

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

December 2021

Volume 64, Number 12



"Freshly cut Christmas trees smelling of stars and snow and pine resin, inhale deeply and fill your soul with wintry night."

– John J. Geddes

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Peak of the Month: Peak 5310, Talkeetna Mountains

**DECEMBER**

**MEETING**

**Wednesday**

**December 15, at**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Annual Christmas**

**Party at AMH**



**"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."**

*This issue brought to you by: Editor—Gerrit Verbeek assisted by Dawn Munroe*

## Cover Photo

Greg Encelewski topping out on the slabs of North Doublemint.

Photo by Martin Ksok

## DECEMBER MEETING

Wednesday December 15, at 6:00 p.m. Annual Christmas Party!

Please join us for our annual Christmas Party being held at AMH.

2633 Spenard Rd, Anchorage, AK 99503

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/AMH>

Thanks to AMH for providing us an awesome outdoor event venue, so please show them some love. MCA will bring a grill and some warm beverages, but feel free to volunteer some potluck items.

We are also looking for a few volunteer items to make a good atmosphere:

- Solo Stove or like-smokeless fire pits
- Additional grills if you have an amazing one
- Additional lighting

If you'd like to volunteer items or time to help set up/break down please reach out to Heather Johnson or Nathan Pooler.

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit

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

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## Training

**December 11-12, 2021 – Crevasse Rescue Course** (Beginner/Intermediate) in Anchorage. Leaders are Gerrit Verbeek, Jen Aschoff, Nathan Pooler, Pat Schmalix, and Larry Daugherty. Day 1 will be indoors at and focus on theory. We'll cover knot practice, progress capture devices (friction hitches and mechanical devices), what you need for glacier travel on foot and on skis, how to rope up, how to build haul systems, and a quick overview of glacier navigation. Day 2 will be indoors at a rope access training facility, and outdoors at a nearby park. We'll focus on practicing self-rescue, rescuing teammates, and glacier travel.

Twenty slots are available. The course was announced earlier via our email list due to timing with *Scree* publication.

**January 12, 2022 – Waterfall Ice Climbing** (Experienced Beginner/Intermediate) at Eklutna Canyon. The trip leaders are Pat Schmalix ([schmalix@hotmail.com](mailto:schmalix@hotmail.com) or text 907-942-3445 between 9 a.m.- 6 p.m.) and Kristen Sommers. The goal of this course is to improve "newer" climbers' technique and knowledge. This will not be a class for first time ice climbers. Participants will have to have attended the Ice Fest at or above the Advanced Beginner level, or prove comparable experience. The course will be top-rope only and cover footwork, tool placement, and anchors. All participants MUST know how to top rope belay, supply all required gear, and have properly fitted crampons with clothing required to stay out all day.

This course is limited to 8 students, please no late cancellations.

**Article Submission:** Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to [mcascre@gmail.com](mailto:mcascre@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 11th 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. Send high resolution file photos separately, including captions for each photo. 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 don't forget to submit photo captions.

Online? Click me!



**Check Facebook for last-minute trips and activities.  
Or, schedule one that you want to organize.**



## Announcements

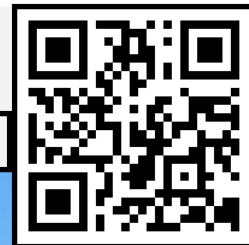
<b>Proposed 2022 Budget</b>						
	Budget 2022	2021 Appr. vs. Actual	Actual 2021	Approved 2021	Actual 2020	Actual 2019
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Membership Dues <i>received during calendar year</i>	\$14,500	(\$2,478)	\$12,022	\$14,500	\$16,581	\$15,608
Scree subscriptions <i>scree included in membership dues</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$270	\$225
Training <i>BMS, ice climbing, rock climbing, other</i>	\$3,000	\$739	\$3,239	\$2,500	\$0	\$5,086
Photo Calendar	\$2,500	(\$2,726)	\$275	\$3,000	\$2,820	\$2,423
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.	\$0	(\$150)	\$250	\$400	\$706	\$710
Interest on Accounts	\$100	(\$100)	\$0	\$100	\$196	\$0
Other - Donations, etc <i>Donations, check reimbursements</i>	\$500	\$16,700	\$17,200	\$500	\$7,175	\$455
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$20,600</b>	<b>\$11,986</b>	<b>\$32,986</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$27,768</b>	<b>\$24,507</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
Training <i>Campsites, access fees, instructors, trip leaders</i>	\$3,500	(\$894)	\$2,606	\$3,500	\$80	\$3,702
Scree <i>Postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$2,000	(\$123)	\$1,877	\$2,000	\$1,988	\$1,240
General Meeting <i>Rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$400	(\$50)	\$350	\$400	\$941	\$43
Administrative <i>Supplies, PO box, web site, ads, travel, misc.</i>	\$2,000	(\$3,097)	\$1,403	\$4,500	\$684	\$579
Hut Construction & Maint. <i>Materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees</i>	\$4,000	\$14,303	\$22,703	\$8,400	\$19,704	\$3,176
Insurance <i>Reincorporation fees, insurance</i>	\$110	(\$80)	\$30	\$110	\$0	\$100
Club Equipment <i>Climbing gear, misc equipment, storage</i>	\$600	(\$27)	\$573	\$600	\$561	\$480
Library <i>New books, periodicals, storage</i>	\$75	(\$75)	\$0	\$75	\$0	\$0
Other: <i>Miscellaneous expenses</i>						
Photo Calendar	\$1,800	(\$1,726)	\$74	\$1,800	\$1,275	\$1,530
MCA Products <i>T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.</i>	\$200	(\$200)	\$0	\$200	\$0	\$300
Other - Awards	\$350	(\$186)	\$164	\$350	\$0	\$0
Other -	\$0	(\$0)	0	\$0	\$208	\$0.
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$15,035</b>	<b>(\$7,845)</b>	<b>\$29,780</b>	<b>\$21,935</b>	<b>\$25,441</b>	<b>\$11,149</b>
<b>DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE</b>	<b>\$5,565</b>	<b>\$4,141</b>	<b>\$3,206</b>	<b>(\$935)</b>	<b>\$2,306</b>	<b>(\$9,383)</b>

## The Watchtower (3186 feet), Kenai Mountains ...as good as it gets.

Text and photos by Dano Michaud

June 8, 2009

60.08247, -149.30404



Watchtower view

Since the day I moved to our home on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Seward, I have been looking at this 3200' (+/-) bump on one of the many ridges across the bay. Since Fourth of July Creek is a common starting point for some of our other adventures, on the first outing up this creek I realized I had to climb it. This is the baffling part about this peak, to my knowledge there was no official FA. Now, I'm not trying to convince the reader to believe that I thought I was the first to grace her summit, that would be foolish to say the least. I'm almost certain it's been visited by an earlier climber of the 1940s, 50s or the 60s maybe, a hunter or miner, not to mention the tie-hacker logging for hemlock trees for the railroad ties. The latter group not of the climbing interest do tend to cover a lot of ground but seldom desire to work that hard just to be on top as we do. This small peak located across the bay from Seward is about a mile southwest of Mount Alice, and Fourth of July Creek is tucked in along her base, and being just a mile offshore, she is visible from Seward and fairly easy to access. Yet I was unable to find information regarding any climbing activity on her slopes.

Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009 prove to be the day, once more our mantra "*Carpe Diem*" spoke loudly between my ears, because the weather was, well, *as good as it gets*. With a clear sky and the sun busting over Mount Alice at 6:30 in the morning I had that excitable feeling in my veins. I slammed down my breakfast, downed 2 cups of joe and gathered up my gear, which happen to be packed and ready from the night before. Milepost 3, the cut off to Nash Road, takes me across the bay toward the Spring Creek Correctional Center. On a sideroad, I parked in the ditch next to the gate

that leads to the local rock quarry, it made a nice access point to Fourth of July Creek and from there to the creek is about a 500-foot walk. Straight up from there is where my adventure began.

Fourth of July Creek can be sketchy to cross, as with all typical glacier feed streams, its volume is partly based on the weather system that is happening at the glaciers. The glaciers that feed this stream are all within a three-mile radius so the momentum to gather up large volume as it moves along is restricted by distance. So, the possibility to wade the creek is good throughout the year but with the last few days of the extreme heat we were having I wasn't about to screw this up, not to mention when I return later in the day the creek might be even higher. So, I brought my pack raft to cross the swollen creek and ironically it took me more time to set up the raft for crossing than it took me to ford the dang thing! To my graces, the crossing was uneventful, which I like, and the next thing was getting through the barbed wire fence Mother Nature installs on all Alaskan mountain streams, it is also referred to as *Oplopanax horridus*, or *Devil's Club* but I've heard it called by names some folks would prefer me not to repeat, so I won't. I burrow my way through and up to the spruce slope where travel was more negotiable.

Around 1000' elevation I left the shade of the spruce forest where I entered an alder maze, picking my way through I spotted a small creek and worked my way towards it. The vegetation was just beginning to sprout and had not choked the ground around the creek, making for easy access if I stay close to her shores. I proceeded up and into a picturesque high mountain cirque, I stopped



to take in the sight of the ridges that surround me, and the new smells of summer. Within it the quietness, I felt surreal for moment as I viewed what laid before me.

As for this basic peak, I had scoped out a route from the parking lot hours before but as usual “plans change” and now I had a some additional choices. I picked the most direct route that would put me on the ridge to climber’s right. I quickly gain the ridge and proceeded to scramble up through the sketchy grass slopes, I made it to the first bump prior the summit, now at 3000’ I got my first view of the glorious valley that laid beyond to the south. ‘This area will need additional exploring’ was my first thought, followed by... ‘later.’

As I stood and bask in the heat of the sun I took in the glorious view, then I was startled by the very close presence of some mountain goats, the majestic mountain monarch. It was a group of seven, I looked at them with disbelief, so close and they looked at me as if to say, “who the heck are you?” It was unfortunate that these monarchs of the high country stood in my direct route to the summit proper. I gingerly made my way in their direction and sure enough they began to get up and make their way to a more peaceful ground, a spot of snow where they took their rest from the heat.

I picked up my pace and continued on for the next 500’ and an additional 200’ of elevation to the summit proper. It was a little bit of a scramble with a section of side hilling and walling, reaching the top was fabulous for the wind was now nonexistent.

I took in the complete panoramic view. To the north Mount Alice in all her glory, on her right going east the Godwin Glacier, then Mount Mary, the Shelf Glacier, Santa Ana Peak, Likes Peak, further on the rest of the peaks that make up Resurrection Peninsula, the bay and to the south as I make my way around I can see the Chiswell Islands, then Callisto Peak, the Callisto Icefield, Bear, Marathon, Phoenix, Benson, the Resurrection Peaks and Mount Ascension. Distance yet very visible, the Harding Icefield with many of the peaks and nunataks having seen no man on their summits. The view was phenomenal!

I brought along a small pill container, a piece of paper and a pencil. I signed the log and named the peak *The Watchtower* (for its proximity to the prison). Afterwards I put the log under a pile of rocks, took some more pictures, then took a few moments to reflect on the beauty and the gratitude I had for this beautiful place.

I then retreated from the summit top to the bump where I first encountered the goats. Once there, I stripped down to shorts and top, broke out my stove, and brewed up tea and a hot meal. As I was once again reflecting, I stood up to look over the valley below. I was hoping to spot a bear or two in the distance terrain. But

once again I was startled by the sudden presence of a goat. He (or she) had walked up on me while I was getting all comfy. Needless to say, once the goat got a good look (and smell) of me he turned and got the heck out of there.

After a good hour in the sun, I returned via a fabulous glissade down a long snow slide off the back side of the bump that I just had lunch on. I retraced my track through the devil’s jungle of clubs and alders, crossed the creek and was back to my van.

Later that evening, I was in my backyard enjoying a beverage in the evening sun. I sat on my deck looking out over the bay toward the peak I just climbed and call The Watchtower and thought to myself...this is...as good as it gets!



# Brooks Range Express 2.0

## Dan Peak (7020 feet), Dillon Mountain (4820 feet), and Cathedral Mountain (3375 feet)

Text and photos by Shane Ohms

May 28-31, 2021



68.293,-149.559



*Cathedral Mountain is the blocky mass left of center.*

Again, it was three peaks and one big Memorial Day weekend. In similar fashion to the maiden voyage, myself, Sophia Tidler, Gerrit Verbeek, Chelsea Grimstad, and her two dogs Kiva and Bean, hopped aboard the Brooks Range Express (my red truck) on a non-refundable ticket to the North North.

Summary: This time the focus of the trip revolved around skiing Dan Peak, a peak that had piqued my interest during a July 2020 trip over Peak 7226 [Editor's note: Peak 7226 is known as *Kansas Peak* on [bivouac.com](http://bivouac.com)], Peak 6983, and James Dalton Mountain. The skiing on Dan Peak's north side, I suspected, would keep us on mellow slopes while whisking us past steep walls and impressive geology. Cool I say! This hypothesis came to be correct and Dan Peak is a Brooks Range peak I would rank highly as a ski-focused peak.



*James Dalton Mountain, Peak 6983, and Peak 7226, as seen from near the top of Dan Peak.*

The second peak was Dillon Mountain and, thanks to an *Adventures of Lupe* article, we knew the southern aspect had some routes that went, and indeed they were easily findable. We were on our way back south early since the majority of this party's trip needed to be in Anchorage by Monday night, so at the Coldfoot gas station I rapidly conceived plans for a third peak along the way that would take only half a day to bag: Cathedral

Mountain. Cathedral Mountain turned out to be a pleasurable peak with only a little bushwhacking. I am not sure why this peak isn't more popular.

The following text is more or less copied from my website. Many more photos (including some referenced in this text) can be found here: <https://fromrockstorivers.com/2021/08/09/brooks-range-express-2-0/> And since it will probably be a few years before I have the time to pictorially retrace the steps of Brooks Range 1.0 myself, enjoy renowned Alaska adventurer Ian Borowski's film for free at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaptMSyNZG8&t=78s>

### Friday May 28th, 2021

Friday after work we boarded the Brooks Range Express, fueled by Lady Gaga, and motored up to the Brooks Range camping on Chandalar Shelf just shy of Atigun Pass in the land of the actual midnight sun.

### Saturday May 29th, 2021

We ducked under the pipeline and made way for the inevitable Atigun River crossing. We hopped over some of the rivers flow on ice, but at one spot we'd have to walk across the river. My approach shoe of choice, rubber boots, came in handy, lobbing them over for all but the dogs to use. We continued up the canyon draining the north side of Dan Peak with skis on packs. Eventually the canyon became less of a canyon and more of a valley and we put the skis on our feet. The sun came out too and it got HOT like the inside of a microwave, cooking us contents.



We wove around to the north aspect. Chelsea, Sophie, Gerrit, and the dogs were well ahead of me and had essentially conducted a snow pit test before I got there. As I pen this out, I can't recall the results, but probably a CT-30 since we continued on up. We kind of all split up at this point, but kept visual tabs on one another. I wanted some specific pictures, so I skinned to the East Ridge and then skinned



*Atigun River crossing.*

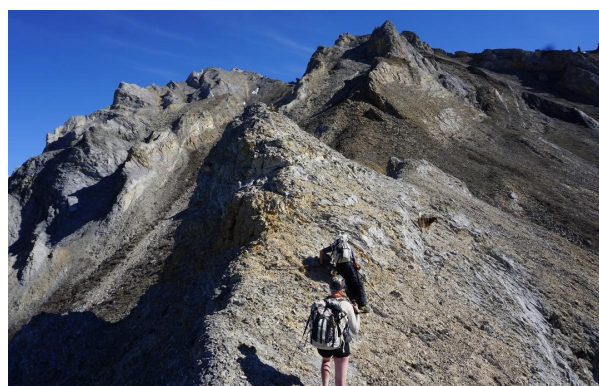
that to the summit. Gerrit hopped on a center ridge of the Northeast Face and the dogs chose to follow him. Sophie and Chelsea took the North Ridge. A strong wind that we would've paid good money for while we baked down in the valley was now ripping up on the ridge. Gerrit had gotten to the top first and promptly dug in a little wind block while waiting for the rest of us. I took bare minimal photos with cold fingers. I wish the wind was less so we could've stayed longer. The ski down was amazing, warmed spring corn. No challenging aspects or steep angles, just a fun giddy time.

Steve Gruhn later brought to my attention a 1989 *American Alpine Journal* article referencing Dan Peak having first been climbed by Kevin Murray sometime between 1985 and 1988.

Back at the car, we celebrated Chelsea's birthday with IPA's and a cake Sophie had managed to stow away. We then drove back to camp at the same spot on Chandalar Shelf - but not so fast! At the top of Atigun Pass, Sophie and I got out to do a free road lap. Unlike the road laps on Brooks Range Express 1.0, which were done early in the morning on hardpack, the snow was now softened by the afternoon sun. And you already know I had to thread the thermosiphons like a boss again.

### **Sunday May 30th, 2021**

We packed up camp and drove south to the pullout at the big lake west of Dillon Mountain. We arrived early enough that we enjoyed a little shade in the shadow of the mountain on the approach. We tried our best to stay out of the marshes. There is a vegetated wall that guards the south ridge of Dillon Mountain. It's all fine and dandy to go around it, but Sophie saw something that would "go" and indeed it did, saving us a bit of walking.



*Sophie Tidler and Gerrit Verbeek on the south ridge of Dillon Mountain.*

Now in the sun, we maneuvered over to the middle of the three south ridges. The ridge was a bit scrambly, but not super exposed. I'd been on trips with these dogs up Tetlin Peak and Donoho Peak before and they had no issues with Dillon Mtn. either. Uneventfully (which is how I like it), the summit was gained. We enjoyed spectacular views of two old favorites; Snowden Mountain and Sukakpak

Mountain (featured in the video I referenced in the very beginning of this text). The for the descent, we took the modest scree gully to the west of the middle South Ridge. This would actually be the easiest way up Dillon Mountain from a technical perspective, but the downside is... well; uphill scree. We made it back to the car before 1 p.m.

Back at the Coldfoot gas station it was Sunday and still quite early in the day. We all had Monday off, being Memorial Day, but I heard rumors circulating amongst the 5 Stankorage stowaways that there was going to be some mutiny if we didn't keep moving south. They wanted to cut down on the Monday drive hours since they'd be doing 6 more than myself. But the day was still so young... I yearned for one more summit, just one more! And so, in the Coldfoot gas station I had a brain child; Cathedral Mountain, which is actually visible from the Coldfoot gas station. 5 miles round trip, only 2700 feet of gain, a zero-approach-starts-going-up-right-from-the-road-so-bushwhacking-is-minimal kind of peak. The idea found favor in our party.

At 3 p.m. we were parked on the side of the road and starting up Cathedral Mountain. The brush was mostly the ankle grabby kind and we got out of it soon enough. The plan was to take the West Ridge. From afar it looked intimidating and none of us knew if it went. As it turned out, all the gendarmes are very easy to traverse around. About 20-30 feet below the summit I

found some white stuff nestled in the rocks. Strange, since I hadn't seen any snow anywhere else on the south aspect. I went to grab it and discovered it was papers! A summit register gone astray. Gerrit who was already at the top confirmed finding a red can. The papers must have blown out.

The papers read Richard L. Carey for a first ascent on July 29, 1995. When I got back home, Steve



Gruhn would inform me of two more ascents in August of 2017 by Lily Grossbard, then by Stephen Lunde two days later. Since the summit register was M.I.A. for some period of time, more ascents may have been made and simply weren't recorded.

The way down would have been uneventful, except we ran into a black bear which had materialized on a little pass that we couldn't have been on but only 3 hours prior. The bear didn't really want to relinquish right of way, but we had him beat, 6 to 1. We reached the car before 8 p.m. We continued driving south to camp Sunday night at the Arctic Circle sign campground. We had a good time, complete with a campfire. Bugs and the inability to consume more alcohol made staying up pointless and ultimately drove us stumbling into the tent.

### Monday May 31th, 2021

On Monday we drove back to Fairbanks with only one break (for pie), then the Anchorage contingent did another 6 hours on the road back to the big city. I went into this trip with some anxiety that the trip wouldn't live up to Brooks Range Expedition 1.0 ... Well, I can honestly admit that it didn't. \*sigh\* But that's ok. I suppose diving into a now all-too-familiar mountain zone just isn't as mind-blowing as the first time. All in all, it was a seamless trip though. We played our cards perfectly, and perfect is good enough.



*Freshly carved lines descending from Dan at the top left.*



*Looking down Cathedral Mountain's west ridge.*



*Summit of Dillon Mountain, looking south.*



*A wide expanse of flatlands south of Cathedral Mountain's summit.*



*Pleasant hill rambling down Cathedral Mountain's west ridge.*



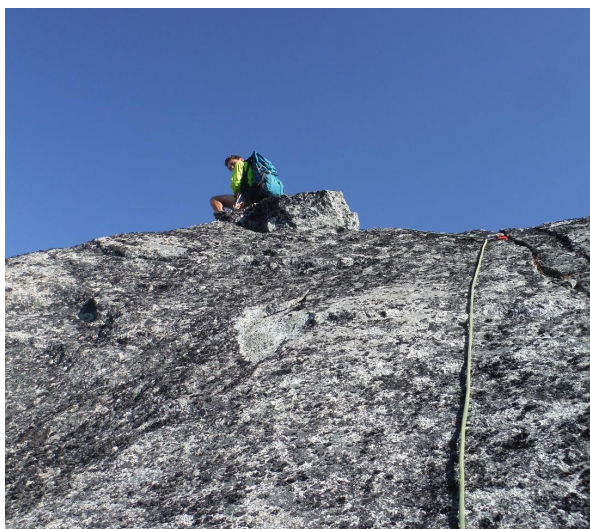
## Doublemint Spires (South Peak 6372 feet, North Peak 6308 feet) and Sentry Spire (6004 feet), Talkeetna Mountains

Text and photos by Martin Ksok

Summer 2020



61.850,-149.037



*Greg Encelewski on narrow summit ridge of  
North Doublemint.*



*Greg Encelewski on the south summit of the Doublemint Spires with  
Troublemint in the background.*

Although not possessing the necessary prominence to be a true summit, Doublemint Spires, or Doublemints to be exact, do form a prominent feature as viewed from the Mint Hut. The south summit is higher of the two but the north one presented us with better climbing, mostly because of the poor route choice on my part. Greg Encelewski and I made it an overnight outing, chose to not bring a tent and stayed at the hut. A brave decision considering the nine tents that were pitched that night in the vicinity. We did get the whole floor to ourselves after kicking some dogs out to the foyer. We were "supported" by Ethan, Jason, Tiegen, Zoe Copp and Ethan's sweetheart Sophie. We ascended the still faint trail above Moonstone Lake (surprising for how much use it must get), proceeded over headwaters of the Little Susitna River and through boulder fields guarding the approach to the narrow col between two summits, roped up and quickly climbed beautiful low angle slabs of the north peak. The difficulty was low, I ended up placing a couple of stoppers for protection and we rappelled from the top. The plan was to tackle the south peak next from the col but a featureless steep slab denied us that convenience. Instead we dropped down and traversed around the west side looking for a way up. A gully presented itself so the fools that we were decided to take it. It was mostly a scramble but a very loose one, large rocks embedded in sand forced us to travel one at a time until we reached the south ridge and pleasant low

angle slabs with some grassy benches. In retrospect climbing the south ridge of the south peak, rappelling to the col and continuing up the slabs of the north peak would have been a finer choice. Daylight permitting, one could also keep going and make it up Sentry Spire in one outing. We retreated down the gully rappelling at least once through the loose sections. A quick stop at the hut preceded the monotonous trudge down valley and our stashed bikes.

On another occasion Peter Taylor joined me for a trip up Sentry Spire, also an overnight trip, but this time we got to sleep in the loft. His wife Kazumi provided support this time. The approach is quite similar and so is the climbing. Our route started at the col between the spire and Troublemint Spire and mostly due to wet rock and lichen included two pitches of low-angle roped climbing and rappelling (absailing for Peter who is from New Zealand). The narrow summit of this feature makes it worth the effort, if not in itself then at least as a side trip while climbing Troublemint or traversing Doublemints. We left three rap anchors initially but I retrieved the lowest one while climbing Troublemint during a separate trip, mainly because I could see it from the col which really bothered me, but also because the rock happened to be dry at that time. All the climbing was done while wearing hiking boots and using a single rope, sixty meters on Doublemints and fifty on Sentry Spire.

## Noel Hanson Mountain (Bone BM; 4984 feet), Mount Kenai (5020 feet), and Peak 5100, Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne Todd

October 13, 2020



60.366,-149.634



*Carrie hiking up Noel Hanson Mountain*

With memories of the respectable bushwhack and corresponding biting insects with Steve Gruhn up Peak 5309 from the previous summer (see the September 2019 Scree), map perusing is deemed very worthwhile for access to Noel Hanson Mountain (NHM), Mount Kenai, and Peak 5100\*, which are next door. One obvious alternative on the map is a trail that runs parallel to Snug Harbor Road, east of Porcupine Creek.

Wanting to get a reasonably early start, which never seems to happen when departing from Anchorage, Carrie Wang and I drive down the previous evening to have a route plan pre-determined before the next morning.

A pleasant brisk evening walk to the Surge Tower (does that deliver or consume electricity?) reveals that the trail on the map no longer exists. That, compounded with the terrain below NHM being quite steep from here, causes us to opt for my previous route. I'm expecting a pretty healthy bushwhack.

We still need headlamps for a 7:15 a.m. start (check the charge and batteries before fall season!). Shortly after gaining the second social trail from Rainbow Lake, it's light enough to ditch the torches which we're conserving (see note above). Exiting the forest along the snowmachine trail, we notice a new (?) flagged and cut trail that angles more directly toward NHM, so we bite, especially as I know what continuing straight (southeast) on the wider trail would bring (brush and misery). We also have the

advantage that being mid-October all the leafy plants have shed their leaves, and there are zero flying insects.

Up we go on this wonderful, freshly cut, recut it turns out, and well-flagged trail. I'm curious if this trail has been made by hunters or hikers or skiers or ...? Soon we're in hemlock-studded alpine. Wow, that was refreshingly pleasant. Hiking up the southwest ridge of NHM, the sun has a difficult time escaping over the Peak 5309 ridgeline to our right. Even so, with freshly snow-painted upper mountain zones, and Cooper Lake behinddrop\*\*, the viewscape is glorious.

The sun breaks over the 5309 ridge and then battles off and on with intermittent clouds. Our ridge is fairly easy walking with poles and just a few hours after departing, we're on the snow-striated, wind-draped, and survey-platformed top (amazing progress for us). Noel Hanson Mountain casts a serious shadow on the land to the north. No reason to linger, so we continue east, now in a foot of snow. A solitary goat ambles along then rests on the edge of the steep north terrain. Kenai Lake borders us far below to the left as the sun slowly wins the sky battle.

Rime flowers are prevalent along the Mount Kenai ridgeline. A closer look reveals most of them were started by a small, thin plant strand. Another larger set looks like albino porcupines. Ahead, a striking rime-plastered tower looks impressive, but



the summit lies just beyond. It's briefly quite warm. Now in full sunshine with little wind, looking steeply down on still lightly fall-speckle bordered Kenai Lake and around to recently visited, now snow-topped peaks, and with many lakes showing (Kenai, Cooper, Crescent, Upper Russian, Lower Trail), our path cleanly behind and the path to 5100 looking easy, the day is stunning. This is the loitering summit.

A quick cruise over to 5100 for slightly different views, including a substantial gendarme north of 5309 that Steve and I missed because of clouded summit views, but a rude, bulbous cloud blocking the sun leads to a short summit stay. We backtrack to a smooth-looking snow slope, a snow-covered remnant glacier. The initial section looks to be a great way for an uncontrolled slide into rocks, so we skirt it on exposed rocks. When it levels slightly I venture out for smoother travel, but drop a leg into a few shallow ice holes.

Minutes after we leave, the cloud slowly abates, lending to comments of, "Dang, we were just 15 minutes too soon."

Off the remnant glacier, I'm rather curious how it views without snow. We pass by a fun, ice-circle-patterned lake. Then light hail begins, and looks to persist, as we hike over mostly-snow-free rocks. Perhaps it was good timing after all.

We hurry out Boulder Creek Valley to gain alpine terrain, and leave the hail behind. The skies clear slightly as we traverse and then slowly regain the southwest ridge of Noel Hanson, aiming for an ascent route intersection around 3300 feet.

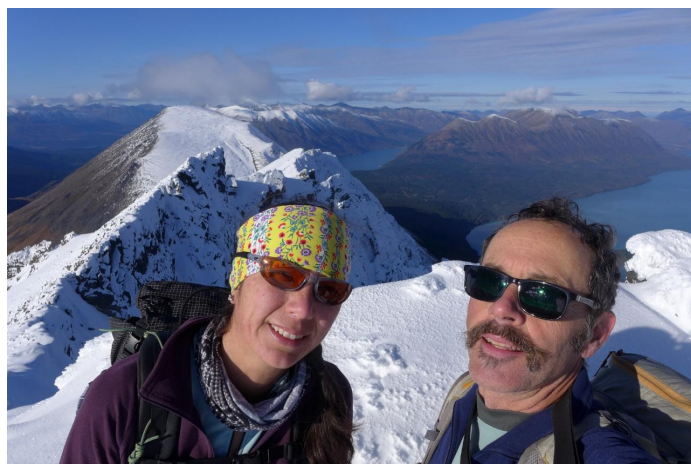
With evening-sun-draped views of Cooper Lake and environs, and back on the trail, it's an easy and pleasant hike down and back to the car, well before dark.

Eleven hours, about 12 miles, and 6000 feet of elevation gain.

\*The peak one mile south of Mount Kenai. Both GPS devices show an elevation well over 5100'. \*\*behindrop: the back-drop behind you.



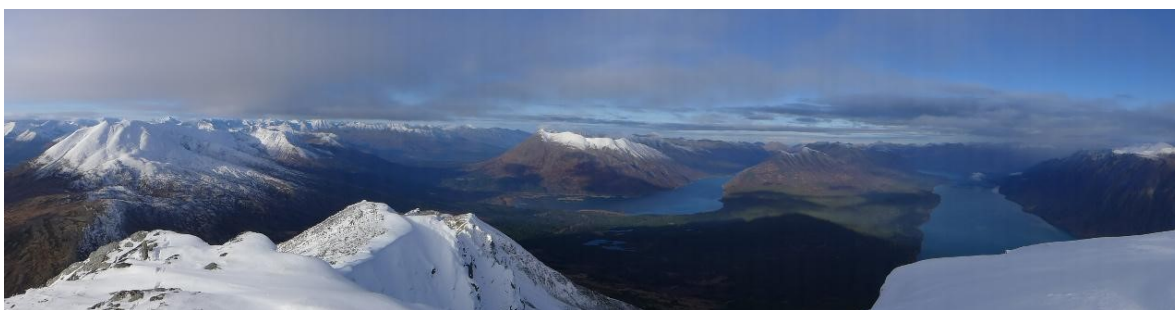
*The ridge gendarme*



*Carrie and Wayne on Mount Kenai ridge*



*Parting view of Peak 5100*



*Panorama from Noel Hanson Mountain*

## Kenai Ramblings 5.3: Utah (4460 feet), Nebraska (4300+ feet), and Wyoming (4528 feet) Peaks

Text and photos by Wayne Todd

June 11, 2020



60.6400,-149.637



*Steve hurrying off Wyoming.*



*Steve on Utah ridgeline, Mount Summit backdrop.*

Now onto a newly found trail, I'm back at Summit Creek Trailhead with longtime friend Steve Wilson, but now equipped with bicycles as I'd gleaned the trail seemed so bike friendly on the exodus from Mount Summit two weeks prior.

The trail is rather steep, and didn't we just pass a sign that bikes aren't advised, but we muster on, frequently hopping off to push the bikes. This seems to go on for 'a while' but I keep verbalizing, "the trail levels out just a bit further". Finally, enough bike-walking and we ditch the bikes trailside. Continuing on foot we make much better time.

The Summit Creek Trail is a very good trail, IF you are on foot. Today's objective is clearly stateside: Utah (4460 feet), Nebraska (4300+ feet), Wyoming (4528 feet), North Gilpatrick (4862 feet), and Arizona (4550 feet) Peaks.

We're soon (?) at the pass and the snow-melt in two weeks is substantial, allowing early alpine plants to erupt and bloom, and make reasonable mountain hiking progress. Oddly, we spy color movement on the Summit ridgeline, some other folks are out here today. A hard right turn and before long we're stateside on Utah Peak. A near roller-coaster ride later, if you're a tall mountain runner, neither Steve or I am, we're on Nebraska Peak. These peaks are very close.

The day is a pleasant mix of sunshine, mixed clouds, mild wind and the forecast only mentioned a slight chance of something bad, late in the afternoon. Another whoop dee doo and we're on Nebraska Peak, a bit later than I'd thought, all my causation from miscellaneous things like the bike idea, having a reasonable start time, etc.

North Gilpatrick Mountain and Arizona Peak now look some distance away but there's plenty of light this time of year. We're snacking and enjoying the views until we look behind us and "oh, crap", we're in for it. There is no doubt looking at the sneakily approached cloud system we are in for a pounding. As the rain and hail unloads, we hastily shove stuff in packs, except rain gear, and run down a snow tongue as thunder and lightning unleashes around us. The 'squall' doesn't let up as we arc around Nebraska and Utah peaks, bee-lining for the pass. Recent bike tracks imprint the snow.

My lower body is already thoroughly soaked, and I still think the rain will stop so skip the rain bottoms (foolish, foolish hiker). We hike down the Summit Creek Trail with a purpose. But, there's that lurking biking problem. The rain does not relent, and the trail is now quite slick. At least the ride on the bikes will be fast. Ha.

The trail is slick enough staying upright on the bikes is a 'challenge' (that's French). At the numerous ditches where I try to stop and hop off, my old, and now wet spandex crotch area tends to grab the seat, making for animated, mostly uncontrolled dismounts. There's a few over the handlebar incidents where again the spandex sticks to the seat. A classic 'stop' is when I abruptly pull brakes, lose control and Steve slides headfirst into me, also over the handlebars.

Surprisingly, we make it back to the vehicle fairly intact, just a bit muddy. Car heaters are a most wonderful apparatus.

Now about North Gilpatrick Mountain and Arizona Peak ...

Approximately 10 hours, 12 miles, 5,200' gain.



## Peak of the Month: Peak 5310

Text by Steve Gruhn;  
photos by Shane Ohms

**Mountain Range:** Talkeetna Mountains

**Borough:** Matanuska-Susitna Borough

**Drainage:** Butte Creek

**Latitude/Longitude:** 63° 2' 17" North, 147° 36' 43" West

**Elevation:** 5310 ± 10 feet

**Adjacent Peak:** Peak 5896 in the Butte Creek drainage

**Distinctness:** 650 feet from Peak 5896

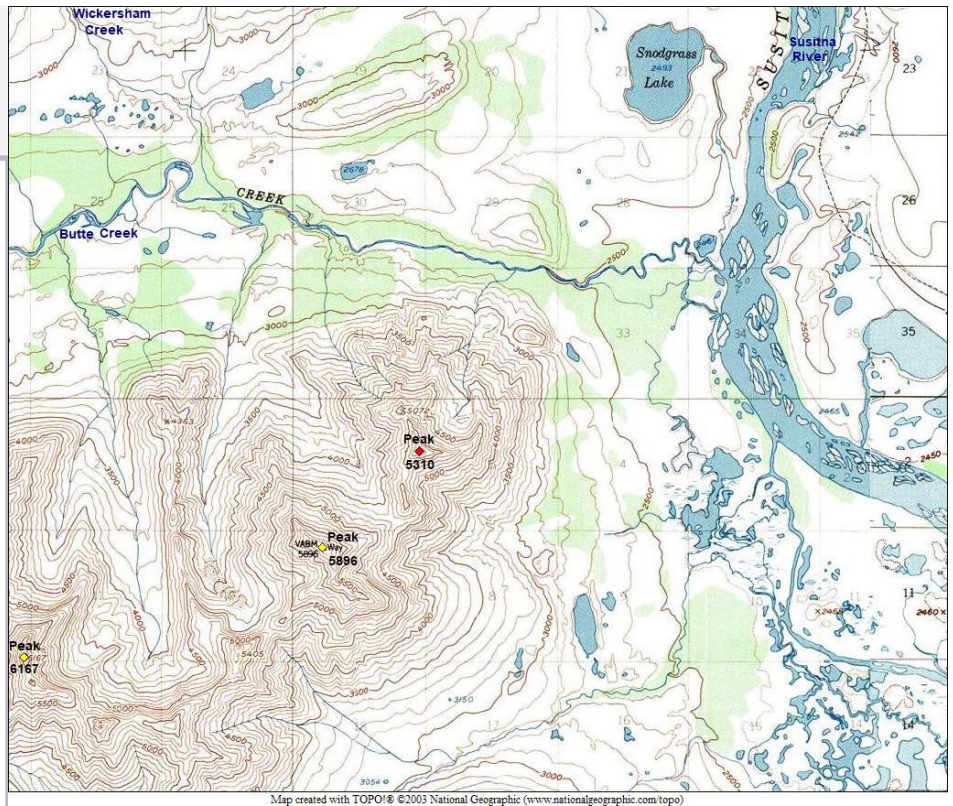
**Prominence:** 650 feet from Peak 5896

**USGS Map:** 1:63,360: Healy (A-2), 1:25,000: Healy A-2 SE

**First Recorded Ascent:** April 24, 2021, by Sean Marble and Shane D. Ohms

**Route of First Recorded Ascent:** Northeast bowl to the north ridge

**Access Point:** Snodgrass Lake Trailhead



Sean Marble boots up the north ridge of Peak 5310.

Peak 5310 is depicted on the USGS' 1975 *Healy (A-2), Alaska*, quadrangle as being between 5300 and 5400 feet in elevation. The USGS' 2016 *Healy A-2 SE* map depicts the summit as being between 5280 and 5320 feet. These two maps reveal that the summit is between 5300 and 5320 feet. Averaging the minimum and maximum possible elevations, I call it Peak 5310.

On April 24, 2021, Sean Marble and Shane Ohms set out from the Denali Highway on skis, heading south along the Butte Creek Trail. A little over a mile south of Snodgrass Lake, they skied across Butte Creek on a snow bridge and began to pick their way through the spruce, alders, and willows toward the northeast aspect of Peak 5310.

Upon reaching the bowl northeast of the summit, Marble and Ohms gained the north ridge of Peak 5310 at the saddle south of Point 5072. They continued skinning up the ridge for another 100 vertical feet and then cached their skis. In ski boots, but without crampons, they followed the north ridge to the summit, enjoying the views of the Clearwater Mountains across the Susitna River.

From the summit Marble and Ohms retraced their route to their ski cache, put on their skis, and descended the west face of the peak to the valley floor, which they followed northwest to an elevation of about 3100 feet. They camped there on a patch of snowless tundra.

On skis Marble and Ohms reached Butte Creek on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>, waded across barefoot, and skied downstream. Dense brush caused them to repeatedly switch from one side of the creek to the other. However, they were able to find snow bridges for each crossing, so they didn't spend a lot of time taking off and putting on boots. Eventually they reached the point where they had crossed Butte Creek the previous day. They skied back to Snodgrass Lake and the car via the same route they had taken the day before.

I don't know of a second ascent of Peak 5310.

Information for this column came from Ohms's blog (<https://fromrockstorivers.com/2021/05/22/peak-5350-talkeetna-mountains/>) and from my correspondence with Ohms.





*Sean Marle skis south down the Butte Creek Trail toward Butte Creek.*



*Sean Marle skiing down the northwest aspect of Peak 5310.*



*Sean Marle descending the north ridge of Peak 5310.*



*Sean Marle coming down Peak 5310.*



*Sean Marle crossing Butte Creek.*



# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2021, at 6:30-8:00 p.m., conducted online via Zoom

## Roll Call

Gerrit Verbeek (President) - Present  
Nathan Pooler (Vice-President) - Present  
Curtis Townsend (Secretary) - Present  
Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Present  
Luke Konarzewski (Director) - Absent  
Brenden Lee (Director) - Present  
Josh Pickle (Director) - Absent  
Heather Johnson (Director) - Present  
Andy Kubic (Director) - Present  
Peter Taylor (Director) - Present  
Mike Meyers (Past President) - Present  
Gabriela La Greca (Website Design) - Present

**Scribe:** Curtis Townsend

## Committee Reports

### President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- Gerrit Verbeek will reach out to Lila Hobbs, Josh Pickle and Luke Konarzewski for interest participating in website, Peter Taylor also volunteered to help if needed e.g. with news feed.

### Vice President (Nathan Pooler)

- Nothing to report.

### Secretary (Curtis Townsend)

- Nothing to report.

### Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- Nothing to report.

### Liability Committee

- Nothing to report.

### Awards Committee

- Mike Meyers + Gerrit Verbeek + Brendan Lee to present mug and Honorary Lifetime Member certificate to Steve Gruhn.

### the Scree (Gerrit Verbeek, Dawn Munroe)

- Nothing to report.

### Trips Committee

- Board discussed refundable and non-refundable sign-up fees to reduce cancellations. No decisions made.

### Training Committee

- Huge demand for training. Heather: formal avalanche training courses are filling up instantly. Kit Barton request-

ed 2-day crevasse rescue course. Gabriela would love to participate in a 7-day winter mountaineering course.

- Heather Johnson will create guidelines for the MCA to arrange non-certified snow safety / avalanche practice, Nathan to help.

### Huts Committee (Jonathan Rupp Strong, Greg Bragiel, Cory Hinds, Vicky Lytle)

- Jonathan Rupp Strong working to submit interim report for the MSTPF Grant, windows to be installed in the spring.

### Mentorship (Lila Hobbs, Katherine Cooper)

- Nothing to report.

### Communications Committee (Andy Kubic, Heather Johnson)

- Gabriela demonstrated new website, Board is impressed and grateful.
- Andy is the Point of Contact for final edits and QA/QC of the new website (target Dec. 1st), will set up handover sessions with Gabriela, collect feedback from Board, and delegate as needed.
- Brendan Lee to create MCA Wikipedia page (no deadline).

### Calendar Committee (Vicky Ho, Lila Hobbs, Heather Johnson, Mike Meyers, Lexi Trainer)

- Heather estimated the calendar will be ready for distribution Nov. 1st. Will coordinate with Nathan to send ListServ emails, no further Board help required.

### Board Votes/Decisions

- Voted to change future Board meetings to begin at 7 p.m., and to hold the next Board meetings November 17th and December 15th to fit holiday schedules
- Voted against Adobe Acrobat DC subscription for now - Curtis offered to digitize Scree scans, Board consensus is that minor errors in OCR text is acceptable
- Voted to prioritize having website live by December 1st. Andy is the point of contact
- Voted to approve a Jan. 22 ice climbing training led by Pat Schmalix and Kristen Sommers
- Voted to approve Kit Barton to begin planning a snow safety practice. Katherine Cooper volunteered to help (time permitting)

### **Date and Location of next Meeting**

- General Meeting November 3, 2021 at 6:30pm via Zoom.
- Next Board Meeting on November 17, 2021 from 7:00-8:00 pm.

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Gerrit Verbeek	<a href="mailto:president@mtnclubak.org">president@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 1 (term expires in 2022)	Luke Konarzewski	<a href="mailto:lukekonarzewski96@gmail.com">lukekonarzewski96@gmail.com</a>
Vice-President	Nathan Pooler	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org">vicepresident@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 2 (term expires in 2022)	Brendan Lee	<a href="mailto:brendanlee718@yahoo.com">brendanlee718@yahoo.com</a>
Secretary	Curtis Townsend	<a href="mailto:secretary@mtnclubak.org">secretary@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 3 (term expires in 2022)	Josh Pickle	<a href="mailto:joshuampickle@gmail.com">joshuampickle@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Katherine Cooper	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mtnclubak.org">treasurer@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 4 (term expires in 2023)	Heather Johnson	<a href="mailto:hjohnson2211@gmail.com">hjohnson2211@gmail.com</a>
			Director 5 (term expires in 2023)	Andy Kubic	<a href="mailto:andy.kubic@gmail.com">andy.kubic@gmail.com</a>
			Director 6 (term expires in 2023)	Peter Taylor	

Annual membership dues: Basic ("Dirtbag") \$20, Single \$30, Family \$40

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](mailto: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](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com). Material should be submitted by the 11th 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](mailto: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: Katherine Cooper — 209-253-8489 — [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org)

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Vacant—[training@mtnclubak.org](mailto:training@mtnclubak.org)

Mentorship: Katherine Cooper and Lila Hobbs—[mentorship@mtnclubak.org](mailto:mentorship@mtnclubak.org)

Huts: Greg Bragiel—350-5146 or [huts@mtnclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtnclubak.org)

Calendar: Lexi Trainer

Librarian: Gwen Higgins—[library@mtnclubak.org](mailto:library@mtnclubak.org)

*Scree* Editor: Gerrit Verbeek — [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com) assisted by Dawn Munroe (350-5121 or [dawn.talbott@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn.talbott@yahoo.com))

Web: [www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org)

Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.io/g/MCAK>.

*Wayne Todd and Steve Wilson on Wyoming Peak in the Kenai Mountains.*

*Photo by Wayne Todd*

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Anchorage, AK 99524-3561