



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

DECEMBER 1986

Volume 29, Issue 12

DECEMBER MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, December 17th at 7:30 pm at the **Z J LOUSSAC LIBRARY, PUBLIC CONFERENCE ROOM, LOWER FLOOR, 36th and DENALI St.** After the business meeting, Dan O'Haire will show slides of past MCA trips on the Harding Icefield.

MINUTES FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The meeting was held November 19th at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, and called to order by President Mark Findlay at 7:45 pm. The reading of the minutes for October was waived. New members and guests were welcomed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

\$ 198.75 - Petty Cash
918.74 - Checking Account
3,344.03 - Money Market
\$4,461.52 - Total MCA Monies

We are currently accepting membership dues for 1987. It is \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family. Dues can be mailed into the club with a self-addressed, stamped envelope (if you wish your card to be mailed to you.) Dues must be received by DECEMBER 31ST for 1987, if you want to continue getting this newsletter.

MCA
Box 102037
Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Attn: Treasurer

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Outhouse Committee

The committee inspected the Rent-A-Can previously discussed and came to a consensus to build one instead. It will be made out of pressure-treated

wood and metal, which should discourage porcupine cuisine. The outhouse will be pre-fabricated, hauled in by sled to the Mint Hut and stored until spring for installation.

B. Scree

Articles for the newsletter are welcomed, so if you do a trip please feel free to write it up. Information on publication can be found on the back. Thanks to Doris Curtis and Priscilla Lukens for taking over the mailing of Scree .

II. OLD BUSINESS

None.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. New officers and board members were introduced. Members were encouraged to suggest new activities and ideas for the club. If you have any ideas or thoughts let one of them know about it.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Annapurna Circle Trek

Nepal, September 26 to October 24, 1987 is still open. The cost of the trip is \$1810. For more information write:

Kathleen Byrne

Box 4864

Davis, CA 95617

916-756-5168

B. Telemark Clinic

with the Nordic Ski Club is on Dec. 5 at AMH.

C. Moontables

were provided by Rick Maron to the club.

- D. Jim Breun announced that he would like to climb Denali or Foraker this spring and is in need of partners. Contact Jim if you are interested.

E. Northern Lights Calendars

were offered by Ed Bovy at the meeting for \$7.95. Part of the proceeds sold during the meeting go to the club. It is a beautiful calendar and may also be picked up at the Book Cache or Stuart's Photo.

- F. Rick Maron announced two ski trips, Dec. 6 and Dec. 21. See Upcoming Trips for details.

- G. Chuck Chapman announced he had reservations for a cabin in Snowhawk Creek for the weekend of Dec. 6th. All members were invited.

- H. Stuart Ollanik asked for volunteers for Alpine Alternatives. They lost all state funding and need people to volunteer their time. If you can help contact Stuart at 279-4506 or 272-7913.

V. MAIL

American Alpine Journal, Chicago Mountaineer, Trail and Timberline, Heritage Newsletter, REI Schedule of Events, National Forest Recreation Association, Climbing Magazine, Proposed Easements of the Gana-A-Yoo, Matanuska Valley Moose Range Management Plan.

VI. POLITICS

- A. Stuart Ollanik informed us again of the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' proposed plan to widen the Seward Highway. The Resurrection Pass Trail near Juneau Falls will be affected by the expansion. He provided the club with an easy-to-fill-out questionnaire so we could meet the Nov. 21 deadline for expressed ideas.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

A special thanks goes to Nigel Young for sharing his experiences in Antarctica. It was a marvelous slide presentation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marcy Baker

ADZE

For Sale:

Climbing rope, Edelride Dry Classic LD
9 mm, 90 meter
Never used! Never unravelled! Brand new!
\$135
Joel Ivey 274-9482 762-4204w

UPCOMING TRIPS

- December FLATTOP
20 Annual overnighiter spent on the summit to watch the solstice go by. Meet at Glen Alps at about 3 p.m. Don't forget your headlamp and Jack Daniels.
Leader: Willy Hersman, maybe
- December SKI TOUR
21 10 to 12 miles. Place to be determined by snow conditions. Leader will contact sign-ups by phone prior to the trip. Beacons and shovels required.
Leader: Rick Maron 338-6969
- January MINT HUT
2-4 Three day trip. We need people to help haul in the outhouse. Skis, sleds, winter gear, no tents needed. Good times.
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132

January MOOSWA PEAK
10-11 Above Silvertip Cr., Kenai Mts. Some climbing experience required.
Shovels, beacons, and avalanche knowledge mandatory. Call leader.
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132

Climbing Notes

Ben Bensen reports that he, Jeff Johnson and Mike Serofchuck made it to the summit of Mt. Kiliak (7450), a rarely-visited peak above Eagle River valley, on October 19th. Their climb was from Icicle Creek, a repulsively brushy little stream running between Kiliak and Yukla. Kiliak was first climbed by Vin and Grace Hoeman and Dave Johnston in 1968 from the Kiliak Glacier just west of the peak.

TRIP REPORTS

The Tusk First Ascent June 21, 1986

I was psyched. The portable holds, a slippery wet gully, and rockfall had taken its toll. How did Paul Belamy lead this thing? It wasn't very hard, maybe 5.7, but it was nasty - loose and wet. It was here that Paul took a twenty-foot leader fall on a bolt left by a previous party. I reached for the only decent-looking hold with my left hand. In horror, I watched a melon-sized rock rip loose and crash onto my thigh. I cursed at top volume. Paul asked if I was alright. It hurt, but nothing worse than a bruise. Hurriedly, I clipped the haul rope into Paul's pack, and thrashed my way to the top of what we were calling Elephant Gully.

Once out, I breathed a sigh of relief and began hauling the pack. I'd pulled in about 30 feet when the rope went slack and I heard a crashing sound below; the pack was gone. I instantly was flooded with guilt and self-anger. In my fear-induced haste I had clipped the haul rope into the accessory straps - not the stronger shoulder straps. I told Paul what had happened and apologized profusely. Not only was the day's climbing at an end, but also, I suspected, was Paul's camera and binoculars which were in the pack.

Paul was forgiving. I was hoping that the Tusk would be forgiving on a second attempt. I had visions of being "gored" by this giant horn of rock. Downclimbing the 50 deg. couloir was as nerve-racking as the loose rock had been in the gully. Having left crampons and ice axes near the bottom of the Tusk, we had planned the day as only a reconnaissance. At the bottom of the couloir I looked up at the route. At the top of the couloir is a jagged finger of a rock, pointing savagely at the Alaskan sky. It struck me as signaling a particularly obscene gesture.

The Tusk was first attempted in 1971 by a strong team led by Steve Hackett. We had seen a "note-bottle" stashed at what Hackett termed "Disappointment Col" at the top of Elephant Gully. They were stopped cold by a blank headwall on what we called Walrus Buttress. We had a good look at it that first day, and it looked like it was going to be bolts and thin placements in flared cracks. It looked slow.

When I interviewed Fred Beckey for a profile last year, I ran across a story about the Tusk in the book World Climbing. Beckey and Eric Bjornstad hadn't succeeded, yet it was easy to see why they wanted to climb this remote fang of rock, it looked like something out of Patagonia. Though not nearly as high as Fitz Roy, the Tusk bore obvious resemblance to that or perhaps Bugaboo Spire. When I confronted Beckey with questions about this prize, he reluctantly admitted that it had never been climbed. Beckey had described it as "the worst rock I've been on in twenty years." Hackett's party made the same comments.

Bjornstad told me that at one point a ledge had broken loose, and a rock "the size of a TV set" had tumbled down, nearly hitting him. Both he and Beckey had been hit by rockfall, but not injured. Bjornstad confided that the party was "pretty psyched-out." I saw the Tusk as an irresistible challenge; besides, the rock didn't look that bad in the photos.

The most impressive challenge is the West Face, rising vertically 2,000 feet, it may someday give fine Grade V or VI routes on Yosemite-like granite. But the summit - by whatever route - was our goal and the South Arete appeared most feasible. And our first attempt had failed.

Paul and I returned to our base camp on the west side of the Tusk. This trip had the added company of my wife, a pleasure I'd never experienced on longer expeditions. Far from loved ones, I often developed a hard shell that wasn't easily cracked by homesickness. Though she is a capable climber, we felt it was best for Jennifer to stay at base with our CB radio and do the thinking for us in case of the unthinkable.

We were off the next day at 6:30 a.m. Paul's pack was undamaged when we found it in the moat of the couloir, 800 feet from where I dropped it. His camera and binoculars, however, were a total loss. Controlling fear was foremost on my mind as we hiked around to the east couloir, the start of our route. It was clear that Hackett and Beckey had picked the best possible route. About midway up the east couloir we heard a reassuring sound; Lowell Thomas' Helio Courier. He had come to check on us, and we waved as he made several passes.

Climbing the couloir with ice axes was more secure. We ascended 500 feet up the east couloir to where it narrowed, scrambled into a horizontal moat where we began climbing the rock on the right. The first pitch (class 4) ascends parallel to the couloir. The second pitch bears up and right into a dihedral (5.5). The third pitch enters Elephant Gully. There is a bolt about halfway up the pitch, which is fortunate. There is another bolt for a belay at the top of the pitch (5.7). The day before we had fixed a rope on this. Halfway up I heard Paul yell. His arm had been hit by a baseball-sized rock. He wasn't sure if it was broken.

"I don't feel any protruding bones," yelled Paul. "Let's try for the col and we'll see how I feel."

Despite a big swelling knot near his elbow, he stoically decided to continue. After snorting out an arsenal of bolts, pitons, rurs, bashies and hooks, I scrambled up the exposed ridge to the Walrus Headwall. The left (west) side of the Buttress looked loose and improbable. I was skeptical about the prospects to the right, but it looked better than the headwall. After a forty-foot horizontal traverse I looked up into a reasonable dihedral and smiled.

"This is it!" I yelled.

Leading the first pitch of untouched granite, I expected more of the same loose rock. Instead I found solid alpine granite. The following two pitches were class 5 with a few hard 5.8 moves. In less than an hour we had solved the major crux of the Tusk: the Walrus Buttress. Lucky route finding made it three pitches of 5.8.

The remaining six pitches were very enjoyable but easy (class 3 to mid-5) on more good granite, often on only one or two pieces of protection. It was my first virgin summit.

All around was a sea of mountains and glaciers, most of them as untouched as was the Tusk. We shook hands and built a cairn. The 20 or so rappels were tiring but uneventful - except for one thing. Our camera got left on the top of the Buttress. Shades of Maestri and Cerro Torre? No proof that we made the summit? Maybe such doubts can entice a second party up the Tusk. They can have the camera.

Gary Speer
Lewiston, Idaho

The Rainbow Scramble

The last hike on the summer hiking schedule went out with a blast. Good day, good people, good mountain. What more could you want? Eleven of us scrambled out of cars and up the trail towards Rainbow Peak. Anyone who has been even a short way up Rainbow Peak knows there is lots of scrambling involved.

The sun wasn't out but the clouds were high and we had good views of Turnagain Arm, Resurrection Pass Valley, the South Suicide and McHugh Peak. There was lots of wildlife to see too. A snowshoe hare, a couple of moose, several Dall sheep, some pine grosbeaks and a white ptarmigan.

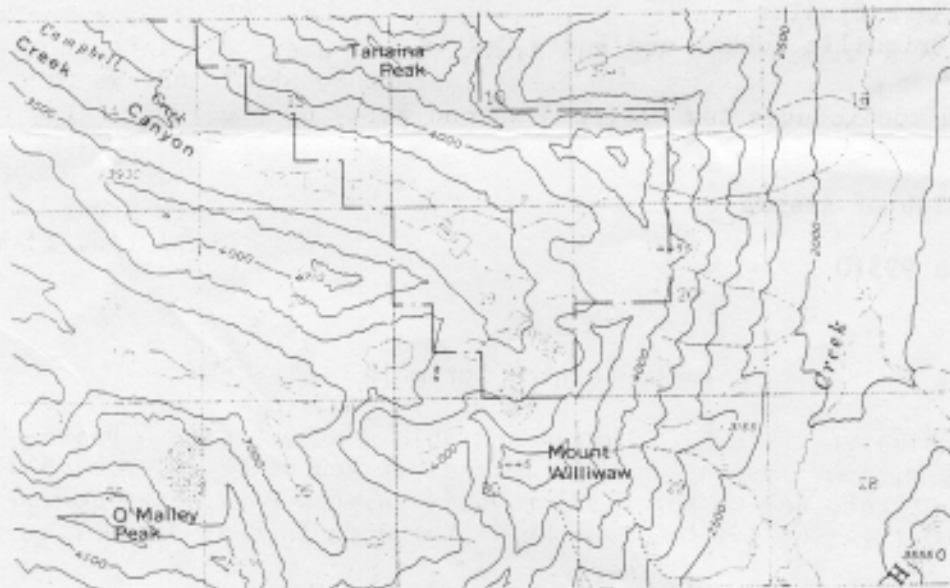
We all huffed and puffed up the ridge, on the scree we all took a bunch of different routes to the top ridge and everyone made it to the peak for lunch. That is everyone except me (the chicken-outs caught up with me within yelling distance of the peak, I didn't think anyone could hear all that bad stuff I was yelling.) Well, it was a little chilly up there and we all headed down. The scree was good for a glissade. Other places along the way down were rocky chutes. These chutes left some of us with holes in the seats of our pants, and we bragged on and compared these at several reststops. Nothing a roll of duct tape wouldn't fix!

Don picked a good day for the hike. The next day there was snow halfway down Rainbow. Don Hansen, Todd Shipley, Linda White, Jane Stammen, Doris Curtis, Kathy Burke, Susan Parry, Ester George, Pauline Dickie, Sylvia Lane, Helen Mandzik.

Kathy Burke

MAP TRIVIA

Answer to last month: The Tusk.



Question: What is the 4710' peak above Williwaw Lakes? And...
What is the 5150' peak southeast of Tanaina?

MEETING LOCATION CHANGE

**Z J LOUSSAC LIBRARY
PUBLIC CONFERENCE ROOM, LOWER FLOOR
36th and DENALI St.**
