

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

December 2007
Volume 50 Number 12

How strange that nature does not knock
and yet does not intrude
Emily Dickinson

Mountaineering School 2008!!
Lake Peters, Canning River
Marcus Baker Redux
Peak 3560
Fiddlehead
The Parent Trap
Wyoming
'Appolo' Peak – POM

Monthly Meeting
Wed. December 19 @ 7:30
Program: Christmas party and member
slide show (see inside)

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

"To maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering"

Join us for our club meetings the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9th and G Streets next to the Phillips Building (you may use marked parking after hours)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at www.mcak.org

Cover photo: Amy Murphy hiking on Shaman Dome Ridge in the Chugach. Photo by Ron Ramsey. Article next month.

Article Submission: Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can also attach a word processing document to an email. Due to formatting problems please do not submit material in the body of an email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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Correction: Some Screens escaped last month with the name of Mt Godwin incorrectly listed as 'Goodwin'. It was correctly identified in the body of the article. The Scree for download on the website is correct. *Ed.*

50th Anniversary Committee

In 2008 we celebrate the 50th year of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. The MCA Board is recruiting members to serve on the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee. The Committee is looking for input on planning events throughout the year and ordering commemorative t-shirts, water bottles, etc., among other projects. Members with an MCA history and anyone with good ideas are welcome. Please contact Bridget Paule (silene.acaulis@gmail.com) or Annette Iverson (Iversonannette@yahoo.com) if you are interested in helping plan or have an idea to share.

December Club meeting (Christmas party)

The Monthly meeting will be the club's annual Holiday Dinner and slide show. The MCA will provide the meat, condiments, and beverages. Members provide the rest. Please do not bring your best serving utensils—any items left will be donated to the church. Use the following "last name" guide, which is different from previous years:

A-C Pasta, rice, potatoes, stuffing
D-H Dessert
I-M. Veggie dish
N-R Chips, appetizers
S-Z Salad, Fruit Salad

Membership slide show: Members are welcome to bring 10 to 15 slides to present to the club. We can accommodate both digital pictures and slides.

If you want to sing Christmas carols, show up early.
Amy Murphy will play carols on the piano starting at 7 PM

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

December 1, Avalanche Mountain

Class C – Ice axe, crampons, snowshoes and avalanche gear needed, Early start, contact Tim Harper at silvers78@gci.net

December 2, Rabbit Lake day hike

Snowshoes or skis may be needed depending on conditions, contact Tim Harper at silvers78@gci.net

December 8, Ptarmigan Peak

Class C, Ice axe, crampons, snowshoes and avalanche gear needed, contact Tim Harper at silvers78@gci.net

December 8 - Annual Tree Decorating/Ski Trip

Class B - Join us for this annual, festive holiday trip where we stop to decorate a tree alongside the trail as we journey back towards Williwaw Lakes. Meet at the Glen Alps parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Bring lunch and skis, snowshoes, ornament(s) and holiday hats. We will sing Christmas carols throughout the day! We usually return before dark. Trip leader is Amy Murphy: hayduchesslives@yahoo.com.

December 9, the Ramp

Class C, Ice axe, crampons, snowshoes and avalanche gear needed, contact Tim Harper at silvers78@gci.net

December 22–23 Ship Creek trail clearing

Ski from Arctic Valley into the Ship Creek drainage. Loppers are best for trail clearing; avy gear, weather dependant. Stu Grenier oinkmenow@hotmail.com

December 29–Jan 1, Lost Lake, Clemens Cabin

Ski Touring and Telemarking ~12 miles round trip. Class B, Leader Greg Bragiell 569-3008, Snowshoers welcome.

January 12-13, Grant Lake ski touring

Class B, elevation gain 400'+, distance 6+ miles. Sign up at the December 19 MCA meeting

January 19-20, Powder time

Let's find some of that January powder that everyone talks about. Maybe Girdwood's Winner creek or Hatcher Pass. Randonee or Tele gear, avalanche gear (and know how to use it). A limited number of beginners will be allowed to join the crew. Contact: seanbolender@yahoo.com

February 23-29 Resurrection Pass ski touring

Class C, Tele in American, Alfonsa and Abernathy drainages. Elevation gain 2000'+, distance 36 miles+ Enter and exit from Hope. Sign up at the January 16 MCA meeting.

March 1, Indian to Arctic / Arctic to Indian day ski

20 mile traverse, A classic backcountry ski in the Chugach State Park. Ability and endurance are a must, conditions may be tough. Touring gear with metal edges, avy and survival gear and a good attitude are required. Plan to stage cars at both ends for carpooling. Weather dependant. Stu Grenier, oinkmenow@hotmail.com

March 7-9 Bird to Arctic ski traverse

Class D, elevation gain 2300'+, distance 26+ miles Sign up at the February 20 MCA meeting.

March 24-30, Bomber Traverse

Lane, snowbird, Bomber, Mint Huts. Class Glacier, elevation gain 6,100'+. 23+ miles. Sign up at the February 20 MCA meeting.

April 5-6, Eklutna Traverse training weekend

MANDATORY training weekend for Eklutna traverse participants.

April 27-May 4, Eklutna Traverse

Pichler's, Hans' and Rosie's huts, Class Glacier, Elevation gain 6000'+, distance 30+ miles. Sign up at March 19 MCA meeting.

MCA Basic Mountaineering School 2008

January 31 to March 2

Want to learn how to survive and thrive outside in Alaska's winter? How about climb a mountain or cross a glacier? If you do, get ready because it's time for MCA's Basic Mountaineering school again. We will teach you all the above and a lot more January 31 through March 2nd. Evening classes will be held every Thursday and some Tuesdays. Make sure to reserve your weekends for fun in the outdoors sessions.

Sign up will be held at the November, December and January MCA general meetings. A small fee of \$80 (that's not a misprint) is charged to students to help pay for classroom space and equipment replacement (ropes, etc). Instructors get in free so volunteer if you qualify and can help.

The course will include the following classes each being taught as an evening classroom session followed by a one or two day weekend field trip.

The course consists of the following classes:

- Knots, equipment, clothing and nutrition

- Navigation, winter camping and snow shelters

- Avalanche

- Snow climbing (self arrest, anchors, roped travel, crampons) with a separate field trip climb

- Glacier travel and Crevasse rescue

MCA Mountaineering School makes a difference



During the 2007 snow caving weekend, Guillaume Jean, a Frenchman in Alaska for just three months, learns to drink California wine out of a box. Is good, no?

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Lake Peters to the Main Fork of the Canning River

by Don Hansen



Mt Chamberlin ridge
Photo by Randy Plant

The five of us: Randy and Yukiko Plant, Amy Maclean, Jim Szender, and I drove to Fairbanks on Thursday July 19th. We stayed in a B&B and flew with Wright Air on the 20th. Three of us went to Fort Yukon and two to Arctic Village to catch our Yukon Air charter Cessna 185 to Lake Peters on the north side of the Brooks Range/Franklin Mountains. We got dropped off on a short tundra strip at the foot of Mount Chamberlin on a sunny afternoon. We went for a short hike to the lake to investigate the buildings of the William Holms Research Station located on the east shore of the lake but were stopped by the ranging torrent of water coming out of Chamberlin creek and we didn't want to get our feet wet to look at buildings.

Saturday morning the 21st of July we woke up to thick fog down to the deck and it didn't start to burn or lift till about 10 AM. Randy, Yukiko, Amy, and Jim started up the Chamberlin ridge on a long ascent up Mount Chamberlin (a 6,000 ft plus climb) while I rested my cold that I came down with just before the trip. I checked out the route up Carnivore creek and hiked a short ways up the ridge that afternoon for views and pictures. Jim and Amy came down to camp in the afternoon after getting up to about 5,800 on a very tough going steep talus ridge. Randy and Yukiko came down early that

evening after getting up to 6,800 ft with still a long way to go to the 9,020 ft summit of Chamberlin.

Sunday July 22nd began with low fog. We waited till late that morning to break camp after our tents dried before heading up Carnivore creek. We checked out two possible places to cross the swollen creek where it braided into 3 forks. The first didn't look too bad but the second seemed better. I crossed the first two braids easily and located a spot where the 3rd braid was widest and the water flowing slowest. We crossed there without any difficulty. We traveled along the west side of the creek and found a grizzly bear kill site of a caribou. There wasn't much left but the hooves and part of the lower legs of the animal and a patch of blood. There were lots of caribou tracks funneling through the rocks along the creek where the kill had occurred. We setup camp within about a mile of the 800 ft pass between Carnivore Creek and Franklin Creek. The next morning Monday July 23rd we headed up stream to the pass and huffed our way up the steep talus and tundra slope resting more than half way up the slope and reaching the pass for lunch. There were great views up and down Carnivore creek including views of the glaciers feeding the creek. Next we headed for the small lake just below the pass but found no good campsites along the shore. We headed down to a small fast flowing creek on the

other side of the pass and setup camp on a tundra bench at the bottom of a talus slope along the creek. We spent 2 nights here.

Upper Carnivore creek from the pass



Photo by Don Hansen

Tuesday July 24th we went for a day hike up the ridge above camp. There were great views down Franklin Creek and the Canning River in the distance. The next day July 25th we broke camp and headed down to Franklin Creek. We spotted an easy place to cross the glacier fed stream where it was wide and braided. We went about another mile on the south side of the creek on a bench above the creek and setup camp next to a small but deep lake in which we went swimming that afternoon during the 70's heat of the day. The water was cold but not too bad and was refreshing. On Wednesday July 26th Randy and Yukiko climbed up a ridge 5,500 ft above camp while Jim, Amy and I rested and went for a short hike up the ridge above the lake. We all spent time picking blueberries that were very abundant at our campsite and along the lakeshore and on tundra slopes above the lake. I saved some for my oatmeal in the morning.

Friday July 27th we broke camp at the lake after early morning showers and headed along the bench above Franklin Creek avoiding thick willows along the streambed but sloshing through boggy tussocks along the tundra bench. After about 3 miles we crossed a swollen tributary of Franklin Creek after locating a wide spot in the creek where the current slackened. We went another 2 miles through patches of tussocks and setup camp on a bench just above Franklin Creek between rain showers and sunshine. The next morning, Saturday July 28th, during a break in the showers we broke camp and hiked the 6 miles to the lower lake above Franklin creek traveling high on the bench above the creek to avoid tussocks as much as possible. We had to bite the bullet and drop into the tussocks for the quarter mile to the lake where we setup our next camp. We spent 2

nights here and picked lots of blueberries, hiked around the lake and watched a red-necked loon and arctic loon on the lake. On Monday July 30th after the fog lifted we broke camp and hiked the mile and a half to the Canning River and traveled up stream on a bench above the river

for the first mile and then dropped down to the river and traveled on gravel bars for about a mile crossing a small tributary of the river. We avoided getting our feet wet by hiking along a river channel just below a steep bank and cliff for another mile and setup camp on a river flat next to a willow thicket. Tuesday morning July 31st we were awoken by crashing sounds in the willows and a grizzly bear that ran up the bench along the river above camp. He must have smelled us or my dirty smelly-socks and wanted nothing to do with us.

We continued on hiking along the river gravel bars crossing a major tributary of the Canning that was braided and easy to cross. We were forced to ascend the bench along the river to avoid a main fork of the river. That afternoon as dark clouds were coming from the north I decided

not to try to cross the last swollen tributary of the river before the airstrip location marked on the map but setup camp on the bench above the river. We had about 10 minutes to find campsites and setup our tents before the downpour began. This turned out to be a good decision with the rainstorm lasting through that evening. Wednesday August 1st we broke camp after the rain and crossed the torrent stream at its mouth with the Canning River and headed along a gravel bar for about a mile till we were forced up on to the bench above the river where we tromped through the tussocks. After going about 4 miles to where we thought the airstrip should be according to GPS coordinates we spotted what look like a gravel strip along the river below. We decided that we better check it out so we bushwhacked through the willows down along the river. A shriek of joy from Yukiko indicated that she had found the airstrip. We walked down the airstrip and found a campsite nearby in the willows. That evening a large band of caribou cows and calves came down to the river near our camp and several snowshoe hares visited our campsite and cook site. The hare's droppings were everywhere around camp and the willows had been grazed by them within about 2 feet from the ground.

Thursday August 2nd we called Yukon Air pilot Kirk on the satellite phone to notify him that we had made it to the airstrip and asked about when he'd be picking us up on August 3rd. Randy and Yukiko went for a hike up a 5,000 ft plus ridge above the river while Amy, Jim and I hiked along the river near camp between rain showers. Friday August 3rd Yukon air picked us up late in the morning and dropped us off at Arctic Village where we waited till early evening for the flight back to Fairbanks and the drive back to Anchorage on Saturday August 4th.

Marcus Baker Redux, May 2007

By Marcin Ksok



This trip was going to be different, we allowed what seemed like plenty of time - ten days. A small team of four pulling light loads should make for a straightforward, successful bid for the summit. We planned to follow the 2005 MCA route up Knik glacier. It was fairly free of crevasses and safe. It took a while to assemble a committed team which consisted of Greg Encelewski, Sam Pepper, Rocco Robilotto and myself. Problems started even before we headed out. Four days before departure date I learned that our pilot Mike Meekin changed the flight arrangements without informing us - instead of the promised two planes we were only getting one and his son-in law, Matt, would be flying us in, therefore we had to go in individually equaling a five hour ordeal just to get on the glacier. It was quite a disappointment.

Sam, Greg, Marcin and Rocco



So there I was, enjoying the sunshine on Knik glacier, watching clouds roll in from Prince William Sound, airplane disappearing behind a ridge, hoping not to

spend next couple of days in a tent by myself. Luckily, five hours later our two rope teams were skiing up the glacier, clouds were now pouring over the ridge on our right and quickly filled the valley. We knew the general direction of travel and kept on going. Around 8,700 feet we came up on a crevasse field. Since this was Rocco's first trip like this, he was put up front. He skillfully zigzagged around divots in the snow, crossed bridges, and almost made it over one of the last ones, but his sled went in. I held it tight and put in a picket, with Greg's help the sled was rescued and we moved in closer to the ridge on our right, trying to avoid more holes. By the time we reached 10,200 feet the weather had deteriorated, the temperature dropped to zero and the wind picked up. 10,200 became our hangout for the next three days. It snowed six to seven feet, we dug and dug, read books and built a snow cave.

Marcus Baker



On day five we woke to a decent morning and lots of fresh snow. We gave it a go, but going was tough, ski



Marcin

post holing up to our knees in powder proved difficult. After a couple of hours we were near the ridge, negotiating a bergschrund which formed where ice pulled away from the ridge's rock. Greg led the way but had to turn back on the first attempt. On the second he made it through and positioned himself on a small ledge on a steep ridge. I was last to go through and sunk in after swapping skis for crampons below the ledge.

Thankfully Rocco had me on a solid belay and I was able to get out of the hole with Greg's ice axe. Continuing up the ridge we got hit with a strong gust and kept punching through windblown snow. Visibility deteriorated. Steeper ground ahead was not inviting in these conditions therefore the attempt was abandoned. Skiing and postholing awaited us on the way back due to more snowfall which filled our tracks. Thursday, due to an eye injury Sam had, and avalanche danger after such heavy snowfall, we turned back, got socked in before the crevasse field and were forced to set up camp.

Friday was beautiful, sunny and warm. As we passed next to a huge ice fall, things let loose. From a comfortable distance we enjoyed a spectacle of falling ice and snow debris. After studying surrounding mountains we noticed many avalanche tracks that came down after the storm. After getting down to landing zone around 8,000 feet and recovering our cache, we built the last camp and sunbathed for a while. The next day, three of us went out for a ski to look over the Prince William Sound. It was a blue bird day, a summit day, too bad it didn't come earlier in the week. Nevertheless, I was grateful for the spectacular views.

Sunday afternoon Matt came to get us, but due to the time of day and soft snow, he decided to carry out minimum weight and we had to leave a lot of gear behind. Back in a Palmer bar over a cold one I was hoping he would get all our stuff out the next day as promised. Two months later he declared it lost. Unexpectedly on August 10th we got our stuff back in almost perfect condition, followed by a \$200 charge for extracting it, but I was glad to get the gear and not have to replace it. The trip turned out to be an expensive experience, but we did get to spend time in great surroundings and learn new things.



Peak 3560 (Kenai Mountains; Wolf Creek)

by Steve Gruhn

Bushwhacking is like a drug. Some say there are bad side effects, such as altered mental states, loss of blood, excess perspiration, hyperventilation, fatigue, and irritability. I, on the other hand, am addicted.

By late September the orienteering season has drawn to a close and I begin to go through bushwhacking withdrawal. Devil's club thorns begin to fester their way out of my skin, cuts and cow parsnip blisters gradually heal, the hair slowly grows back on my legs, and I grow ants and restless.

On September 22, 2007, Wayne Todd helped me stave off these withdrawal symptoms. Wayne's trip report in the August 2006 Scree of a major bushwhack near Hope Point, led me to believe he might need to feed his addiction, too. We drove to the Resurrection Trail parking lot along Resurrection Creek south of Hope. I headed up the trail and, a while later, Wayne followed. We hiked and biked (I hiked, Wayne biked) the 5 miles to Wolf Creek. We rendezvoused at Wolf Creek. I had been up the Wolf Creek drainage before and knew that I would find a treatment for my withdrawal symptoms.

We snaked our way through the open forest and tall grasses for about a mile and a half (straight-line distance) and then set our sights on our objective, Peak 3560 north of Wolf Creek. We headed up the south-facing slope on slippery, frost-killed vegetation. When this proved insufficient to slow us down, Wayne luckily found some alder patches in which to wander around. Emerging at the top of the alders, we thankfully observed that we had come out of the brush at the highest point on the slope. Had we veered either right or left we would not have had the pleasure of anywhere near as much bushwhacking. We were fortunate, indeed. My cravings were being fed.

We then headed up the slope, angling to the northwest, and pausing occasionally to dine on soft blueberries. We crossed a ravine and hiked up the north-northeast trending ridge. At about 3000 feet we again angled to the north and arrived at the ridge overlooking Gold Gulch at about 3150 feet. We walked the spine of the ridge northwest to the summit. We found no sign of previous ascent, so we built a small cairn and left a register. Fall had dappled the hillsides in a palette of colors that resonated with my soul. We admired the view before beginning our descent via the west-northwest ridge to a 3050-foot saddle.

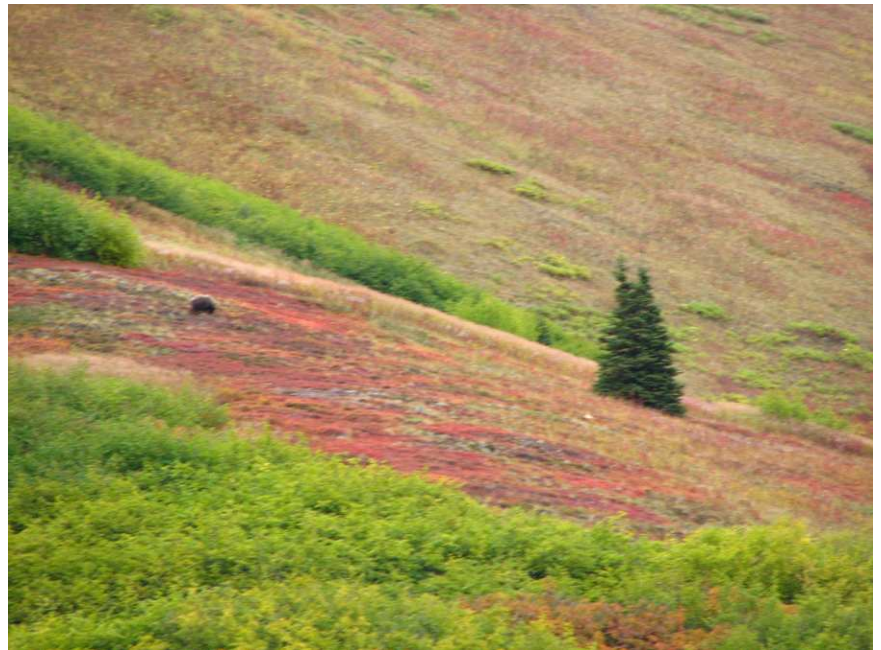
At the saddle we descended to the south, but we soon noticed a brown bear in our path. This caused us to divert our path even further to the west to make a large circle around the bruin. Unfortunately, the bear prevented us from dropping into the brush like we had planned, so we contented ourselves with sidehilling above the alders. Eventually, though, we were able to descend to the marshes and brush of Wolf Creek and once

again all was well with the world.

We meandered through the willows, alders, devil's club, tall grass, and marsh while hiking down the south side of the creek, periodically keeping a wary eye on the brown bear on the other side. Eventually, though, we broke into the open forest and found our way back to the Resurrection Trail.

Bushwhacking appetites sated, we raced the setting sun to reach the truck by dusk. Wayne, on the bike, made it with time to spare. I lost the race, but managed to arrive shortly after dusk. Once again the Kenai Mountains had given me my fix. (*Weird people, Ed.*)

A fellow bushwacker



Fiddlehead Mountain (4940, Kenai Mountains)

by Steve Gruhn

I started writing the Peak of the Month column in February to spur some activity in climbing peaks throughout Alaska. By late September I'd been writing the Peak of the Month column for nine months and, despite an unsuccessful MCA trip in March to climb the first Peak of the Month (Peak 5450 in the Western Chugach Mountains near Goat Creek and Yuditna

Creek), I had not heard of anyone reaching the summit of one of the featured peaks after reading the column. In September I decided that the column would spur someone to action, even if it was only me.

Lisa Ferber and I decided to climb Fiddlehead Mountain (June's Peak of the Month) on

Saturday, September 29. Saturday was a gorgeous fall day, the first after several days of rain. We drove to the Granite Creek Bridge on the Seward Highway and parked at a gravel pullout (elevation about 650 feet) on the east side of the bridge (the Granite Creek Campground to the west was closed). We walked across the bridge and headed up an old, gravel logging road to the north. We followed this road for about three-quarters of a mile as it switchbacked through the frost-covered brush.

At the highpoint of the trail (about 950 feet) we struck off into the hemlock forest. The travel through this second-growth forest was rather easy. But soon we became re-acquainted with my long-lost alder friends. Orienteering season had drawn to a close, and I had been going through bushwhack withdrawal, interspersed with only the occasional foray into thick vegetation, and I had begun to have symptoms of withdrawal. But my shakes and convulsions stopped when we got to experience the joy of hiking up steep, frost-covered alder-covered slopes. Along the way, I re-acquainted myself with other long-lost friends: cow parsnip, devil's club, false hellebore, tall grasses, and wild roses. We navigated through the steep vegetation to the open blueberry-filled tundra above.

Soon the tundra gave way to rocks, and then to fresh snow. There were great views in all directions as we followed the south ridge to the summit (elevation 4940 feet). Clumps of snow fell down the west face and rolled, picking up snow until they grew into giant wheels that then toppled into pieces, which rolled downhill and

grew into wheels of their own. The colors of fall dappled the mountainsides around us. All of the peaks were dressed in fall colors, capped with fresh snow, and backdropped by a blue sky dappled with white clouds. The occasional white cumulus cloud scudded across the blue sky. We lingered for a while, gazing at surrounding peaks: Mount Alpenglow; Frenchy Peak; Mount Susitna; the Suicide Peaks; Mooswa Peak; Bench Peak; the Tordrillo Mountains; the peaks near the headwaters of the Twentymile River, Placer River, Portage Creek, and Resurrection Creek drainages. Unfortunately, neither Lisa nor I remembered to bring a camera.

Soon it was time to go. We retraced our steps down the south ridge until we reached the broad southern slopes. While descending, we found some meadows to the east of a gully that was east of our ascent line. We were able to nicely connect these meadows on the southeast side of the mountain until we reached the hairpin corner of the old logging road. From there it was a half-mile walk back to the car. The round trip took us about 7.5 hours.

On the drive back to Anchorage, the skies opened up and the torrential rains of fall resumed. Our timing had been nearly perfect.

We had thoroughly enjoyed a hike that I likely would not have considered had not I first been intrigued while researching information for the Peak of the Month column. I hope that the column will spur others to enjoy peaks that had previously been off their radar. And I'd like to read about their experiences in *Scree*, too.



The Parent Trap

by Wayne L Todd

Taking Carrie's outdoorsy, out-of-state parents on an MCA hut traverse seemed like a pleasant and easy undertaking....

We cruise up the Mint Valley under sunny skies. The single stream crossing is lower and easier than normal. Despite being here many times, I'm still impressed with the beauty of this valley; the lush greenery, dotted with purple, maroon and white flowers, caressed by a glacial stream, rimmed by minty peaks and accessed by a great trail!

Whilst taking a break below the Mint Hut Hill, a Wasilla gnome appears. We are trepidatious at first, but warm up to him when he asks about local geography, such as the location of the Mint Glacier. He is on a quest to dispose of his mothers ashes on the glacier. As we ascend Mint Hill, he initially follows us a distance but then disappears.

Mint Valley



The freshly painted red hut is inviting (thank you Greg Bragiel for all your hard work) but alas the paint is still wet and odiferous. After playing cards on a large boulder until 11pm, the four of us retire into our three person tent. I state "tomorrow will be an even shorter and easier day". Becky is startled when *Marmota caligata Giganta Canina* attempts to join her in the outhouse.

We are blessed with a sunny morning as we hike by moraine lakes on the snow-free Mint Glacier, punctuated by sharply shadowed jagged ridges. We ascend single file, climbers left, on snow to Grizzly Pass. From here on, this is new territory for everyone. I scramble south up point 6,300 for better views, pictures and hut scouting. (I doubt the Dnigi hut can be seen from here without powerful binoculars on a sunny day with the light angle perfect for reflection).



Moraine Lake



Initially, the snow descent from Grizzly Pass is easy but then we encounter 'boulder fields forever'. The vehicle size boulder hopping is slow and intense for some, especially the steeper sections. At least the black lichen-covered boulders are dry, providing reasonable friction.

The boulders terminate at the valley bottom. We enter a visually and acoustically rewarding world of a flower and moss bordered stream, flowing from the boulders. Flowers en route to the Dnigi Hut include fireweed, lily, lupine, gentian, king's crown, cotton grass, purple and white geraniums, false hellebore...

Reaching the hut seems to 'always be a little further' and never in sight. The group is ready for well earned R&R after the boulder descent. After crossing another boulder field and ascending a morainal rise, a bright glint reveals the hut. Old weather balloon instrumentation rests along the rise. (Having the hut GPS coordinates is highly recommended).

Approaching the hut, a glance reveals a small outhouse; a subsequent glance reveals a large outhouse, then a mid size. 'Did I eat some bad mushrooms'? Motion of the outhouse doors reveals the mystery; the door slowly swinging open and closed in the breeze. Boulders give way to alpine foliage near the hut. (The toilet seat base is quite chewed by squatters. Profiling is frowned upon but I'd bet it would be small rodents with large, nashing teeth).

Dnigi Hut



Relieved to be at an occupiable hut, we settle in and are pleased to see the care and cleaning that snowmachiners, skiers and hikers are giving the hut. Deane makes due with no complaints even though a stomach bug makes him unable to eat for the remainder of the trip. Though only about half the distance, this day's hike was longer.

The good weather is exchanged for rain, clouds and fog as we look out from our comfy abode the next morning. The beauty of this being no doubts about wearing rain gear and we don't have to wear those pesky sunglasses.

We head down-valley east of Moose Creek with route descriptions and a half dozen GPS points. The alpine foliage is accentuated by the rain, because nothing else can be seen and the sidesloping on the wet foliage requires visual attention. Becky trips forward and slides head first down a hill, luckily stopping uninjured in more alpine.

We tally our stream crossings to assist the map and GPS aids in our navigation of the unfamiliar, mostly obscured landscape. (We were concerned about entering brush and losing precious elevation, but think traveling would have been easier a few hundred feet lower on occasionally glimpsed natural benches).

Mild obfuscation occurs at a hard left turn for Elbow Pass. After discussion and checking the GPS numerous times, we decide to take the left of two similar and close

valleys. Midway up this valley, I begin to doubt the correctness of this valley. Knowing the 'always move forward' mentality of this group a 'reasonable' looking slope appears to lead to the right ridgeline and hence possible access to the valley to the south.

I *scramble* up, realizing the slope is steeper, less stable and quite a bit longer than appeared in the fog. In scout mode, I reach the ridgeline ahead of the group, have a quick glance through the fog of the next valley, which looks just like the valley we just climbed out of, but can be accessed from here. (*Twilight Zone music*). I consider descending to assist others but realize my rockfall is a real danger, so sit and zone acknowledging we are full-on mountaineering; except we don't have helmets or hardware, are not trying to climb anything and are just trying to reach Eska Valley.

Re-united, the group does not want to descend to the next valley, so after a brief scouting, we move east up the ridgeline. (Elbow Pass was less than half a mile distant according to the GPS). Initially the ridge is reasonable for hiking but then it narrows and steepens. Careful scrambling across exposed, wet, rock faces leads to the Elbow Pass ridge but the ridgeline to Elbow Pass is even steeper and more exposed. A direct descent into Eska Valley seems the most viable option. The now part sheep, part human hikers descend a wet, steep, loose rock-filled gully; first clearing as much debris as possible, then assisting one another with hand and hoof placement and moving to safe zones. After this, the descent on 40° wet boulders is less intense.

Concerned about fatigue and possible injury in the group, I present the option of tenting out another night. I am verbally chastised but luckily not flogged for the suggestion. The transportation mode shifts at the base of the boulders, above two small "pleasant-looking-for-camping" lakes. Ouch!

Eska Falls



We power hike, lope, and briefly jog down Eska Valley on the soft, boulder free and gentle slope. We slow a bit for the steeper descent to the small upper falls for safety and for wild flower and waterfall viewing. I'm left behind when picture taking in the mild sprinkles. After a couple of sharp creek bends, we find a trail to the east. We motor on. The trail disintegrates above the steep section adjacent to the impressive three thousand foot, or was it three hundred foot, Eska Falls but we negotiate down with fortitude amidst the fern and Monkshood.

Muddy, very slick four wheeler trails are our next hiking medium. The pace is swift, precipitation is left behind and a sporadic "whhooooo" boot sliding out-of-control is entertaining. With deduction, luck and GPS we choose the correct trail leading back to the GPS'd truck. Amazingly, no one had fallen on the super slick trails. Nearing the truck, I proclaim ".3 miles" thrusting my GPS in the air and deftly falling on my butt into the slime.

Carrie and I are wondering which hut traverse to take her parents on next.....



Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

by Amy Murphy

Teton Crest Trail

I grew up in Wyoming and spent many wonderful hours in the pristine backcountry of the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and I always enjoy returning to go climbing and hiking in these stunning mountains. While visiting the Tetons in early June, Ron Ramsey and I planned on doing the Teton Crest Trail (TCT), which "Backpacker" magazine listed as one of their Top 10 hikes one year. The trail, originally patched together by renowned mountaineer Paul Petzoldt, is 39-miles long and winds its ways through stunning alpine scenery along the crest of the Teton Range.



The trail starts at Phillips Pass on Teton Pass and ends at String Lake, but there are also different entry and exit points depending on how much time and energy you have. The trail's elevation is mainly over 10,000' and rarely drops below 8,000', so it definitely requires acclimatization before attempting it. We belatedly learned that one option for accessing the trail is to ride the Jackson Hole Ski Area tram to the top and hike from there to Marion Lake, one of the designated TCT

camping sites. That sounds like an interesting, easy way to start this trip!

We rode down through Idaho to get to Jackson, Wyoming and observed the impressive, "back" side of the Teton Range and were disheartened to see extensive snow cover on the upper portions of the mountains, where the TCT is located. When we arrived at the ranger station to check on trail status and backcountry permits the rangers discouraged us from doing the trip due to the amount of snow covering the trail. They said nobody had done the trail recently (which meant no footsteps or visible trail markers to follow) and ice axes were mandatory.

Since we rode down from Alaska on a motorcycle with limited storage capacity and weren't able to bring all the gear required for a "winter" backpack trip in snow, we decided to be safe and do this trail another time. Plus, the logistics of where to safely park the motorcycle for a few days and arrange for transportation to and from the trailheads would have been challenging. (However, one helpful young ranger informed us that hitchhiking in national parks is illegal, but **only** if you get caught – so do it carefully.) We opted to do some day hikes instead and weren't too disappointed with our decision.

Death Canyon

This canyon is one of the TCT access points and the trailhead is located about 1-1/2 miles off the Moose-Wilson Road. To access the TCT from here you hike up to Fox Creek Pass, at which point you traverse the formidable-looking Death Canyon Shelf, a relatively narrow and level plateau with sheer cliffs. Death Canyon was formed by glaciers and is renowned for the incredibly sheer, tall cliff walls that display centuries of geographical history. If you are interested in geology and rocks, this is a fascinating place to visit. We passed by a ranger cabin, historic barn and the steep trail leading to

the Alaska Basin, which looks like an appealing place to explore some day. We only hiked about eight or nine miles roundtrip as we weren't acclimated yet and got a late start.



Although not as popular as other trails in the Grand Teton National Park, this trail winds through beautiful scenery and is well maintained. There are several designated camping spots including some by Phelps Lake about 1-1/2 miles in from the trailhead, and other spots higher up, close to where the trail meets up with the TCT. You need permits to camp overnight along all the backcountry trails.

Cascade Canyon

I have gone hiking and climbing in the Tetons before but never had the opportunity to explore this incredibly scenic canyon, which provides outstanding views of the backside of the Tetons. We decided to try to hike 14 miles roundtrip up to Lake Solitude (9,035'), nestled in a basin at the top of Cascade Canyon. The hiking guide said this trail provides some of the most stunning alpine scenery anywhere in the world, and after hiking up there Ron and I both wholeheartedly agreed with that statement (and we have hiked through alpine scenery in different countries as well as the U.S.).

We rode a ferry boat across Jenny Lake to the main trailhead, which saves two miles of hiking each way. The ferry stops running around 6:00 p.m. so you have to time your hikes if you want to take the "easy" way back to your vehicle. And be sure to leave early in the morning to avoid the crowds at the boat dock! On our way up we stopped to view Hidden Falls, a beautiful waterfall that is

understandably the most popular hike in the park. We also paused at Inspiration Point overlook, which provides views of Jenny Lake and Jackson Hole valley.



The start of the trail is packed with hordes of noisy people, but the higher we climbed the crowds disappeared and we saw very few people and enjoyed the peaceful solitude. The trail follows a beautiful, clear creek that cascades down the glacial-formed valley and sometimes meanders through green meadows filled with vibrantly colored spring flowers. In some places the creek violently tumbles over rocks while in other areas it placidly flows along. The main creek is fed by numerous smaller tributaries that cascade down the steep granite walls lining the canyon. The valley provides awesome views of Mt. Owen (12,928 ft), the Grand Teton (13,770 ft) and Teewinot Mountain (12,325 ft).

After hiking a few hours we spoke to some hikers on their way down who had hiked to Solitude Lake earlier that morning. They said it was completely iced over and snow covering the trail required deep postholing. Since it was warm and sunny the snow was soft enough to safely climb up and down with poles (we lacked ice axes) so we considered continuing on up. However, postholing didn't sound too inviting since we can do plenty of that here in Alaska and we didn't have gaiters. We hiked up to a spot below Solitude Lake, ate a late lunch, enjoyed the incredible scenery and sunshine and decided to head down to catch the last ferry.

We hope to return here some time to spend more time exploring this fantastic area, but we'll come in July, after most of the snow has melted. Since hikers and climbers always discuss what food they want to voraciously consume after returning from a trip, I highly recommend stopping at the Mountain High Pizza restaurant in Jackson. This place has been in business ever since I was a teenager climbing and skiing in the Tetons (decades ago) and they still serve some of the best-tasting pizza I have ever had!

Peak of the Month: Mount Appolo

by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Talkeetna Mountains

Borough: Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Drainages: Granite Creek and South Fork of the Kashwitna River

Latitude/Longitude: 61°55' 35" North, 148°47' 59 " West

Elevation: 7950 ± 50 feet

Prominence: 1700 feet from either Peak 7950 (in Section 35 near the Sheep River), Peak 7950 (in Sections 27 and 34 near the Sheep River), or Peak 7950 (in Section 9 near the Sheep River), or 2600 feet from Tyrant's Tor (8150)

Adjacent Peaks: Peak 7267 (near Granite Creek and the South Fork of the Kashwitna River), Andromeda (7547), and Peak 6150 (in Section 16 near Granite Creek and the West Fork of the Kings River)

Distinctness: 1300 feet from Peak 7267

USGS Map: Anchorage (D-5)

First Recorded Ascent: May 12, 1973, by John Pinamont, Larry Swanson, and Art Ward

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Southwest ridge.

Access Point: Sutton.

Mount Appolo is the highest peak on the USGS Anchorage (D-5) quadrangle. It was this distinction that prompted Pinamont, Swanson, and Ward to attempt it.

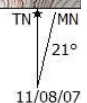
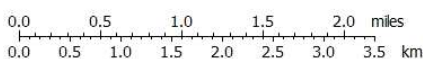
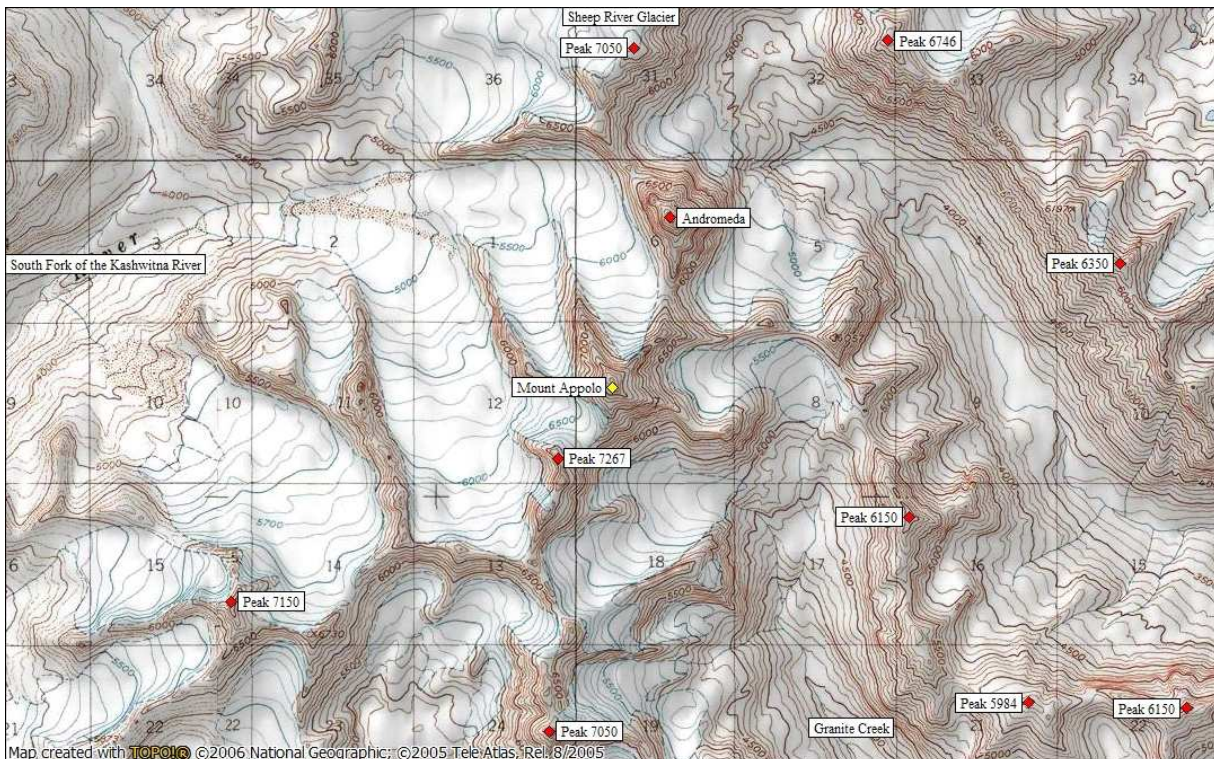
From Sutton, the party walked east along the Glenn Highway for a little over a mile to the Granite Creek Bridge and then hiked and skied up Granite Creek for

two days to establish a base camp at an elevation of about 4600 feet. The next day they skied up to a glacier to the north of their camp and then skied west, ascending the glacier to a low point at an elevation of about 6350 feet on Mount Appolo's southwest ridge. The trip to the summit along the half-mile-long ridge consisted of low-fifth-class climbing and scrambling. For the descent the party opted to glissade from the summit down a 60- to 45-degree snow chute to the western edge of the glacier they had ascended. After two days of ski touring, the party followed their tracks down Granite Creek, noting that the sunny weather had melted a significant amount of snow in the interim. They returned to Sutton less than 10 hours after leaving their base camp.

Pinamont named the mountain after the Greek god of the sun (misspelling Apollo) due to the sunny weather and the fact that the peak reigned above the other summits in the area.

Swanson's trip report appeared on pages 3 and 4 of the June 1973 *Scree*.

The party had a pretty good month of mountaineering. Two days before the start of their Mount Appolo trip, Swanson and Ward made the second ascent of Peeking Mountain. And 12 days after returning from Mount Appolo, Swanson and Pinamont climbed Bashful Peak.



11/08/07

Parting shot

Alaska's best Mountaineers take time to stretch



Photo by Tim Kelley

MCA Board Meeting Minutes

MCA Minutes
Board/Transition Meeting
November 7, 2007

- I. Call to Order 6:11 pm
- II. Attendance: Bridget Paule, Sean Bolender, Steve Gruhn, Travis Taylor, Randy Howell, Annette Iverson, Steve Parry, Tom Devine, Don Hansen, Jayme Dixon, Andy Rembert.
- III. Old Business:
Huts Update—During the 30-day public comment period, one comment was received and it didn't pertain to our application for renewing the lease. We are currently in a 20 day appeal period for last minute issues. The fee for the lease renewal for the first five years of our 10-year contract will be about \$2600 and is adequately covered by this year's huts budget. To satisfy the requirements of the lease process, we have a newly updated liability release form that will go into use in December 2007.

Ice Festival Report—A few ice festival registrants were unable to attend the event and contacted Jayme ahead of time about receiving reimbursements. Since some registered via PayPal, which charges us transactions fees, the following motion was approved unanimously by the Board: Members who are approved for reimbursements for MCA training and activities in 2007 will be reimbursed for the full amount of their payments, less any PayPal charges incurred by the MCA. For the 2008 Ice Festival, a reimbursement policy will be developed and advertised with a set reimbursement schedule and requirements.

Surplus Funds—The MCA has a healthy pillow of funds built up over the years. What to do with this money, since we are no longer putting it into building new huts, has been raised. A number of ideas were proposed and the issue will be discussed further in the coming months. Some ideas: put it into benefits that the members will see directly such as training, awards, and 50th anniversary events; use it for the maintenance and enhancement of our library; use it for the hut outhouse initiative or other hut maintenance operations.

IV. New Business:

Budget Planning—The Board reviewed and approved a budget proposal for 2008 that will be published in the December Scree and voted on at the December 19th General Meeting. See the proposal following the minutes for a detailed budget plan. Several expenditures were approved for the end of 2007 including some new avalanche beacons and a club laptop for record keeping and use at meetings.

Trip Leader Training –Scheduled for just before the Nov. general meeting at 7:00 pm. We'll present potential leaders with a list of planned trips that they might take on.

Holiday Dinner—Dec. 19th. By the Dec. board meeting Bridget will price out main dish options. We'll plan on 3 turkeys, 3 hams and sides of potatoes and stuffing; and hopefully a tasty vegetarian option.

Gear Swap—We'll run this at the break with tables in the back of the room. The break will be slightly longer than usual to accommodate the event. Sellers will be solely responsible for their gear.

50th Anniversary—At the next general meeting we will recruit members to be on a committee responsible for planning events and promotional items for our 50th year. Annette has volunteered from the Board and we're looking for members with a good MCA history and great ideas.

Public access—Sean has met with Diane Evans regarding work towards an easement for access to Ram Valley. The landowner is positive and Sean will continue to offer advice and assistance throughout the process.

V. Next Meeting: General Meeting Nov. 21st. Same Bat Time, Same Bat Place.

VI. Adjourn 8:30 pm
Submitted 11/21/07

Bridget Paule

MCA General Meeting Minutes

MCA Minutes
General Meeting
November 21, 2007

I. Call to Order 7:45 pm

II. Treasurer's Report: The proposed 2008 budget approved by the Board is published in the December Scree and will be voted on by the membership at the December 19th General Meeting.

YTD Revenue	\$13,928.21
YTD Expenses	<u>\$12,802.60</u>
Balance	\$ 1,125.61

III. Parks Advisory Committee Report:
The MCA is working with the Chugach Park Access Coalition on a project to obtain an easement for access to Ram Valley. Future volunteer work to establish trails or parking might be needed, we'll keep you posted.

There will be an open house presentation of the proposed Southside Denali development along Curry Ridge on Thursday, Nov. 29th, from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Atwood Building downtown.

Check online at the State Parks website for summer 2008 volunteer opportunities.

The Committee would like to see the MCA board draft a letter to the Governor supporting the idea of setting aside part of the anticipated oil tax surplus in a fund that would support our State Parks.

IV. Hiking and Climbing Committee:
The 2008 Basic Mountaineering School sign up begins tonight. Classes will run the month of February with some classroom session on Tues/Thur evening and weekend field trips. Cost is \$80 for the series. Please contact Steve Parry for more information.

A new Ice Climbing School will run the month of January. The fee will be \$40. Contact Andy Rembert for more information.

V. Trip Schedule: Please see this month's Scree for current trips; check the website for new postings and keep an eye on the listserve.

VI. Huts Committee Report: Our leases are renewed for the next ten years, thanks to Sean's lead in the process.

VII. Announcements:

2008 Calendars are on sale now for \$10 each. Some will be available at AMH, or contact Stu Grenier for more information. Welcome Mark Kimmerer to the layout job this year. Next year we will be looking for vertical shots.

50th Anniversary Committee members are being recruited. The Committee will be responsible for planning events, developing promotional materials

and other tasks. If you are interested, please contact Annette Iverson.

Annual Holiday Potluck will be held on the 19th of December. Members bring side dishes and a few great slides to share. Check the Scree and website for what to bring as your contribution.

VIII. Presenter: Jay Rowe presents slides from his climbs of Sugar Tooth and The Tusk.

Submitted 11/21/07

Bridget Paule

MCA General Meeting Minutes

MCA Minutes
General Meeting
October 17 2007

- I. Call to Order 7:30 pm
- II. Treasurer's Report:
YTD Revenue \$13,747.33
YTD Expenses \$12,187.05
Balance \$ 1,560.28
- III. Old Business:
Huts Update—We manage a number of mountaineering huts and are currently renewing the leases on five of these for the next ten years. They need periodic maintenance, so if you're doing a trip in the area, contact Greg Bragiel to see how you can help. Please note you must be a member to use the huts .

Ice Festival Report—The Festival was a great success, attended by about 85 students, and was pulled off without any reported injuries and with fantastic weather.

Training—We are currently recruiting trip leaders for new and planned trips. If you're interested, there will be a Trip Leader Orientation at next month's meeting at 7:00 pm, just before the meeting commences. The annual Winter Mountaineering School will be holding registration next month as well. The course will

run most weekends in February and cover a variety of traditional topics. Steve Parry is the lead and is recruiting instructors.

- IV. Board Elections: Congratulations to the 2008 Officer team and Board members— President: Sean Bolender, Vice President: Annette Iverson, Treasurer: Travis Taylor, Secretary: Bridget Paule.

New Board Members: Tom Devine, Jayme Dixon, Steve Parry.

Continuing Board Members: Andy Rembert, Don Johanson.

- V. Announcements:
National Outdoor Inst.—An avalanche training weekend is coming up on Oct. 20-21 (this weekend), to be held out at Kincaid. For more info cal 376-2898.

Ski Swap—The big one will be held at West High, also this weekend, Sat. and Sun.

MCA Gear Swap—To be held at the next general meeting, November 21st. Bring your gear and prepare to trade. Further announcements will be in the Scree and on the listserve.

- VI. Presenter: Joe Stock showed slides from several ski trips—2004, from Valdez to the Matanuska Glacier; 2005, the Chugach Crusher; 2006, the Neacola traverse; 2007, El Castigador.

Submitted 10/22/07

Bridget Paule

Adze

Info Needed

I am planning a trip to Argentina and Chile this winter. I am seeking first hand knowledge about hiking in the national parks and Patagonia. In short, If you have traveled there, I would love to hear about it.
Mark Kimerer – markkimerer@hotmail.com

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

2008 PROPOSED BUDGET

	Proposed for 2008	Current for 2007	Approved for 2007
REVENUE			
Membership Dues <i>received during calendar year</i>	\$6,800.00	\$6,200.00	\$7,200.00
Scree subscriptions	\$300.00	\$330.00	\$300.00
Training <i>ice climbing, crevasse rescue, other</i>	\$6,500.00	\$5,900.00	\$6,000.00
Photo Calendar	\$3,000.00	\$640.00	\$3,500.00
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.	\$500.00	\$633.00	\$500.00
Donations	\$0.00		\$0.00
Other--Interest on Accounts	\$200.00	\$225.21	\$200.00
Other--MCA 50th Anniversary Product	\$3,000.00		
Other - Due from Reserve	\$2,200.00	\$2,700.00	\$2,700.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$22,500.00	\$16,628.21	\$20,400.00
EXPENSE			
Training <i>campsite and access fees,</i>	\$4,800.00	\$4,032.98	\$4,800.00
Scree <i>postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$2,300.00	\$1,945.16	\$2,000.00
General Meeting <i>rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$2,000.00	\$1,366.26	\$2,700.00
Administrative <i>supplies, forms, PO box, bank fees, rewards, phone</i>	\$500.00	\$248.00	\$500.00
Hut Construction & Maint. <i>materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees*</i>	\$6,000.00	\$2,857.20	\$6,000.00
Club Equipment <i>climbing gear, misc equipment</i>	\$700.00		\$500.00
Library <i>new books, periodicals, Scree binding</i>	\$300.00		\$300.00
Other: <i>miscellaneous expenses</i>			
Photo Calendar	\$2,600.00	\$2,253.00	\$3,000.00
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.	\$0.00		\$0.00
Donations - MCA donations to others			
Other-MCA 50th Anniversary Product	\$3,000.00		\$0.00
Other- Meekins Grant	\$0.00		\$250.00
Other - Awards	\$300.00	\$100.00	\$300.00
Other - Summit Registers	\$0.00		\$50.00
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$22,500.00	\$12,802.60	\$20,400.00
DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE	(\$2,200.00)		(\$2,700.00)

CASH BALANCE - All Accounts as of Nov 1, 2007

Beginning Balance - January 1, 2007	\$23,976.30
Increase (decrease) during 2007	\$1,125.61
Current Balance for 2008	\$25,058.91
Checking - Credit Union 1	\$6,001.32
Money Market - Credit Union 1 (1.2%-1.4%)	\$18,158.28
Pay Pal (1.4%)	\$2,129.10
18-month CD - in trust for hut lease - Northrim Bank (4%)	\$1,065.46
Petty Cash	\$50.00
TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS	\$27,404.16

The board reviewed budgets from 2001-2007 and the following projections of revenue and expenses were unanimously approved to present to the membership. Please look over as we will vote on the proposed budget at the Dec 19th General Membership meeting.

Submitted by Travis Taylor, MCA Treasurer

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Sean Bolender	830-5102	Board member	Don Hansen	243-7184
Vice-President	Annette Iverson	222-0581	Board member	Andy Rembert	688-3230
Secretary	Bridget Paule	230-9903	Board member	Jayne Dixon	382-0212
Treasurer	Travis Taylor	382-4823	Board member	Steve Parry	248-8710
			Board member	Tom Devine	529-0618

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, Please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the club treasurer. The Post Office will not forward the newsletter.

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be submitted on the web at www.mcak.org or e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles should be received by the monthly club meeting (third Wednesday of the month) to be in the next month's Scree.

Paid Ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be 'camera ready' and pre-paid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by our monthly meeting to pick it up or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant 243-1438
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell – 346-4608, Jayme Dixon – 382-0212
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008
Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 346-2589
Web: www.mcak.org (change your address here)
Mailing list service: MCAK@yahoo.com

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