

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

December 1985

Volume 28, Issue 12

DECEMBER MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, December 18th at 7:30 p.m. at the Fairview Community Center, 10th and Karluk St., Anchorage. After the business meeting Doug Fesler will present a program on Avalanche Awareness. Also, to celebrate the holiday season we will have Christmas cookies for refreshments. BRING YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS GOODIE TO SHARE.

MINUTES FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The meeting was held November 20, 1985 and called to order by President Mark Findlay at 7:40 p.m. The reading of the minutes for October was waived.

The club welcomed new people.

TREASURER'S REPORT

\$ 267.33 - Petty Cash
2,712.68 - Money Market Rate Plus Acc.
558.02 - Checking Account
\$3,538.03 - Total MCA Monies

- (1) Membership for single members: \$7.50
family members: 10.00
- (2) All memberships expire on 12/31/85. Dues paid after October 1, 1985 will be applied to 1986 memberships.
- (3) Dues paid after December 31, 1985 will be charged the new rates:
Single: \$10.00
Family: 15.00
- (4) Membership cards are not mailed, unless a self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed. Mail dues to:

MCA
Box 102037
Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Attn. Treasurer

I. Old Business

None.

II. New Business

- A. Tim Neale announced that the Hatcher Pass Management Plan is having a public meeting on Monday, December 9, 6:30 p.m., Central Jr. High. The Department of Natural Resources of the State of Alaska is forming a plan to determine what to do with the land in Hatcher Pass. Some ideas are a Land Giveaway, Urban Development, Mining, or more Recreational Use. He announced an outdoor coalition formed by the MCA, Nordic Ski Assoc., Knik Canoers and Kayakers and a few others. The coalition is concerned with the main "pass" area and surrounding mountain areas and would like to preserve them for recreational use only (meaning no motorized vehicles), limit the commercial development and mining areas, and would like to designate the Mint and nearby glacial areas as a semi-wilderness (meaning non-mechanized). Tim encouraged everyone to attend the meeting and voice their opinions.
- B. Sandra Constantino, Hatcher Pass Project Manager, urged everyone to attend the meeting mentioned above and support the MCA and coalition's views. She also announced an open house by the Hatcher Pass Management Plan for viewing the maps and to answer questions. The open house (was) Nov. 25th at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bldg., first floor meeting room, 1101 East Tudor.
- C. The issue of raising dues to Single \$10.00 and Family \$15.00 as of December 1, 1985 was brought up. The increase was justified due to increase in postage rates for mailing Scree, increase in municipal rates for meeting rental facilities, and insurance. The increase of dues is needed if the club is to continue to upgrade and purchase equipment and/or library shelves. It was pointed out that dues are not being raised because of one-time expenditures such as the purchase of the slide projector or other such equipment.

Tim Neale suggested raising class fees or charge rental fee for the club equipment.

Reggie Buchanan suggested we postpone raising dues until December 31, 1985, so it can be announced in the Scree before it actually takes effect.

A motion was made to raise dues as of December 31, 1985, and was

seconded. This motion was carried, 45 for and 13 opposed.

III. Announcements

- A. Dave Pahkle asked the club members not to overuse or abuse MCA rental equipment.
- B. John Dillman announced the postponement of his Telemark Class until further notice, however, interested beginners can still sign up. Contact John Dillman 279-1246.
- C. Michael Rees is getting together an order for lightweight snow shovels and needs 20 or more people to get a good price on them. He already has several people interested but will take more. Call Michael at 563-8276.
- D. Rob Schwebel (was) looking for others who would be interested in a Thanksgiving outing to the Mint Glacier Hut, or another place. Contact Rob at 562-4352 or Mark Skok at 274-3934.
- E. Outgoing President Doug Van Etten was presented with an ice axe in thanks for his efforts during the past year.
- F. The MCA library is located at Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking, 2633 Spenard Rd. Anyone interested in helping to put the library in order please contact Kathy Burke at 346-2841.
- G. Ed Bovey sold calendars for \$7.95, \$3.00 of which goes to the MCA.
- H. The next meeting of the MCA will be held at the Fairview Community Center, 10th and Karluk, 7:30 p.m. This is due to the Pioneer Schoolhouse being closed during December.

Mark Findlay adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Thanks to Todd Miner for his slide show on climbing in Ecuador, some of its culture and lots of its pigs.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Burke

-----WE NEED YOUR HELP-----

If you want the backcountry snow stability assessments and mountain weather forecasts issued by the Alaska Avalanche Center to be as accurate and specific as possible, lend us your eyes and ears. A snow stability assessment is only as good as the data it is based upon. In forecasting for Hatcher Pass, Chugach State Park, and the Kenai Mountains, we have a tremendous amount of area to cover especially since the mountain snowpack is highly variable. We are out in the field almost every day of the week, but we need as much data as we can get. We urge you to call in observations of snow instability (e.g., recent avalanche activity, evidence of recent wind-loading, whumphing noises, shooting cracks, hollow sounds...) to our avalanche information hotline. The number to call is 276-3689. It's a recording line, so just leave your name, phone number, and a message describing when, where, and what you saw. It won't cost you a thing if calling from southcentral Alaska.

IN RETURN--you will be able to receive accurate, detailed avalanche advisories and mountain weather forecasts for the southcentral mountains, updated twice daily throughout the winter. The number for this 24-hour conditions recording is 271-4500. Check out conditions before you head into the backcountry.

ALSO:

One of 6 sets of the David Ridgely Taylor memorial collection of avalanche literature has been donated to the Alaska Avalanche Center. Assembled by Dr. Alice Bovard-Taylor in memory of her son who was killed in an avalanche in Utah, the collection is small but comprehensive. The selection ranges from easily read general books to highly technical aspects of snow formation. Important, historical, out-of-print sources are also included. The objective of the collection is to make avalanche information readily available to mountain travelers and researchers. You are invited to borrow the available books and articles. The collection is housed at the University of Alaska's Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center located at 707 A Street in Anchorage.

For further information about backcountry observations or the collection, please call the Alaska Avalanche Center at 271-5099.

TRIP REPORTS

Bold Valley Overlook

October 26, 1985

We left the Eklutna Lake parking lot under clear, cold (12 deg.) skies. A mist was rising from the lake and the Twin Peaks were smiling as the sunrise spread down from their summits.

We hiked 5 1/2 miles around glacial green Eklutna Lake. Actually the hiking was interrupted by a few spurts of slipping (don't ask!) and a few comments about next time leaving our skis at home and bringing our mountain bikes.

We turned onto the well-marked, well-maintained Bold Valley Scenic Overlook Trail. Flocks of redpolls chattered above us, and in the snow all along the trail were fresh tracks of rabbits, squirrels and mice. Snow crystals showered us all day and we enjoyed inspecting the perfect 6-point patterns caught on our sleeves.

Up the ridge towards the overlook the snow was 4-inch powder, the temperature was 5 deg., and there was a constant breeze. At the overlook Dall sheep tracks were all over the ridges and Bold Peak towered above us. Cold toes hurried us off the ridge and back around the lake. Couldn't have asked for a better 17-mile day or funnier (?) company.

The bold ones: Steve Harder, Kathy Burke, Steve Jones, Dan Nellis.

Bold Leader

A Quick (and well-deserved) Thanks

I'm sure everyone has their own ideas on what makes a good instructor: but it took attending the recent MCA Beginning Mountaineering class to observe and impress upon my mind a few good instructor/leader qualities. In bitter cold conditions, there was never any faltering in the patience of the instructors. They took time in setting up safe instructing areas, always explaining why things were the way they were. There was always a perfect balance of positive-reinforcement and gentle-encouragement towards each individual student. There was always present a kindness and genuine concern for each student's safety and comfort; and that made it easy for some of us "hesitant students" to relax and learn as much as we could.

The leaders were all well supplied and ready to relieve any mental or physical discomfort. They were open enough to take time between lessons to point out spectacular mountaintop sunrises and sunsets, a group of Dall sheep not more than fifty yards away, the beauty of individual snow crystals and a lonesome wolf howl.

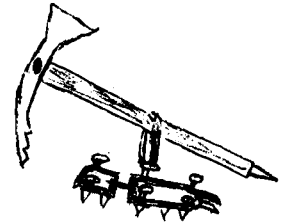
The MCA is full of very "mountain-wise" people, that are more than willing

to share their knowledge. I have found these same qualities in teachers of every MCA class I've taken: it's only up to you to go and learn.

Now, if I can only learn the trick to being a good student! Thanks to some great instructors: Tim Neale, Willy Hersman, Rick Maron, Mike Miller, Jennifer McCaffrey and Sandi Foster.

Special thanks to Bruce Tremper who taught us how to use the Pieps, but more importantly taught us how to avoid avalanches so that we wouldn't have to use the Pieps!!!

Beginner Mountaineer

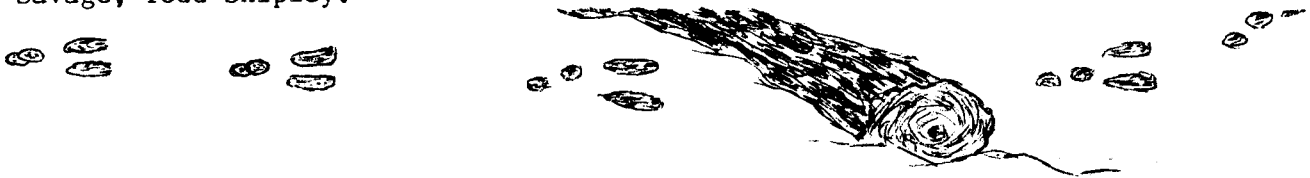


The Perch

Nov. 16

Early morning, good skies and five degrees, we hiked fast so our toes wouldn't freeze. We saw fresh tracks of rabbits, spruce grouse, squirrels, lynx and mice, frozen blue waterfalls and feathered hoar frost on the river ice. The one-inch powder show made some spots slippery for hiking; the views from the perch made lunch really exciting. On our hike back, shared trail-tales warmed our hearts, but it took the warmth of the visitor center to defrost our other parts.

Perch pals: Kathy Burke, Carol Gilbert, Steve Harper, Dan Nellis, Mary Savage, Todd Shipley.



No Turkeys at the Mint

For the last half dozen years or so somebody has gone up to the Mint Glacier Hut for Thanksgiving; sometimes it was a simple group, sometimes it was very elaborate, with whole turkeys, dressing, yams, etc. Some people may have even complained that it was a bit too crowded. This year the Mint Hut was a cold, lonely place, left to the sleeping marmots. Mike Miller and I knew something was different when we broke fresh tracks up the Little Su Valley on Friday, after Thanksgiving. We looked up from the valley and saw no signs of life. Not a single linked turn on the glacier, not a single kicked step down back-door gap.

We figured that if no one else was going to be up there, why spoil the solitude. After a night bivied by a large boulder, we got up under clear skies on Saturday, climbed Telemint, and skied out by headlamps to the roadhouse. Where was everybody?

Willy Hersman

DECEMBER - JANUARY

8 AVALANCHE AWARENESS \$2.00 762-4523 HANUKKAH	9 HATCHER PASS MANAGEMENT PLAN 6:30 CENTRAL JR. HIGH 15 th + C ST.	10	11	12 REI SKIING SAFETY CLINIC HELD AT PHYSICAL THERAPY BLDG 272-4565 7:00	13 HATCHER PASS: BACK- COUNTRY AVALANCHE HAZARD EVALUATION + RESCUE (THRU 16 th) \$95 + Books 762-4523	14 WOMEN OF THE WILDERNESS XC SKI CLINIC \$35 694-7304 ALSO KAYAKING BAJA 694-7304
15 WOMEN OF THE WILDER- NESS XC-TRACK SKIING \$15.00 694-7304 NORDIC SKI ASSOCIATION NANCY LAKES BUS TOUR 277-0842	16	17	18 MCA DECEMBER MEETING 7:30 FAIRVIEW COMMUNITY CTR. DOUG FESLER ON AVALANCHES!	19 AUDUBON 7:30 AT CENTRAL JR. HIGH 10 th + C ST. 694-3786	20	21 MCA ANNUAL WINTER SOLSTICE SLEEPOUT AT FLAT-TOP 337-8666 NORDIC SKI ASSOC. EAGLE RIVER SKI TOUR/HIKE 277-0842
22	23	24	25 NORDIC SKI ASSOCIATION RESURRECTION PASS SKI TOUR (THRU 29 th) 277-0842 CHRISTMAS	26	27 THOMPSON PASS: BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE HAZARD EVALUATION + RESCUE (THRU 30 th) \$95 + Books 762-4523	28 NORDIC SKI ASSOC. FULL MOON SKI TOUR CHUGACH STATE PARK 277-0842
29	30	31	1	2	3	4 NORDIC SKI ASSOCIATION TWENTY-MILE VALLEY OR TUENAGAIN PASS 277-0842
5	6	7 SIERRA CLUB 7:30 ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH 276-4048 WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY	8 NORDIC SKI ASSOC. JANUARY MEETING 7:30 CENTRAL JR. HIGH 15 th + C	9	10	11 WOMEN OF THE WILDERNESS TELEMARK \$35 694-7304

DECEMBER - JANUARY

ADZE

Blue Water Paddler, the Alaska ocean kayaking quarterly, has available a 1985 holiday greeting-note card. Designed and created with air brush techniques by well-known Anchorage artist, C. K. Weaverling, this card combines elements of the sea, a kayak, and the Alaskan winter night sky. Order for \$10 per dozen cards with envelopes: BWP Greeting Cards, Box 10-5032, Anchorage, Alaska 99510. For single cards contact your nearest sea kayaking retailer.

Winter Solstice Sleepout

Just a reminder that the sleepout on Flattop will go on as it has in the past. Be prepared for a cold, windy night to celebrate the longest night of the year. President Mark Findlay says he will be going up sometime in the afternoon on Saturday, December 21st if others want to join him. Rides can be arranged by calling Mark. Phone number on back of Scree.

Halley's Comet

Chugach State Park, as part of its winter activities schedule, will have a program on Halley's Comet at the Eagle River Visitor's Center on December 14th, from 7-9 p.m. An indoor slide program will be followed by outdoor viewing (if skies are clear). Bring binoculars and very warm clothes. Pre-registration is requested. Call Eagle River Visitor's Center at 694-2108.

Wondering About Those False Summits?

According to the Colorado Mountain Club, for a peak to be considered a separate peak, that summit must be 402 meters (1320 ft.) away from the next nearest summit, and there must be a vertical drop of no less than 91 meters (300 ft.) from that summit to the saddle connecting it to the next nearest summit.

History Corner

Only Conjecture

The photo is not very impressive; a man with baggie Army pants, knee-deep in snow, lowering a large log, his back to the camera, ice axe beside him. Such pictures in a book usually draw one's attention first since they probably record some significant event rather than display artistic ability with a lens. Here was no exception. After reading a few pages I realized that this was the last picture ever of Vin Hoeman; taken just seconds before an unlikely ice avalanche would rip through the mist, sweeping Vin and six others forever away. The mountain was Dhauligiri. The book, which is in the MCA library, is "Mountain of Storms" by Andrew Harvard and Todd Thompson, N.Y.U. Press, 1974.

The book deals mostly with the American expedition to Dhauligiri in 1973, an expedition which would attempt the same objective as the ill-fated 1969 trip:

the southeast ridge of the mountain. A mountain which had been climbed only twice before, never by Americans. Only two chapters are devoted to the earlier trip.

The 1969 Expedition was put together in just three weeks by the well-respected leader, Boyd Everett, Jr., a veteran of many successful Alaskan expeditions. They flew to Kathmandu in April, 1969 and had established base camp at 15000 feet by April 20th. The climb never really reached even the base of the southeast ridge. The sudden avalanche of the 28th happened at 17500 as a crevasse bridge was being made. Lou Reichardt, who had taken the picture, was somehow standing in a safer place than the others. He alone survived.

Lou would return in the 73 expedition, which was led by Jim Morrissey. Nineteen pitches on a steep, ice and snow face would be required to reach the top of the southeast ridge. John Roskelley would be among the first to reach this point, where his feet would dangle over each side of the ridge. He would sit, exhausted by the altitude, and realize as he looked ahead at the long, long knife ridge that the route would simply not go.

Much more than three weeks had been used to prepare for the 73 expedition, but one source of information might have easily saved them the trip to that ridge: a close flyover. Vin Hoeman is an MCA legend, nothing could ever change that. But I had to pause for conjecture. The book says a flyover might have been the difference between failure and success on the ridge in 1973. What about 1969?

(In 1978 the route was finally climbed. By the Japanese. At a cost of three lives.)

Willy Hersman