaineering; however, they need not be experienced in rescue work because that training will be provided. Stanley Kaufman is working on Park Service recommendations for the Brooks Range (known as the Gates to the Arctic area). He has asked for names of people who know routes and climbs in the central Brooks Range. It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that Doris Curtis represent MCA on the Parks Council. This group meets twice a month at AMU. John Baxandall asked for input in trying to establish areas for skiing which would be closed entirely to snowmachines. The area of interest covers McKinley south and as far east as the Wrangells. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Dona Agosti, Secretary

THE HUMP

June 14, 1971

Hiroshi Ohtsu

The mountain we have climbed

The Hump, St. Elias Mountains

The day we have climbed to the top

Jun 14, 1971

The route

From the col between The Hump and Mt. Huxley

Member

Hiroshi Ohtsu

Seiichi Tanabe

Belonging to the Ryoyu Alpine Club, Tokyo, Japan

The time of mountaineering

Between Jun 6 and July 5 in 1971

Bush pilot

Mr. Mike Stone

Wilson Air Service, Gulkana

EDITOR'S NOTE--RE: A NICE DILEMMA FACED EACH MONTH. Condensing what was said in SCREE five years ago this month and ten years ago is always difficult 'cause some of the flavor, the individuality and of course, the details and interesting and/or humorous happenings on the trip and/or climb cannot be conveyed in several sentences. This month you get to enjoy a longer reminiscence with me. -kms-

WHAT-SCREE-SAID-WAY-BACK-THEN-DEPT.

Ten years ago - December, 1962 - 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 Airstrip 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-roof trapper'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.

Believe the Editor in 1962, Gwynneth Wilson wrote the following RIDDLE in the December, 1962, SCREE: 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.

Five years ago - December, 1967 - "'CANTATA PEAK'" First Ascent August 26, 1967 6710' NCCS II, P5...via Southeast Ridge by Dave Johnston

"Karen Courtright and I didn't get very far above the highest homestead up the South Fork of Eagle River Friday evening, August 25, before darkness determined that we camp. A newlocked gate, built by homesteaders in defense against thieves and vandals, forced us to park some five miles below the end of the road. Future parties would do well to know someone with a key.

"Our Fortified Oat Flakes were so deliciously trimmed with Milkman, sugar and mounds of blueberries that it was 8 the next morning before we waddled away up the valley. Fortified as we were, and encouraged endlessly by Violets, the van der Laan's famous dog, we should have made good time. But you must allow for our lack of willpower concerning blueberries. I could write a dissertation on this delicacy, but suffice it to say, it took us four hours to cover the four level miles around the north shore of Eagle Lake to the 500' cascade where the valley steepens. Another thing we discovered en route is how comfortable gravel bars can be for naps.

"As the sun cruised by its apex, we began getting our bods in gear. Also, fortunately, blueberries began to dwindle. We followed Bill Hauser's and Bob Hansen's route to the col between 'Icy Peak' 6810' and our 'Cantata Peak' 6410'. (See July SCREE for Bob Hansen's account.) From that pass we had our first good

look at the gendarned southeast ridge. Rock on the crest looked temptingly solid, but it was 3 p.m., so we thought we'd do best to follow the line of least resistance. A talus shelf contouring around the right side of the ridge seemed best, so we followed it a quarter mile or so to the base of a deep, prominent couloir. We scrambled several hundred feet up this dark, rotten crevice until a steep section forced us to rope up.

"Until this point, Violets had run circles around us. But here, no amount of determination could compensate for her tendency to overbalance. Again and again she tried to follow Karen up the pitch. Again and again she peeled off with crinous sounds of scraping and scratching followed by the rumble of a Chugach crudfall and the odor of burnt rock dust. Our hearts were in our mouths when she finally retreated to the bottom of the couloir to seek a better route.

"Karen and I were on our second roped pitch (F5) when we spotted Violets heading back up our gully, deftly dodging the cannonade we couldn't help dislodging. Somehow she reached the foot of the steep section and began singing a most mournful lament. The quavering, sorrowful howls that reverberated up the black gully were completely unnerving. I suggested turning back, but luckily Karen wouldn't hear of it. The third roped pitch proved to be much better: Rock was more solid; we crested the gentle ridge, and best of all, we couldn't hear Violets as well!

"A goat peered curiously at us from the gentle southwest slope as we scrambled the few hundred yards to the summit by 5:20. Goats may have been to this small, rounded summit before, but as far as we could tell, no people had. So we collected our first first-ascent summit kiss and then set to work: I to build a cairn and place a register, and Karen to photograph the sunset over Cook Inlet."

A NOTE ON THE NAME "CANTATA PEAK" by Karen Courtright

"Since Symphony Lake has been submitted as a name for the small lake southeast of Eagle Lake, and in keeping with the idea of naming geographical features in the same area with related thematic names--in this case musical terms--we decided to name 6410' 'Cantata Peak' to continue the musical idea started by Bill Hauser's suggestion of the name Symphony Lake."

#### B I T S   &   P I E C E S

The Board empowered Tom Meacham to act in behalf of the MCA in the execution of the Brooks Range Trust. Any action on behalf of the Club will be presented to full membership for ratification.

On December 8, 1972, Ray Causton and Kathy Selken were married. Our home is in Muldoon. We will be busy remodeling it after January 9th when we return from a three-week honeymoon to Idaho, Seattle and Hawaii--two weeks in Hawaii, naturally. Ray is a Special Officer for the Alaska State Troopers and I will continue to work as a secretary in the Division Office of the Alaska State Troopers.