

the SCREE

**Mountaineering Club
of Alaska**

December 2016

Volume 59 Number 12



"From home to home, and heart to heart, from one place to another. The warmth and joy of Christmas brings us closer to each other."

- Emily Matthews

Contents

A New Route up Mount Mary

Denali

Dare to Adair

Arrigetch Peaks

Alaska Ice

Peak of the Month: Pass Creek Pyramid

December Potluck: Tuesday, December 20, at 6:30 p.m.

Change of Venue: Pioneer School House @ 437 East 3rd Avenue

Dustin Eroh will present "Bike Alpinism: A New Approach."

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

www.mtnclubak.org

"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 meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 20, at the Pioneer School House at 437 East 3rd Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/218318165261775/>

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit

<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=members.form>.

Contents

A New Route up Mount Mary
Denali
Dare to Adair
Arrigetch Peaks
Alaska Ice
Peak of the Month: Pass Creek Pyramid
2017 Proposed Budget
Dave Johnston Receives the Hoeman Award
The Men That Don't Fit In

Cover Photo

Pat Schmalix leading out from the belay on
"Second Coming."
Photo by Josh Hutchison

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 22nd of each month to appear in the next issue of *the Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, December 20, at 6:30 p.m. For December, we'll be switching things up! Meet at the Pioneer School House at 437 East 3rd Avenue in Anchorage for a potluck dinner. We'll provide the turkey. You bring something delicious to share.

Once everyone gets some food and we have some time to socialize, Dustin Eroh will present "Bike Alpinism: A New Approach." Dusty sews amazing gear at Revelate Designs, guides for the Alaska Mountaineering School, and generally gets after it in the mountains. And recently seems to have taken up modeling: open any Patagonia catalog these days, and you're likely to find him in there somewhere. He's climbed all over Alaska and will share thoughts and stories on just a few of his adventures.

A few logistics:

- * Please bring your own utensils, eating-out-of container, and serving spoon/fork/whatever for the dish that you bring;
- * You're welcome to bring your own beverage;
- * If you can't make it for dinner, but want to see the slideshow, aim for arriving around 7:30 p.m.

Hope to see you all there!

Choate's Chuckle

- Tom Choate

How are ice tools like a critical boss?

Answer: both are very picky .

Online? Click me!



Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

December 17-18: Ship Creek Trail Maintenance. From the Arctic Valley area, hike approximately 10 miles round-trip doing trail clearing, camp overnight, and hike out. Trip leader: Greg Bragiel, 350-5146.

December 23: Flattop Mountain sleepout. No leader.

February 18-25, 2017: Hope to Seward backcountry ski touring. ~ 80 miles. Trip leader: Greg Bragiel. Informational meeting, sign up at December and January MCA meetings.

April 1-9, 2017: Bomber traverse backcountry ski touring, glacier travel. ~35 miles. Visit the Snowbird, Bomber, Mint, and Dnigi Huts. Trip leader: Greg Bragiel. Informational meeting, sign up at the December – February MCA meetings.

June 23-July 1, 2017: MCA Summer Mountaineering Instructional Trip. This is a vigorous hiking, climbing, and glacier-travel traverse through the Talkeetna Mountains, the Bomber Traverse, wherein the group stays at various locations that lend to the specific instructions. Basic mountaineering skills, snow travel, ice axe/tool use, ice climbing, glacier travel, navigation, route finding, rappelling, rock climbing, fun, exploration, leadership skills, and confidence building. Glacier travel. ~30 miles. Informational meeting, sign up at the December-March MCA meetings.



Eagle Peak (6909 feet) at center and Polar Bear Peak (6614 feet) at left, from viewing deck near the Eagle River Nature Center.

Photo by Frank E. Baker

A New Route up Mount Mary

Text by Harold Faust



West side of Mount Mary, from the rock quarry on Fourth of July Creek.

Photo by Josh Thomas

One fine peak east of Seward has long been on our list, awaiting a visit to its summit. Tucked behind the south ridge of Mount Alice when viewed from town, this high point occupies the middle of the Fourth of July valley and borders the lower Godwin Glacier. Like many of the peaks just behind the front range in the valley of Resurrection Bay, it has no official name. When I was old enough to begin to wonder about the mountains surrounding our hometown and what folks called them, I was told this peak was Mount Eva.

Over a hundred years ago, Alice and Eva Lowell were sisters who lived on a homestead on the bay. Their mother Mary Lowell sold a portion of her land to the developers who founded the City of Seward in 1903. The gorgeous peak directly across the bay was named for Alice and that label stuck. Perhaps Alice simply admired the mountain, or maybe she explored its ridges and alpine slopes; at some point, her name was attached to it. Her sister's name, Eva, was remembered on the neighboring peak. Eva Lowell was later married to Andy Simons, who held Alaska Master Hunting Guide License No. 1. The fine mountain east of Kenai Lake and north of Sheep Mountain was named Andy Simons Mountain, in honor of that hardy pioneer.

When Greg Higgins and Kathy Fiack made the first recorded climb in the summer of 1986, he wrote that the mountain was known locally as Mount Eva (see the August 1986 *Scree*). He described spending a night near the base of the Godwin Glacier

and then going up a snowfield and couloir to gain the west ridge. They roped up for the climb to the 4883-foot summit and the descent of the rock ridge.

Mount Alice was formally recognized as that mountain's official name in 1983, honoring the long-standing local tradition. In 2000 the Seward Historic Preservation Commission made a project out of placing Eva Lowell's name on a prominent peak visible from Seward. The Commission chose a 5000-foot (1524-meter) pinnacle north of Mount Alice, between the Bear Lake Glacier on the northeast and Sawmill Creek valley on the southwest. In 2001 the name was approved by the Domestic Names Committee of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. That official act left the 4883-foot peak that Higgins and Fiack climbed without a name. We joked about calling it "Noteva," but silliness aside, there was a fine way to continue the tradition of remembering local history: the name Mount Mary would honor the pioneer matriarch, and then three adjacent peaks would reunite the family in that way. (See the map and photos in the March 2013 *Scree*.)

I intended to gather support for the Mount Mary idea and work toward official recognition, but felt that reaching the summit would be the best way to start the project. Two earlier attempts came up short. The first was a day hike on snowshoes with George Peck in 2005, via the Shelf Glacier on the southeast side. We learned a route, but found the distance too great for

the little time and light gear we had. The second trip, with Dano Michaud and Tom Swann, found us retreating within several hundred feet of the summit proper after I managed to knock the edges off two cornices within one rope length and take a short, exciting fall (see the August 2012 *Scree*).

This year, in gorgeous September weather, we made a plan to take light overnight gear, camp high near an alpine tarn we had spotted on another ramble, and attempt a new route on the south side of Eva. Dano Michaud, Josh Thomas, my mountain pup Gina, and I left the truck at the entrance to the rock quarry on Fourth of July Creek and headed upstream. We waded the north fork of the creek three times using lightweight Wiggy's waders and were soon into the thick forest and steep hillside east of the creek bottom. An old logging road, a game trail, and a very old tiehackers' trail took us to the bottom of the wooded rock ridge we knew would lead to goat meadows and tarn-dotted ledges above. It was quite a battle uphill through thigh-deep blueberry thickets, some bushes so heavy with fruit that they bent to the ground. We snacked our way up through "blueberry hell."



Our camp on the tarn below the south face of Mount Mary.

Photo by Josh Thomas

Above the last hemlock stands we made our way up through sections of large talus boulders, glad to have trekking poles to stay balanced as we side-hilled into a large mossy bowl where we found clear running water to refill the bottles. On a hike the previous year, Dano and I had found a sweet little pond several hundred feet above the bowl. Checking the map afterward had revealed a much larger tarn hidden from sight a bit higher, so we were anxious see that pond and show the area to Josh. Once we topped over a rise at 2500 feet and the tarn came into view, we were very surprised to find it nearly half-covered in floating ice and residual snow! Heavy liquid precipitation at sea level last winter had meant thick snowpack at higher elevations, but we did not anticipate how delayed the thaw could be, into September. Following the stream and waterfalls below the tarn,

we came upon several more ponds. We set up camp on a level area next to one that became our swimming hole. The water was crystal clear, and rather well below body temperature. Sweat-free, we enjoyed hot drinks and dinner then sat on the smooth exposed bedrock humps nearby, marveling at the glacier views of the upper end of the valley. A great sunset, with the bay and Seward in sight, and a 4G cellular signal; life was good.



Harold Faust and Dano Michaud (right) near the base of the glacier.

Photo by Josh Thomas

In the morning, under a perfectly blue sky, we set out to see if we could get onto the glacier tucked between cliffs on the south face of Mount Mary. An exposed rock wall and waterfalls seemed to block access to the bottom of a smooth snow surface above. We headed up through ledges above camp, skirting the large tarn. A large family of ptarmigan spread out in the rocks as we passed. Once we reached the base of the cliff, a way up was revealed; a fun, Class 4 scramble slanting up to the right on clean rock. Gina made it up without assistance and waited for us in the steep scree above. We were soon at the tip of the ice, which was melted down to a thin edge. We went to crampons and stepped up onto the right margin of the glacier. The angle was not extreme and traction was very good on the old snow. Very few cracks were visible, we wore our climbing harnesses, but the rope stayed in the pack. The steep rock faces that border the glacier had shed some rock debris, which we skirted easily. The hard, sun-cupped snow made for fine steps as we approached a gap near 4300 feet. At that point we intersected the ridge that had been our route up from the southeast on the climb in 2012. From there we would be working our way up on rock, so the crampons came off and we found a lookout spot to take a lunch break. There was no wind and visibility was perfect. The upper Godwin Glacier was revealed to the east, with Fourth of July Peak, Mount Godwin, and Kindling Mountain all in view.

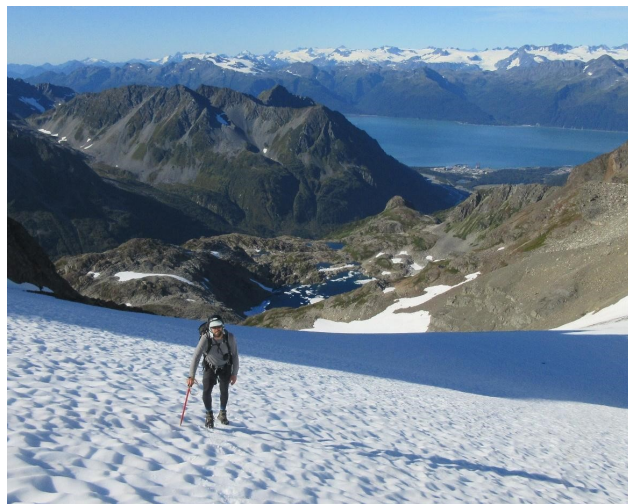
We continued up the ridge to the northwest, making steady progress along a broken crest with some solid footing interspersed with loose rock piles. At one point the dog needed a boost up a short rock step. Gina is the finest canine mountain companion I have ever shared adventures with, always willing to try a scramble, never whines, never quits. She does not seem to understand the danger of cornices, however, and sometimes finds great fun in following a retreating goat.

In rather short order we were on the rather level summit ridge, which bent back around toward the south. No snow obscured the route this time, and it was difficult to determine where I had gone off with the cornice on our winter trip. The highest point was a surprisingly solid spire sticking about 12 feet above the ridge, with a fine, flat top just big enough for one person to stand on and celebrate. We enjoyed the views in all directions, took the mandatory photos, snacked a bit, and Josh posted to the internet from his phone. I piled up a cairn about 40 feet south of the summit spire, and we stashed a Nalgene bottle containing a summit log sheet, dated September 1, which explained the plan to recognize the name Mount Mary. Seward was in sight due west, the ocean spread to the south, and glacier terrain visible in all directions. Especially interesting was the east side of Mount Alice, completely snow free and revealing the narrow scree gully that ran clear to the summit. Several parties have used that as a retreat route, after coming up the south side rocks and not wanting to repeat the experience.

Too soon it was time to thread our way back down the loose rock ridge, don the crampons for the glacier descent, and then down-climb the short cliff below. Back at the tents we swam again, ate a little more, packed everything up and headed home. While tracing the route back down through the trees, we cleared a few more blueberries and eventually reached the gravel banks of Fourth of July Creek. That time we decided our sore feet could use a little cool relief, so we crossed the streams without the waders; ah!

It was a fine trip and a great climb. One more summit visible from town had then been under our boots. Those beautiful tarns would likely need another visit, but we then knew the price to be paid in sweat to reach that wonderful zone. The peak would be Mount Mary to everyone we told, and before too long the name might be printed on maps. With apologies to the memory of Vin Hoeman, who did not feel a mountain should be named for a person, this lady was special!

*Harold Faust and Gina enjoy the summit rocks.
Photo by Dano Michaud*



*Josh Thomas ascends the glacier.
Photo by Dano Michaud*



*Dano Michaud works his way up the southeast ridge.
Photo by Josh Thomas*



Denali

Text and photos by Tony Ruzek unless otherwise noted



Jack Starnawski, Leo Garnac, and Volodymyr Semeniuchenko descend the summit ridge of Denali.

Putting a team together was a long time in the making. At one point, it looked like we would need to split into two groups; a couple of months later, it was just Jack Starnawski and me. We spread the word and Leo Garnac and Felix Ossig-Bonanno from Sydney University Bushwalkers came onboard. We knew each other, strong guys and decent rock climbers, eager to get into the high alpine. We had seven months to bond as a team, fine-tune all gear, and kick ourselves into shape.

Our aim: The West Buttress, the most common route on Denali. Summit success rate in early season was much lower. It meant colder conditions, lots of new snow, but weather tended to be more stable. Also, we were hoping to avoid the Seven Summits crowds later on in the season.

It all started the first week in May, catching up in a cheap motel room in Anchorage. Arriving on a few different flights from different destinations, the team of five shook hands for the first time. The wild card was Volodymyr Semeniuchenko, a Ukrainian guy living in Ontario. A couple days of shopping and repacking food, and we were ready to roll toward Talkeetna. Talkeetna is a base with a handful of flight services that get you closer to any climbing or skiing objectives in Denali National Park.

After arrival in Base Camp, we were in for a good spell of weather. Caching emergency food for our way back, we roped up without any delays, and were on our way up Kahiltna Glacier. Our progress on the mountain followed the “best-case scenario” itinerary. In nine days, our camp at 14,200 feet (Camp 4 or Basin Camp, 4330 meters) had been fully stocked up. By that time, we also had one carry each to the top of the headwall via fixed ropes, and cached four days’ worth of food and extra gear.

The weather forecast was erratic, mostly turning out better than forecasted, at least before the late afternoons. It looked like we might have a window. We were all pumped to set up the High Camp at 17,200 feet (17K Camp, 5240 meters). Felix had the occasional headache when going up and decided to stay a couple more days in 14K camp and catch up with rest of the team later. This was absolutely fine, as we planned to have tents both in Basin and High Camps set up for the duration of our time climbing/skiing higher up on the mountain.

It looked like a beautiful day. I took my time in the morning, thinking I’ll be faster skinning up to the bottom of the fixed ropes. We caught up with Felix and Volodymyr on the ridge just

below Washburn's Thumb. Felix helped to carry our tent all the way here, before returning back to Basin Camp. We continued up the ridge with Volodymyr. Heavy packs and more technical terrain slowed our pace. Also the wind picked up significantly and, before we knew it, we were in a fully blown storm. My skis, strapped to the outside of my pack, gave me a hard time in ever-stronger wind. On the ridge, we were crawling on our knees trying to stay low; the wind threw us around quite a bit.



Motorcycle Hill Camp.

Arriving at camp, it was a large, open area. Easy to pinpoint Jack and Leo's Trango. Volodymyr with his huge backpack showed up on horizon a couple minutes later, turning left and right, bending over into the wind. Jack and Leo helped us set up our tents. I'm sure on everybody's mind were passages from trip reports warning, "doesn't matter how tired you are, when setting up the High Camp, you have to build the walls straightaway!" But this was out of the question; everybody knew it. The wind picked up again. I couldn't believe we were so slack – until now, every camp we set up was absolutely solid, halfway in the ground, snow walls high up.

The next three days were pretty rough. According to weather report, we had a 100-mile-per-hour storm outside. Anything you pulled out of your sleeping bag froze almost instantly. Finally it cleared. There was a pretty decent track up Denali Pass. Beautiful bluebird day, but pretty chilly and in shade all the way to Denali Pass. Just before leaving the tent my thermometer said -32 degrees Celsius. We were heading up almost 1000 meters higher. Fair to assume it would be the infamous -40° on the summit.

On the way up the Autobahn, I passed a French climber. He was sitting next to the track while clipped to his ice axe. His boots were off and he crazily massaged his toes. I gave him a smile, bent over, and made a joke about helping him out. He smiled

back. How little did I know. A bit later I popped up at the top of the pass. Full sunlight, beautiful day, feeling awesome! It's solid ice in that section, but it felt secure. Not much visible exposure, which might give a false sense of security.

A couple of hours later, I was on the other side of Football Field, just before the climb steepened up to the final summit ridge. There was no sign of the other guys anywhere; their pace must have been pretty good, so they would be somewhere above me.

Once on the ridge, the South Face dropped down below my feet – incredible views! Finally, I recognized the guys in front of me. We were passing each other on the narrowest part of the ridge, just a few meters below the summit. Everyone had smiles on their faces, and urgency to head down. A couple of minutes later it was me standing on the summit: beautiful views, snow-drift stops, even time froze – a pretty special moment! I took a few pictures and a short video before all batteries gave up.

The descent was survival skiing at its best. Skating through the Football Field, my knees were shaking – I was pretty tired. The steeper section toward the pass was just solid ice, as in the morning. I side-slipped the top, but there was no point. Skis off, it would be so much safer and less energy-consuming to down-climb. Toward the bottom of the traverse, no more than 200 meters from our tents, I saw Leo, half-sitting, half-lying in the snow. At first I was a bit concerned, but then I saw him laughing. I sat down next to Leo and we talked rubbish. Laughing at each other, he gave me all the reasons why he can't be bothered to go any further. "Look, the tents are right there. If I want, I can bumslide from here. Just leave me here. It's all good." I smiled back, "Doesn't work like that, mate. Fix your crampons and let's keep rolling."

Half an hour later I walked into the camp. Felix was there; he used the day's good weather to come up to High Camp. I asked



Camp 4.

if anyone had boiled some tea. Jack answered something along the lines: “You don’t want to drink from that, I just defrosted my hands in this pot.” What? I thought of it more of a joke. Jack looked pretty grim, holding both hands up without gloves. Leo had a closer peek: “Looks pretty bad, mate.” It’s hard to read Jack’s face. He was smiling, but looked concerned at the same time. “It looks better now, but I had to cut the blisters.” What? I’m not really sure I’m ready to admit the seriousness of the situation. Let’s get some rest first. I took crampons off and climbed into my tent. All I had to do was take off the boots and climb inside. I slid my sock off, and got a nasty surprise. Gee, my toes looked quite purple, what’s going on? I wondered how long before they got back to normal. I had a trip lined up in New Zealand in mid-July, and, yes, needed to get off that mountain first!

Jack got on the radio with the Park Service in 14K Camp, trying to get some tips on what to do with his hands. Interestingly enough, they seemed more concerned about my feet – one can do extra damage to frostbitten feet, even when walking on a flat ground, not to mention front pointing while down-climbing. Also, Jack’s hands were totally useless. He couldn’t hold his ice axe, let alone self-arrest if needed. The instructions were simple: keep in touch and they’d try to fly us out the first chance weather permitted. Two days later, the winds were still too much. We spent the morning at the agreed landing zone, but there was no chance a five-seater Squirrel could make it all the way to us.

I felt really stupid. Apart from my toes, still in the best shape of my life, putting others’ lives in danger. I made the decision pretty quickly – if I managed to get my feet back into my boots, we would down-climb. Jack was in. A few hours later we met with the National Park Service rescue team at the top of the headwall. From there, they short-roped us and took care of us for the next three days before we could fly off the mountain.

The story is far from finished. There are a lot of people we are very obliged to. Starting with the National Park Service, their volunteer team in Basin Camp, the rest of our team for clearing our gear off the mountain, our friends in Anchorage, Dr. Elliott Gagnon in Wasilla, and the list goes on. Frostbite heals slowly, if at all. It cost me six toes and I’m learning to walk again. Jack lost a couple of fingers. I wished I could say we learnt our lesson. Not really sure, though, and I still wonder when things went wrong.

Basecamp was somewhere below.



*Camp 4 from the West Buttress.
Photo by Volodymyr Semeniuchenko*



Top of the West Buttress



Dare to Adair

Text and photos by Wayne L. Todd; with Carrie Wang

October 16, 2016



View southwest from the summit of Mount Adair.

We missed the good-weather window, so knew a race with the weather was on. A 6:30 a.m. Anchorage departure should have been at 5:30.

Hiking from the Primrose Campground, we saw only two other people, staging a vehicle. Carrie Wang and I saw no one else the entire day.

My logic was to follow the Lost Lake Trail until mostly above brushline, cross Primrose Creek* and then hike to Mount Adair, Peak 4940, and Sleeping Sister Mountain. The first problem with this logic was that we were hiking away from Adair.

The morning was quite crisp, the trail hard and frozen, and only wisps of sunlight passed through the trees. After a couple of trail miles we began probing the edge of Primrose Creek to find a chasm hundreds of feet deep. We continued this probing with the same results and briefly considered returning to the trail-head for a more-direct approach. On one of the probes, a flit in the shaded air revealed a northern goshawk had landed just above us.

We continued to the old mining cabin, thinking there should have been a trail down to the creek. Indeed there was – a steep one with various old ropes to assist for the descent. The ropes varied from buried in the ground to having moss growing on them. We passed on using them. (Bringing a short, personal rope was a consideration.)



Carrie Wang at the Primrose Mine.

The last 10 feet looked too steep, but with some technical moss moves I made it down, making it out to be easy (so as to convince Carrie). Numerous pieces of large, rusting mining apparatus were affixed to the rock and strewn about. With the water level quite low the crossing was easy, just a risk of slipping on icy rock (too early in the day to get wet feet in that chilly canyon). (This crossing would be impossible or quite dangerous at higher water levels.)



Carrie Wang at the mine works on Primrose Creek.

The climb up the other side required judicious use of the Whippets in moss over steep rock, but we're rewarded with direct sun rays toward the top.

Above the ravine on the west side, our route now headed right, back toward Adair. We encountered a mix of forest with light undergrowth, partly frozen bogs, fields of dead ferns and grass, occasional moose trails, and small streams with leafless devil's club (only to a BW1 category, so we moved at half trail pace, but it seemed faster). The day was still mostly clear, the sun rays were warm, the mountain views splendid to the east and Adair was just ahead.

Until another creek**, another ravine, really? We found a suitable descent gully and made our way upstream until finding climbable terrain on the north side (via another low-water crossing). Concerns were expressed about the progressing day, bushwhacking in the dark, and re-finding ravine crossings. Options of staying even higher on the exodus (though adding more distance) or trying a direct exit were considered.



Carrie Wang on the ascent of the east ridge of Mount Adair.

From the base of Adair, we began a steady ascent, but noted a grey wall moving our way across the sky from the east. A breeze joined from the north. Half a dozen white “footballs” slowly moved around the still snow-free rocks above us. Were they aware their plumage was currently in stark contrast to the surroundings?

Intersecting the East Ridge, clouds then blocked the sun and we encountered first ground snow (breakable crust) and a steady north wind. This felt winterish. More of Kenai Lake was revealed as we hiked the ridge, Carrie having the pleasure of first tracks.

The summit was snow covered, so not absolute, but pieces of old wood protruded (probably from the survey process). Nearby peaks to the east were obscured, and snow fell from the low grey wall then above Kenai Lake. More climbing was not an option.

We decided to risk a direct exodus, thus avoiding ravine and water crossings and eliminating a few miles of travel. From above, the initial exit looked reasonable. We hurried down the East Ridge as light snow fell (our first of the season). Carrie led a steep light-brush descent onto a large, frozen marsh and then into woods. The forest route went well with just short leaf-free alder and devil’s club patches. The biggest hindrance was down-fall, which entailed crawling under or over, or skirting. Deep boot prints were left in semi-frozen moss sections. Occasional direction checks kept us properly headed and we’re excited as the quarter miles ticked off.

Until Primrose Creek’s ravine, still hundreds of feet deep and now snow covered. But there was a trail along the top, and as we followed it down, it got better and better (except for down-fall). Human sign was noticed. The trail seemed to continue much longer than needed, but we knew this was shaving hours off our exodus. An eagle flew quietly below us in that black and white landscape. The trail dropped to creek level and we saw signs of human crossings from the campground. (While a very good trail, it followed the very edge above the canyon and a slip,

compounded by slick conditions, would lead to an injurious or fatal fall.)

Pulling gaiters on, the shin-deep water crossing amidst snowfall still left mostly dry feet. We made it back before headlamp time! (Very heavy snowfall was encountered on the drive home.)

Another trip that would be fun for some and ludicrous for most.

Ten hours, ~14 miles, ~5300 feet of gain. (Using the exodus route also for ingress should shave 3 to 4 miles and numerous hours off, allowing time and energy for climbing the neighboring peaks.)

*This stream is incorrectly labeled as Porcupine Creek on the Seward B-7 SE USGS and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge maps; it is actually Primrose Creek.

**This stream is incorrectly labeled as Primrose Creek on the Seward B-7 SE USGS and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge maps; it is actually an unnamed tributary of Primrose Creek.



Carrie Wang (left) and Wayne Todd on the summit of Mount Adair.



Carrie Wang descends the east ridge of Mount Adair with Kenai Lake in the background.

Arrigetch Peaks

Text by Katie Mills

July 2-26, 2016



First view of the Arrigetch Valley...The Albatross in view.

Photo by Katie Mills

I thought I had picked an easy expedition. I laughed with glee at how easy it was going to be, feeling smug and smart at how clever I was, for we were going rock climbing. Alpine mixed/ice climbing is more a test of how tough one is, to endure the cold, to endure the exhaustion, to keep moving regardless because to stop is to die. Rock climbing – well, one can't do it if the temperature is too extreme and one can't carry all that much weight on one's back so one is guaranteed a more mellow, pleasant time. The approach was a mere 12 miles or so, which according to most *American Alpine Journal* reports took parties a total of four days to do two carries of their food and gear. Easy. We'll suffer for four days, then enjoy 16 days of Type I rock climbing glee, and then suffer four more days when we hike out. I couldn't believe how smart I was.

Then the dream became a reality; my assumptions were completely wrong, and not a single day was easy. Soaked boots. Pouring rain. Mosquito legions of my nightmares. Ankle-breaking tussock bog-hopping with 90-pound packs. Impenetrable bushwhacks. The struggle was real when Todd Torres, Nick Pappas, and I began our approach to the Arrigetch Peaks in the Brooks Range of northern Alaska. But the dreams of our objectives kept us going! Due to various unfortunate factors, such as

thinking we were going to climb a big wall and carrying too much gear before realizing the futility of the plan and abandoning it, and a team member self-evacuating due to a sprained ankle, it took us nine days to set up base camp in the valley.

The north buttress of The Albatross is the most commanding presence one sees upon entering the Arrigetch cirque. Its top was split in two by a giant dihedral that never saw sunlight, an ever-present black gash slashed across the buttress, making it appear as if the watchful eye of some great god overlooked the valley. That magnificent feature intrigued me in all the photos I had researched on the internet the months leading up to the trip, and I couldn't believe for some reason it remained unclimbed.

Day 11 was finally climb day and Nick Pappas and I set out to climb The Albatross. We found great joy in climbing the beautiful 400-foot splitter crack system we had spotted leading up to the shoulder of the north buttress, all the while finding it difficult to believe that we weren't stuck behind massive crowds in Yosemite and were instead climbing rock never before touched by human hands. Some less-than-stellar, unpleasant, nerve-racking giant loose block climbing got us to the bottom of the dihedral. The dihedral was blank at the bottom, but



Approaching The Albatross.

Photo by Katie Mills

after a few hours of searching, Nick finally found a line of tiny crimps that got him to where the crack started in the dihedral, and we were in! We climbed two pitches up the wet, crumbly corner full of flora and fauna and triumphantly exited to find a perfect safe nest for a well-deserved nap. Three hours later we ran the summit ridge to a low point where we made six terrifying 70-meter rappels off the west side to the safety of the glacier below. In tribute to the stunning dihedral that glowered over the valley, we named the route "The Eye of

Sauron" (5.10c 1,200 feet) and it took us 30 hours tent-to-tent.

We scouted in other directions, but found nothing desirable, so we moved base camp to the beautiful Aquarius Valley. Nick and Todd settled upon a knife-edged peak dividing two glaciers that had been attempted in 2002 [*Ed. note: see page 218 of the 2003 AAJ*]. The climbing consisted of classic, easy 5.6 to 5.7 for the first few pitches, but the pitch the previous party had bailed on was a wild blank arête! Todd used the previous party's bail nut as part

of their belay. Nick managed to lead the pitch clean, calling it the culmination of 10 years of climbing and the best pitch of his life! Tricky ridge running took them to the top, after which they ran the ridge further to a low point and then rappelled down the west side. Because it was our last day to climb before hiking out, they named the route “Go Big or Go Home” (5.10d R) and dubbed the formerly unclimbed mountain “The Shiv.” [Ed. note: *The Shiv is the same feature dubbed “Notchtop” by Jared Coburn and Mike Morley after their aborted attempt in 2002.*]

The Arrigetch Peaks may not have the best quality of rock and may be incredibly inaccessible, but I will say they were the most awe-inspiring mountains I had encountered. Never before had I seen a range with such incredible mystical spires and magnificent overhanging gendarmes soaring like the wings of some giant gargoyle. The peaks didn't look like mountains, but instead sculptures designed by an almighty gothic architect. I felt incredibly fortunate to have been given the opportunity to spend time amongst these spectacular Alaskan behemoths of peaks. The trip was made possible by the Bob Wilson Grant from the Mazamas of Portland, Oregon.



Nick Pappas starting up 400 feet of splitter Yosemite-style crack on The Albatross.

Photo by Katie Mills



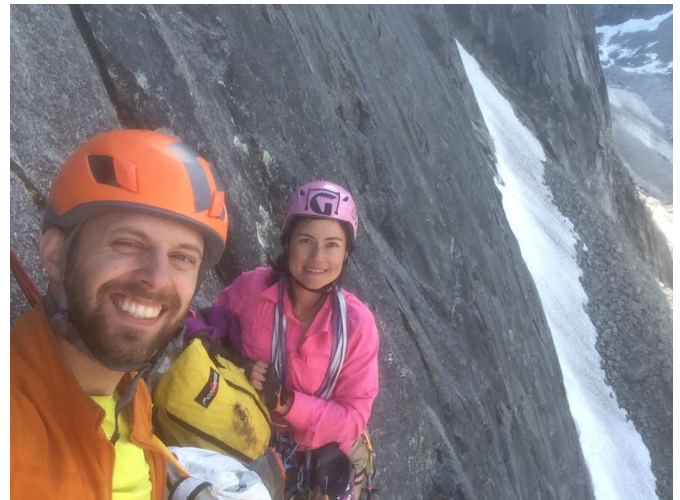
Nick Pappas and Todd Torres enjoying dinner time below The Maidens in the south fork of the Arrigetch Creek.

Photo by Katie Mills



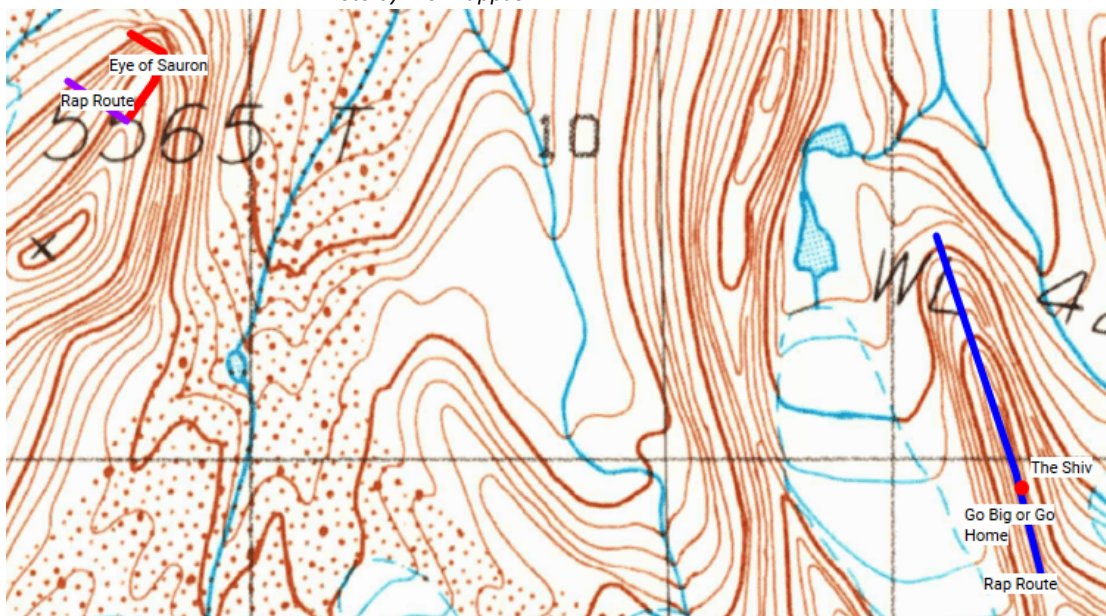
View of the Aquarius Valley with The Shiv on the right.

Photo by Nick Pappas



Nick Pappas and Katie Mills happy to be here on Pitch 2 of the first ascent of the north buttress of The Albatross.

Photo by Nick Pappas



<http://caltopo.com/m/OLJL>

Alaska Ice

Text by Pat Schmalix

Date: February 7, 2014



Five Fingers area.

Photo by Pat Schmalix

It's awesome having a partner that all you have to do is mention a climbing trip and he is in! Not sure how it came up, but I mentioned to Josh Hutchison that I'd like to go back to Alaska and do some ice climbing and he said he was in (knowing little to nothing about it).

Searching the forums, I found out that they planned to resurrect the Valdez Ice Fest over Presidents' Day weekend. I told Josh I'd like to try to attend to see some old friends. He said, "No problem," and the only thing left was to decide if we wanted to head up the weekend before or stay the week after. We chose the weekend before, as we would get more days of climbing in, with a plan of climbing around the Anchorage area for five to seven days and then heading to Valdez for the Ice Fest.

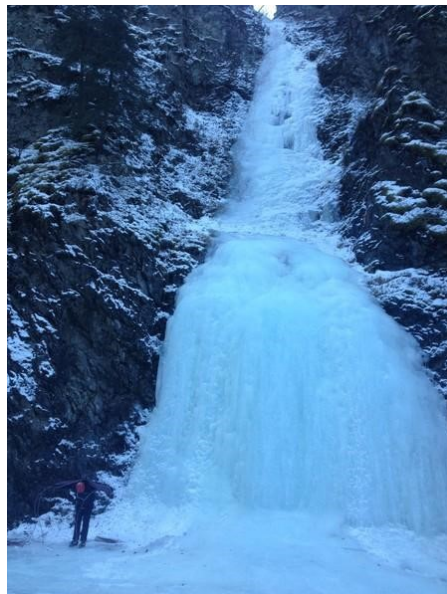
As usual with every trip I plan to Anchorage to climb, it warmed up right before I got there. That time much more than usual, basically everything was melted out or inaccessible around Anchorage and Valdez wasn't faring much better. Then came the "damalanche" that blocked the Richardson Highway to Valdez.

A week before we left, we questioned canceling the trip and heading to Bozeman or Ouray, as either was about a 16-hour drive. Luckily temperatures dropped over most of
Scree—December 2016

Alaska. I got mixed reports, but figured we could salvage some ice climbing even if it meant staying in a lodge and spending more money.

Day 1: I met Josh at the airport around 6:45 p.m. after cutting out of work early for our flight to Anchorage via Seattle. We landed in Anchorage around 3:00 a.m. and caught a shuttle to the hotel for some much-needed rest. Unfortunately, the rental car counters in Anchorage closed at midnight and didn't open until 5:30 a.m.

Day 2: We got moving around 8:00 a.m., dressed and packed to climb, then took the shuttle back the airport to pick up our rental car. A quick stop for breakfast (unfortunately, my favorite bagel shop had closed) put us heading toward Eklutna Canyon around 10:45 a.m.



Pat Schmalix at the base of "Ripple."

Photo by Josh Hutchison

Getting out of the car at Thunder Bird Falls Trailhead was a shock for two guys living in California! The car thermometer read 11 degrees. We slipped and slid our way up the trail, as the Eklutna River access wasn't a viable option due to the warm temperatures. Finally getting down to the creek and going across the ice was a little unnerving at first and any noise made our hearts drop. Hiking up the canyon, there were climbs in that I had never noticed before. I decided I'd take Josh to one of the most climbed water-

falls in Alaska for his first climb up there. "Ripple" (WI3, 60 meters) was about the thinnest I'd ever seen it, but had plenty of ice to climb. We had made a deal on a previous trip that I would get the first lead of this one, but after thinking about it, I gave it to Josh as I'd led it every time I'd climbed it. It was pretty uneventful and a good first climb of the trip.

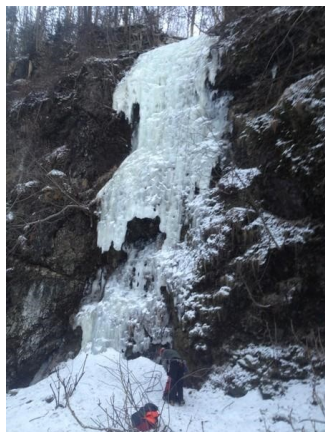
We then moved up the canyon to "Annie Greensprings" (WI3, 20 meters). Again Josh took the lead and enjoyed the steep ice saying, "I think this is the steepest ice I've ever led". After I followed we rappelled and Josh asked me if I wanted to lead it. Of course, I said, "Sure," and got my first lead of the trip (dropping a screw along the way).



Josh Hutchison and "Cham Ripple."
Photo by Pat Schmalix

We then headed down the canyon, planning on hopping on "TJ Swann" and found a party on a climb I'd never seen before; they said it was called "Astroturf." There was a party on "TJ Swann," so we continued down the canyon to another climb I'd never seen called "Cham Ripple" (WI3, 25 meters). I asked Josh if I could have the lead, as I'd never climbed it before, and he obliged. It was a fun lower-angled curtain up to a steep pillar. I got to the top and set a top rope.

We each did several laps and decided to head out.



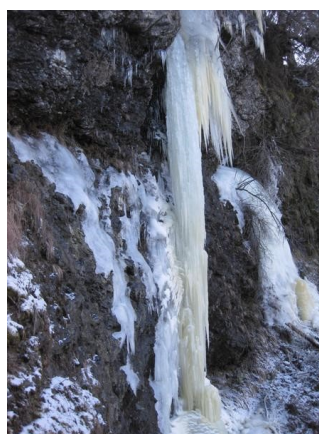
Pat Schmalix and a hacked up
"Mad Dog."
Photo by Josh Hutchison

We debated if we should just hike the trail out or attempt to head down the Eklutna River and climb out on "Mad Dog" (WI3-4, 25 meters). We decided we would give "Mad Dog" a try and would just walk back to the trail if the river wouldn't let us get to it or if it was too thin to lead. After navigating a couple of open pools and my foot punching through the ice, we made it to "Mad Dog." It was pretty hacked out, but leadable. I dropped my pack and set up another top rope and lowered back

down. We ran three to five laps on it, playing on the mixed ground on the left for some of it. We then grabbed our packs and climbed out and headed to the car. After driving into Anchorage, we got our room on Elmendorf Air Force Base, cleaned up, and went to get the best pizza and beer in the world at Moose's Tooth!

Day 3: Despite bad reports, we tried to get into Hunter Creek. We

only got about a quarter mile before realizing our hopes didn't meet reality and headed to the Beer Climbs. When we got there, there were a couple people climbing on the right (fun) side of "Henry's" (WI2/3, 50 meters) and a team roping up on "Blitz." We asked the party on "Henry's" if they cared if we climbed the left side, they said, "No problem," so I headed up, hoping that the party on "Blitz" would be done about the same time we were. Embarrassing as it was, I dropped another screw on some way-too-easy ice and it was uneventful beside that. After rappelling, the other party was still on "Blitz," so Josh took the sharp end for another lap on "Henry's." Again we rappelled and found they had only made it up half the climb and seemed like they were more into talking to each other than climbing.



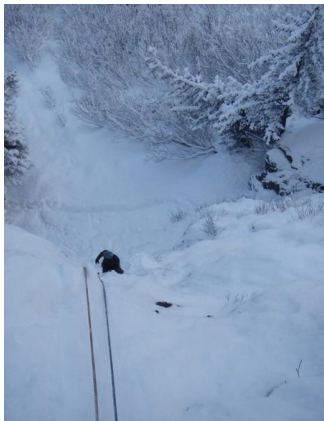
"Pilsner Pillar."
Photo by Pat Schmalix

We collected our gear and headed to "Pilsner Pillar" (WI4/5, 50 meters). Josh got introduced to devil's club on the hike in and wasn't happy. The Pillar was a little more than we wanted to lead, so Josh led up this fun little flow that went up a slot to the left of the Pillar. We set a top rope and rappelled, kicking hard on the way down to make sure it would say put on the climb. We each did several laps on either side of it, with Josh playing on the mixed lines more than I. It was some steep ice, that's for sure.

Afterward, sushi at Dish in Anchorage.

Day 4: We got up fairly early and stopped by the Alaska Railroad office to pick up our permits for climbing on its property. These permits are required and please don't climb on railroad property without one, as this is a great privilege that can be revoked. After another quick breakfast we headed down toward Portage, hoping we would be able to climb something along Turnagain Arm. Unfortunately, there was just enough ice for Josh to see how much potential there was, but nothing climbable, so we continued down to the Portage Creek area to get on the Five Fingers.

The Portage area got noticeably more snow than Anchorage and finding the climbs and a parking area was a little difficult, as I'd only been there once before. After parking alongside Portage Glacier Road, we trudged through knee- and thigh-deep snow to the base of "Ring Finger" (WI2/3). It didn't look that interesting, so we moved left to do "The Pinkie" (WI2/3, 20 meters) and Josh led it. It had several areas of wet, crappy ice and snow-covered ice with water running behind it, but was still a fun climb on top rope for me; I'm not sure how Josh felt about it on lead. We cleaned about a pound of tat from the anchor and left a new cord when we rappelled.



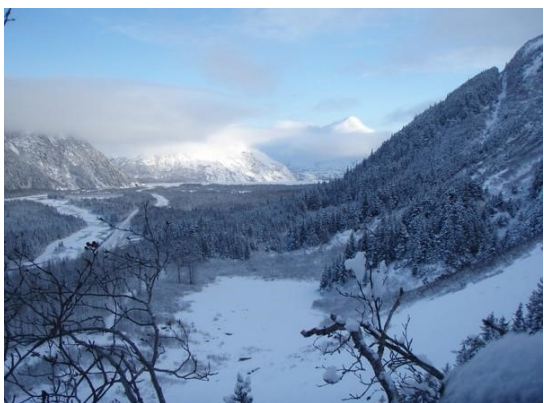
We then moved right to “First Finger” (WI2/3, 50 meters). We ended up getting to the climb about 60 feet higher than the base, so instead of rapping down for some easy ice Josh decided to head up from where we were. It was a little nerve-wracking watching him traverse out over the snow-covered rock with no protection, but fun solid climbing after that. On the

Josh Hutchison coming up the right side of “First Finger.”

Photo by Pat Schmalix

rap down, we grabbed our packs and headed for the right side of the base, where we took

cover from the snow in the trees for a bit and warmed up. I then led up the right side to a near-vertical pillar and nervously started climbing. Topping out and having to get to the anchors, finding nowhere for pro, and needing to cross snow-covered rock and moss was not what I was hoping for, but oh well.



View from on top of the Five Fingers. Photo by Pat Schmalix

At dinner we talked about what the rest of the trip would hold. Up to that point, we planned on spending some time at a friend’s cabin near Caribou Creek and climb until Friday, then head to Valdez. The high for that area was forecast to be -9°; yes, that’s a high of -9°. Being Californianized the previous two and a half years, that didn’t sound like fun, so we opted to go straight to Valdez, as climbing in Valdez was what we both really wanted to do from the beginning.



Day 5: We left Anchorage and headed to Valdez, stopping in Caribou Creek to climb “Kid around the Corner” (WI3). Leaving the car was hard at -1° and a slight breeze. We dropped down to the creek and started hiking upstream with a con-

Pat Schmalix gearing up at the base of “Kid around the Corner.”

Photo by Josh Hutchison

stant breeze with some stronger gusts. When we tucked into the trees that led to the base of “Kid around the Corner,” the wind disappeared and it felt noticeably warmer. Having climbed “Kid around the Corner” every time I’d been to Anchorage, I let Josh lead all three pitches. I absolutely loved that climb! It followed a slot canyon up three distinct pitches with mellow walking and scrambling in between. It reminded me of a miniature Cody, Wyoming, or at least what I would expect Cody to be like from the pictures. It was also my first “true” ice climb, as all I’d climbed before were small flows on Kodiak Island. Man, how one’s perspective changes! We continued on to Valdez, getting there just before dark, which allowed us to see the cleared damalanche and all the ice in and around Keystone Canyon – both were impressive!

Day 6: We woke up to cold temperatures and high winds, so we decided to go to an area called Hole in the Wall. The wind was blowing so hard when we left the car I jokingly made the comment that, “I hope the car is still here when we get back,” because the car had two tires on ice and two on gravel. We ended up making a wrong turn and hiked up a trail a little too far before realizing it and dropping back down to the riverbed and following it to the climbs. Once the climbs came into sight, the wind died down and both of us were focused on “Ski Race” (WI3, 100 meters). We geared up and I took the first lead, stretching out the rope to a full 60 meters. Josh followed and moved the belay up to the left to get out of the fall line. Once on route, we decided that we would do the right side, which was actually another climb, called “Second Coming” (WI4, 100 meters). I took off, climbing up some cool formations to the pillar. I climbed about halfway up the pillar to a platform that formed back behind the formation. I sank a 16-centimeter screw, threw on a double runner and a screamer, and continued up, the whole time thinking, “This is WI3? Holy s--t, if this is what WI3 is in Valdez, I’ll never climb WI4 or WI5 around here!” This was a thought that stayed with me right up until I looked up the climbs to write this report. Josh followed, and when he got to the top, I asked him if he thought I dodged a bullet climbing the top half of the pillar. His answer was a resounding, “YES!” When we threw our ropes, they got tangled behind the pillar in a cave near the platform and Josh had to climb into the cave to untangle them. We threw in a V-thread and continued down.

Josh went to look at “Dire Straits” (WI4+, 50 meters) and was contemplating climbing it when he realized only one of his ice tools was on his harness. Not wanting to climb the committing pillar again, we both prayed that he lost it in the cave. With three tools between us and the cave over 60 meters from the ground, our only option was for the leader to take both tools and the follower only having one, so Josh headed up. Climbing the bottom

half with one tool was kind of fun, actually. I got to the V-thread anchor and swapped gear to let Josh continue up. Luckily he found his ice tool in the cave and rapped on a V-thread to the belay and on to the ground.

After that unplanned climb we decided to pass on “Dire Straits” and climbed some no-name WI3-ish climb up a gully with no anchor noticeable around the top.

We had a windy walk back to the car.

Day 7: Looking at the weather that morning, the winds were still blowing so we wanted to stay out of Keystone Canyon. We decided to head to Sheep Creek to see what was there. The approach was easy and we decided to give a climb a try that had a big section of beautiful, blue ice about halfway up. We climbed up the bank of the creek and up to a rock outcropping to the right of the climb. We unpacked and geared up. Wanting to lead the beautiful, blue ice above, I let Josh have the first lead. Thinking he would take the easiest line up, I was surprised when he put me on belay and I got out from behind the rock. He went straight up a thin curtain/pillar with little to no protection. I was a little nervous following it; I couldn’t imagine leading it.

We swapped leads and I headed up, climbing over several steep steps. I got to thinking I was going to get to the base of the section I wanted to lead and would run out of rope. I got close to it, but not quite to the base of it, and got to looking at where Josh could get to while bringing him up. When he got to the belay he realized he would get the “good” section, he offered it to me and I told him he earned it after leading the first pitch.

We figured he would get to the top of that section, if not just shy of the top. He headed up and stayed toward the left. Josh ran out of rope just over halfway up it and set a belay. I took the fourth pitch and moved up and right, both of us thinking I’d get to the top of the climb. I ended up on some old, hollow ice that was left from before the warm spell. Wondering if it would collapse beneath me, I tiptoed past it to the new solid ice. Just after climbing up the steep section, I looked over my shoulder and took in the view, something I had neglected to do earlier on the climb. Absolutely beautiful!

I belayed just below a Y in the ice and brought Josh up. I gave him what little gear I had and told him it was his choice which way to go. He picked the right side because it had fewer alders in it, though it was a little steeper. With four long pitches below us and seven days of hard climbing behind us, it took both of us longer to finish that last pitch than it should have. Three 60-meter rappels got us to our packs.

Once in cell-phone range, we looked up the name of the climb. It was “Spring Loaded” (WI5, 375 meters). No wonder we were so tired!



Pat Schmalix leading the fourth pitch of “Spring Loaded.”

Photo by Josh Hutchison



Pat Schmalix and “Spring Loaded.” Hutchison and Schmalix basically went straight up from where Schmalix is standing.

Photo by Josh Hutchison

Day 8: Rest day. Ha ha ha! Yeah, right! We did plan on making this a rest day, as we were still tired from the day and week before. We drove out to Keystone Canyon and found the wind to be a little much in the morning, but it was supposed to die down later in the day. So we drove back to town and hiked into Mineral Creek, hoping to get on some of those routes out of the wind. After hiking about two miles, we realized there was nowhere to cross the creek. We discussed our options, climb some short low-angle ice on our side of the creek or head somewhere else. We decided to head back out to Keystone and see how the winds were. They were still blowing, but we hoped that a climb called “Piece of Shit” (WI3, 25 meters) would provide some climbing protected from the wind. Getting out of the car, the winds were blowing every bit of 40 miles per hour, but as we approached the climb we got into a small protected area at the base. Josh asked if I wanted the lead, as he knew this was the climb that I had my only lead fall on several years ago. Saying I needed redemption, he talked me into it. I set up a top rope and we each did several laps on progressively steeper ice.

Once we had climbed every line possible, we headed down the

Richardson Highway and met Nick Weicht, the one planner that didn't pull the plug on the Ice Fest. He was belaying someone on top rope up the first pitch of Bridal Veil Falls (WI5, 185 meters) and welcomed us to use any of the anchors that he set up the night before. Josh led up to the anchor and set another top rope. We climbed several laps on each rope, meeting other locals as they showed up.

That was a lot of climbing for a rest day!



"Hung Jury" from the base.
Photo by Pat Schmalix

Day 9: We woke up early and headed out to Keystone Canyon to get on "Hung Jury" (WI4, 55 meters), a climb I'd wanted to get on since the first time I saw it several years ago, but didn't feel like I could climb it. The wind was blowing pretty good as we walked across the Lowe River to the climb. The "bells" were much more impressive standing under them than they were from the road. Josh gave me the lead, probably because I talked

about wanting to climb it from the first day I met him. It was an amazing climb. There was only one spot where I was concerned; I swung my tool into the top of one of the bells and heard a hollow, cracking sound. All I could think was who would get hurt more, me falling on lead if it fell off, or Josh standing somewhere below me. I gently crossed over it, leaving it attached and continued to the top.

Once down, we joined the group at Bridal Veil Falls for multiple laps on the first pitch for us. Several people were acting tired after a couple laps and asked how many we had done, only to look at us funny when we both said 10 to 12.

Day 10: We wanted to climb something new and then join the festivities in Keystone Canyon later in the day, so we decided to head to Bear Creek and climb "Rain Check" (WI4, 90 meters). I wasn't feeling great, so I was more than happy to let Josh take the lead. He headed up, and with about 15 meters of rope left, I started to get hit with light slough. It lasted about 20 seconds and continually got stronger, it ended up pushing our packs down the hill a bit and burying me to just above the knee. I was glad I had my parka on with my hood up or I would have been frozen. I asked if he was O.K. and he said, "Yes," and he was off belay. I headed up the steep, s---y ice and got to the belay and took all the gear, neither one of us all too eager to continue. I made about two moves off the belay and decided it just wasn't my day and we headed to the Ice Fest at Bridal Veil Falls. I think I

only climbed one or two laps while Josh played on a mixed section for a lap or two.

Nick had an Alaskan-size bonfire going on that just got bigger through the night. So big we ended up in T-shirts for part of it.

Day 11: It was the last day of the Ice Fest and planned as a dry-tooling day at Tunnel Wall. When we arrived someone was leading a route on the right side of the wall. We all stood in the parking area with our parkas on watching and cheering him on. He got to the top and set up a top rope and several headed up to the base of the wall, some starting up a new line, others just hanging out. When I finally headed up, I could see that the wall was much steeper than it looked from below and decided I wouldn't be trying it anytime soon. Josh patiently waited for a free rope that never came and we decided to hit the road for the five- to six-hour drive back to Anchorage.

We hit Moose's Tooth one last time and headed to the airport for a shower at the USO and to catch our flight. Our flight left Anchorage at around 2:00 a.m. that night and got into Sacramento around 8:00 a.m., early enough for me to catch a couple hours sleep before heading to work.

Thanks to Ginny Schmalix and Becky Hutchison for letting us head to the Last Frontier for 10 days of climbing. We ended up climbing somewhere around 5200 vertical feet of ice in those 10 days. Another special thanks to Nick, who not only kept everyone up to date on the conditions in Valdez, but threw one hell of a party and Ice Fest. I already had plans to attend the next year's Ice Fest!

Gear Notes: Eleven screws got us up everything we climbed.

If you can get a copy of the books [Fat City and Urban Ice](#) and [Blue Ice and Black Gold](#), you would have information for a lifetime's worth of climbs. If you can't get a copy, <http://www.alaskaiceclimbing.com> has most of the climbs on it with condition updates in the forum section.

Approach Notes: Alaska Airlines and Dollar Rent-a-Car

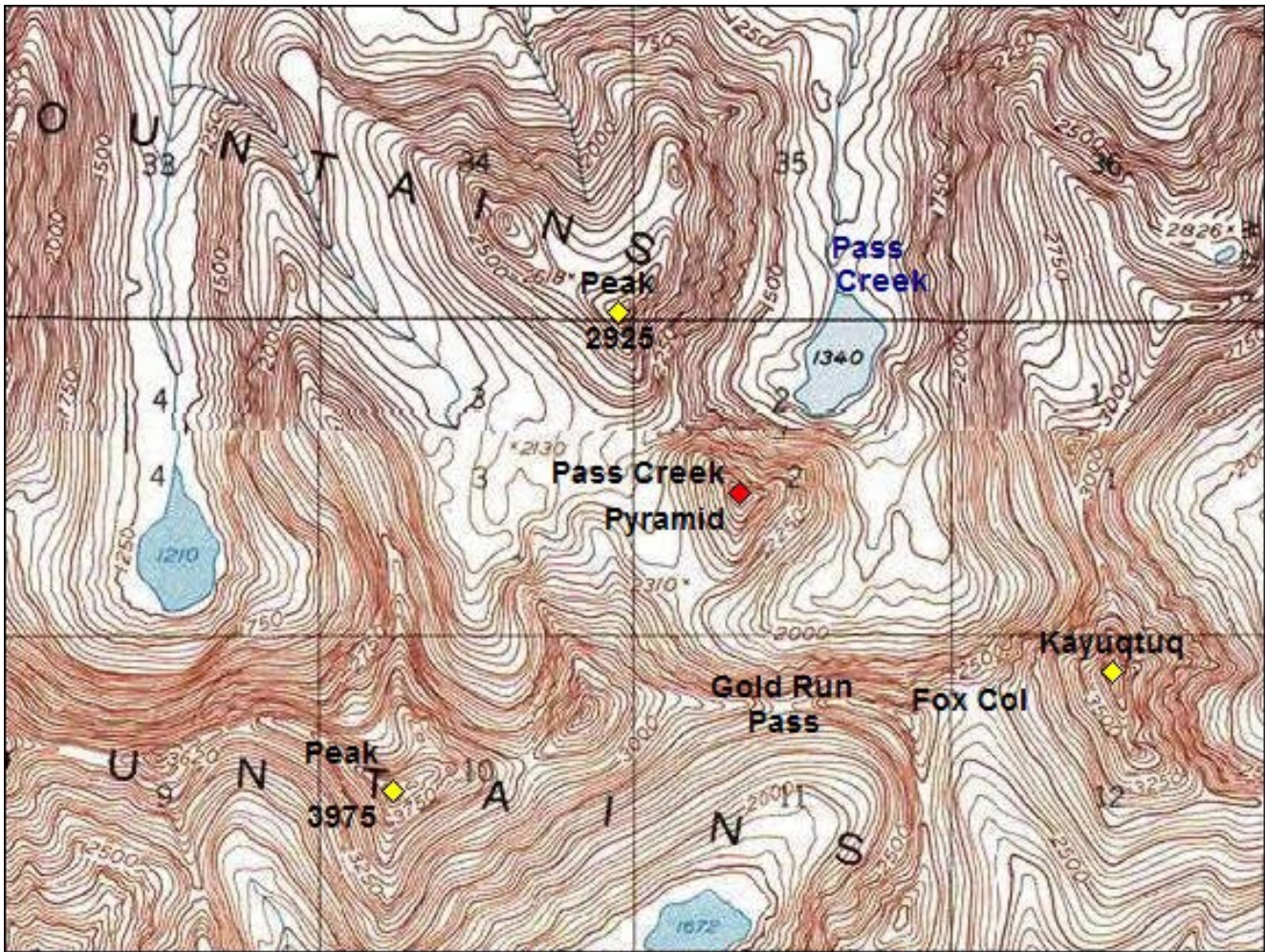


View from the top of "Spring Loaded."

Photo by Pat Schmalix

Peak of the Month: Pass Creek Pyramid

Text by Steve Gruhn



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

Mountain Range: Kigluaik Mountains

Borough: Unorganized Borough

Drainage: Pass Creek

Latitude/Longitude: 64° 59' 47" North, 165° 6' 10" West

Elevation: 2925 (±25) feet

Prominence: 615 feet from Peak 3975 west-southwest of Gold Run Pass

Adjacent Peak: Peak 3975

Distinctness: 615 feet from Peak 3975

USGS Map: Nome (D-1)

First Recorded Ascent: Spring 2015 by Ian McRae and David Panepinto

Route of First Recorded Ascent: South ridge

Access Point: Fox Creek Bridge on the Kougarok Road

Pass Creek Pyramid is a smallish peak on the remote north side of the Kigluaik Mountains.

In the spring of 2015 Leonard Lastine, Ian McRae, and David Panepinto started from the Fox Creek Bridge on the Kougarok Road north of Nome and began their day-and-a-half hike up Fox Creek to Fox Col. McRae and Panepinto descended the north side of Fox Col and traversed to the west after the slope

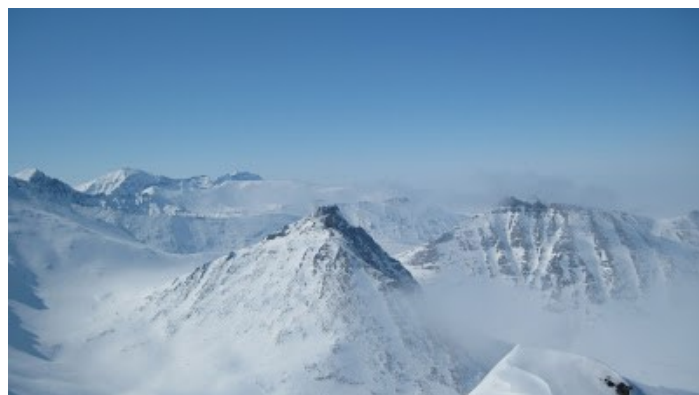
became less steep. They made their way to the 2310-foot saddle south-southwest of Pass Creek Pyramid and then ascended the south ridge to the summit. On the south ridge there were some areas of granitic gneiss that allowed for a few technical climbing moves. The north aspect was a 1600-foot face of chossy, granitic gneiss that McRae described as possibly more suitable for BASE jumping than for climbing. Based on the

presence of Pass Creek to the northeast of the peak, they named the summit Pass Creek Pyramid.

I don't know of a second ascent of Pass Creek Pyramid.

The information for this column came from my correspondence with Ian McRae and from his blog at:

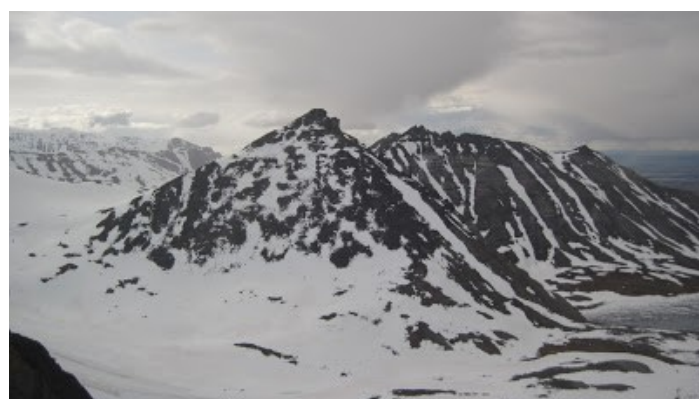
http://kigsblog-allapa.blogspot.com/2015/10/pass-creek-pyramid_10.html.



*East aspect of Pass Creek Pyramid. Mount Osborn is in the background on the left.
Photo by Ian McRae*



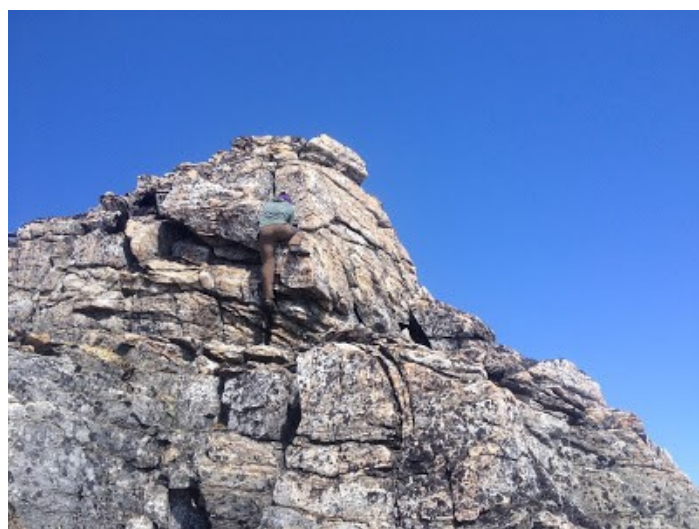
*North aspect of Pass Creek Pyramid. Kayuqtuq is the 3925-foot peak identified at left.
Photo by Manzoor Saghaffie*



*Southeast aspect of Pass Creek Pyramid as viewed from Fox Col in June 2014.
Photo by Ian McRae*



*Ian McRae and his dog Lucy at the summit of Pass Creek Pyramid. Behind them is a 1600-foot drop on the north side of the peak.
Photo by Leonard Lastine*



*Ian McRae enjoys a bit of gneiss technical climbing on the south ridge of Pass Creek Pyramid.
Photo by Leonard Lastine*

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

2017 PROPOSED BUDGET

Proposed for 2017	Budget Change	Approved for 2016	Current for 2016
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REVENUE

Membership Dues	<i>received during calendar year</i>	\$9,500	\$0	\$9,500	\$7,850.15
Scree Subscriptions		\$450	\$0	\$450	\$370.00
Training	<i>BMS, ice climbing, rock climbing, other</i>	\$8,000	\$0	\$8,000	\$0.00
Photo Calendar		\$2,300	\$0	\$2,300	\$1,522.00
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
Interest on Accounts		\$75	\$0	\$75	\$62.82
Other—Donations, etc.		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0.00
TOTAL REVENUE		\$40,325	\$20,000	\$20,325	\$9,805

EXPENSE

Training	<i>campsite, access fees, instructors, trip leaders</i>	\$3,750	(\$250)	\$4,000	\$3,759
Scree	<i>postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$2,800	\$0	\$2,800	\$1,949
General Meeting	<i>rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$15
Administrative	<i>supplies, P.O. Box, website, ads, travel, misc.</i>	\$800	\$0	\$800	\$777
Hut Construction & Maint.	<i>materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees</i>	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000	\$853
Insurance	<i>reincorporation fees, insurance</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Club Equipment	<i>climbing gear, misc, equipment, storage</i>	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$0
Library	<i>new books, periodicals, storage</i>	\$200	\$0	\$200	\$0
Other:	<i>miscellaneous expenses</i>				
Photo Calendar		\$2,600	\$0	\$2,600	\$0
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other—Awards		\$600	\$0	\$600	\$582
Other—		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL EXPENSE		\$42,250	(\$250)	\$42,500	\$7,936

DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE

(\$1,925) \$1,869

CASH BALANCE—All Accounts

Beginning Balance—January 1, 2016	\$37,891
Increase (decrease) during 2016	\$1,869
Current Balance for 2016	\$39,760
Checking—Credit Union 1	\$17,404
Money Mkt and CDs—Credit Union 1	\$20,762
Savings—Credit Union 1	\$416
18-month CD—in trust for hut lease—Northrim Bank	\$1,173
Petty Cash	\$5
Ending Balance—Revised November 9, 2016	\$39,760

Dave Johnston Receives the Hoeman Award

Text by Steve Gruhn



*Dave Johnston with his Hoeman Award.
Photo by Tom Meacham*

At the November meeting the MCA honored Dave Johnston with the Hoeman Award. Named for two of the MCA's most prolific climbers who made significant contributions to the exploration and documentation of hiking and climbing opportu-

ascent of Denali (in 1967) and the first solo winter ascent of Mount Sanford (in 1984). In addition to his climbs in Alaska, Dave was the first (and so far only) person to have reached the highest point in each of the 50 states during calendar winter (completed in 2005). He authored 10 trip reports for *the Scree* and 11 trip reports for the *American Alpine Journal*, and he has given four presentations to the MCA, demonstrating his commitment to documentation of hiking and climbing opportunities in Alaska. In his profession as a park ranger – for a year at Glacier Bay National Monument and for 26 years at Denali State Park – Dave promoted hiking and climbing.

The MCA's Awards Committee (Cory Hinds, Steve Gruhn, and Tom Meacham) presented Dave with an engraved plaque and honorary membership in the MCA. Dave joins Willy Hersman, Tom Choate, Greg Higgins, and Tim Kelley as a Hoeman Award recipient.

Written nominations for the Hoeman Award may be submitted to the MCA's Awards Committee (chaired by Cory Hinds) at chinds100@gmail.com. Nominations should include the names of both the nominee and the person nominating the candidate; a description of the contributions the nominee has made to the exploration, documentation, and promotion of hiking and climbing opportunities in Alaska; and the names and contact information of people who might be able to provide more information to the Awards Committee regarding the nominee's contributions.

nities in Alaska and northwestern Canada in the 1960s and early 1970s – Vin and Grace Hoeman – the Hoeman Award is the MCA's most prestigious award and was developed to recognize people associated with the MCA who have made significant contributions and demonstrated long-term commitment to the exploration, documentation, and promotion of hiking and climbing opportunities in Alaska.

Dave made the following first recorded ascents in Alaska: Andy Simons Mountain, Bird Peak, Mount Stevens, and the Middle Peak of Mount Hunter in 1963; Mount Barnard, Beartrack Mountain, and Mount Case in 1965; Avalanche Peak and Manila Peak in 1966; Cantata Peak and Ice Cream Cone Mountain (aka Skybuster Peak) in 1967; Truuli Peak, Node Nunatak, and Mount Kiliak in 1968; K'esugi Mountain and Paradise Peak in 1969; Herringbone Hill and Moonshadow Peak in 1974; New Years Mountain, Grand Tokosha, and Tokosha Peak in 1975; Con Leche in 1980; The Crowned Jewel and Triple Crown Peak in 1983; Peakbagger Peak and Wisdom Tooth in 1984; Peak 6740 in the Nagishlamina River drainage of the Hidden Mountains and Nagishlamina Peak in 1989; and Bumble Mountain in 1994, having thus made exploratory climbs in the Kenai Mountains, Western Chugach Mountains, Alaska Range, Alsek Ranges; Beartrack Mountains (a subset of the Chilkat Range), Cathedral Spires, Chugach Mountains, K'esugi Ridge, Tokosha Mountains, Tordrillo Mountains, and Hidden Mountains over a 32-year period and demonstrating his long-term commitment to exploration of mountain ranges throughout Alaska. In addition to those first recorded ascents, Dave also made the first winter



Dave Johnston with his wife, Cari Sayre, and son, Galen Johnston.

Photo by Cory Hinds

The Men That Don't Fit In

Text by Robert William Service

Photos by Tom Meacham



Dave Johnston in 1994 during the third ascent of Mount Torbert.

*There's a race of men that don't fit in,
A race that can't stay still;
So they break the hearts of kith and kin,
And they roam the world at will.
They range the field and they rove the flood,
And they climb the mountain's crest;
Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood,
And they don't know how to rest.*

*If they just went straight they might go far;
They are strong and brave and true;
But they're always tired of the things that are,
And they want the strange and new.
They say: "Could I find my proper groove,
What a deep mark I would make!"
So they chop and change, and each fresh move
Is only a fresh mistake.*

*And each forgets, as he strips and runs
With a brilliant, fitful pace,
It's the steady, quiet, plodding ones
Who win in the lifelong race.
And each forgets that his youth has fled,
Forgets that his prime is past,
Till he stands one day, with a hope that's dead,
In the glare of the truth at last.*

*He has failed, he has failed; he has missed his chance;
He has just done things by half.
Life's been a jolly good joke on him,
And now is the time to laugh.
Ha, ha! He is one of the Legion Lost;
He was never meant to win;
He's a rolling stone, and it's bred in the bone;
He's a man who won't fit in.*



Dave Johnston in 1994 during the third ascent of Mount Torbert.



Dave Johnston in 1989 during the first ascent of Mount Nagishlamina.



Dave Johnston in 1989 during the first ascent of Mount Nagishlamina.

Dave Johnston read this poem upon being honored with the Hoeman Award at the November MCA meeting.

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Charlie Sink	258-8770	Board member (term expires in 2017)	Stephen Austria	402-540-7037
Vice-President	Katie Strong	441-0434	Board member (term expires in 2017)	Nathan Hebda	310-3255
Secretary	Max Neale	207-712-1355	Board member (term expires in 2018)	Ralph Baldwin	232-0897
Treasurer	Brian Miller	517-402-8299	Board member (term expires in 2018)	Jennifer DuFord	227-6995
Past President	Cory Hinds	229-6809			

Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$25

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 Membership Committee at membership@mtnclubak.org.

The Scree is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to MCAScree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 22th of the month to appear 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 in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to vicepresident@mtnclubak.org.

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

Mailing list/database entry: Brian Miller - membership@mtnclubak.org

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Ed Smith - 854-5702 or hcc@mtnclubak.org

Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 or huts@mtnclubak.org

Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127 or stugrenier@gmail.com

Scree Editor: MCAScree@gmail.com Steve Gruhn (344-1219) assisted by Dawn Talbott (dawn.talbott@yahoo.com)

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Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MCAK/info>.

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