

# the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

MARCH 2024

Volume 67, Number 3



"I haven't been everywhere, but it's on my list."

– Susan Sontag

## March Meeting

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

6:00-8:00 p.m. at the BP Energy Center

Presenter: Kelly Kropko

Topic: Major Accidents in Climbing,  
Biking, Surfing, and Pack Rafting

## Contents:

*Peak 5050, Endicott Mountains, Brooks Range*

*Frenchy Peak (5079 feet), Kenai Mountains*

*"Blood From The Stone," Second Ascent, Mount Dickey (9545 feet), Alaska Range*

*Synthesizer Peak (5638 feet), Grey Jay Peak (5780 feet), and Camp Robber Peak (5855 feet),*

*Western Chugach Mountains*

*Mount Cook/Aoraki (12218 feet), Southern Alps, New Zealand*

*Burns Glacier, Kenai Mountains*

*Peak of the Month: Peak 5496, Philip Smith Mountains, Brooks Range*

*"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."*

## Cover Photo

Sam Hennessey climbs the first pitch of "Blood From The Stone" on Mount Dickey, a little trickier than it looked. Photo by Rob Smith.

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## Contribute to the Scree!

Have something to share with the Alaska mountaineering community? Trip reports for all levels of mountaineering—from Flattop Mountain to Denali, from Kichatna Spire to Bodenbug Butte—are welcome and requested. We also welcome letters to the editor, notes, essays, poetry, photos, and the occasional creative writing piece. Contributions can be emailed as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). **Material should be submitted by the 11th of each month to appear in the following month's issue.** We prefer text in MicroSoft Word format. Photos should include captions and photographer credits and should not be embedded in the text. While we're not sticklers on word count, submissions that are more than six pages will be split into multiple issues.

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For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit <https://www.mtnclubak.org/membership>



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



# Announcements

## Scheduled Trips:

### Serenity Falls Hut Sleepover

March 22-23, 2024

This trip will involve traveling 10-13 miles across/around Eklutna Lake to the Serenity Falls Hut located near the West Fork of the Eklutna River. Depending on conditions, there will be ice climbing opportunities within one mile of the hut. The hut is reserved for Friday night – we will have a group departing from the Eklutna Lake Trailhead at 8 a.m. on Friday and will depart the hut Saturday afternoon. If you are unable to make this departure time, you are welcome to travel on your own to and from the hut. The waterfall-ice climbs near Serenity Falls are rated WI4 and higher, so this trip is not recommended for beginner ice climbers. There will be opportunities to climb with more experienced climbers if you are not comfortable leading ice. Other fun festivities will take place at the cabin and anyone not interested in ice climbing is welcome to join. There are 13 bunks available on a first come, first served basis as well as additional floor space or winter camping, if preferred. Event capacity is 20 participants; email G Platte at [guerinplatte@gmail.com](mailto:guerinplatte@gmail.com) or Andrew Holman at [andrew.s.holman@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.s.holman@gmail.com) to RSVP.

### Training: Self Rescue in Vertical Terrain

April 10 (evening) and April 13. Attending both days is required.

Do you know what to do if something goes wrong while climbing?

Partner getting hit by rockfall. You picked a route too hard for your partner and now have to lower or assist them while belaying from the top. Descending a multipitch climb with an unconscious/unresponsive partner. Walking up on a party that realized they have a rope too short for the route they just climbed to lower back to the ground safely?

Unfortunately all these (and more) can and do happen sometimes while we are out enjoying a day of rock climbing. Are you prepared? Join us in a climbing self-rescue course to better prepare yourself to handle the “unforeseen” circumstances that you will eventually encounter if you climb long enough.

All participants should have experience with basic climbing systems such as belaying, anchors, rappelling, and basic climbing movements. They should also be able to comfortably lead climb at a minimum of 5.7 outside. Class is limited to a maximum of eight participants!

For more information or to sign up contact Donell Irwin at [mdirwin@yahoo.com](mailto:mdirwin@yahoo.com).

Instructor: Pat Schmalix

### Eklutna Traverse

April 15-21, 2024

Ski traverse. Glacier-travel experience required. Eight participants maximum. ~ 30 miles, ~ 9000 feet elevation gain. Trip leader: Greg Bragiel, [Unknownhiker@alaska.net](mailto:Unknownhiker@alaska.net). Note that there is currently a waiting list for this trip. PLEASE do not schedule your personal trips during that time period. Club-sanctioned trips have priority.



Serenity Falls Cabin:  
61.29324, -148.97569.



Eklutna Traverse:  
61.14025, -148.94786

## Peak 5050, Endicott Mountains, Brooks Range

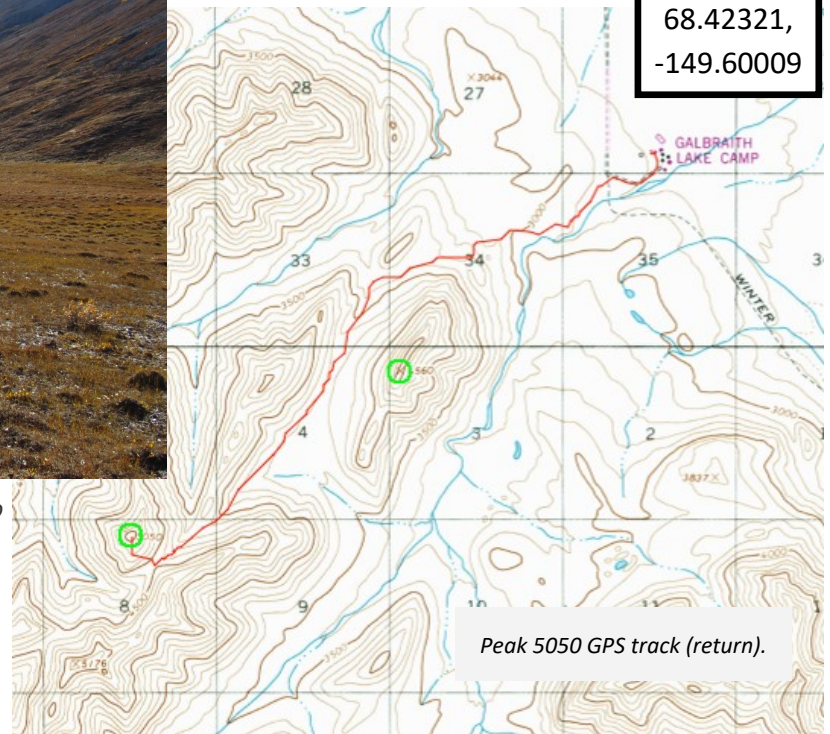
Text and photos by Slow-Plodding Human Porter (SPHP)



Peak 5050:  
68.42321,  
-149.60009



The long valley (center) leading toward Peak 5050 (right). Photo looks southwest..



Part 2 of Day 32 of Lupe's Second Summer of 2022 Dingo Vacation to Canada and Alaska!

August 30, 2022, 2:37 p.m., 51°F, West Galbraith Peak (4580 ± 20 feet) –

Alrighty, Loop! Sad, but true, summit hour is over. Ready to move on?

I suppose we better get going if we want to make it to Peak 5050. Let me tag the summit here one more time, SPHP, then we'll be on our way.

A brief farewell return to West Galbraith Peak's highpoint (4580 ± 20 feet), and Lupe started down the mountain's northwest slope. The valley to the west was the Carolina Dog's first objective. More than 1,000 feet of steep scree had to be negotiated to get down to it.

As usual, SPHP was slow as molasses. Lupe had plenty of time to enjoy the spectacular views during the descent. While still fairly high, Imnavait Mountain (3702 feet) was in sight way out on the North Slope. Peak 4916 dominated the line of silvery mountains two miles northwest, while Point 4510 crowned the big ridge on the opposite side of the valley for which the American Dingo was heading.

Took SPHP more than an hour to reach the valley floor. Pathetic! Ever a true friend, Lupe didn't complain. In truth, she didn't seem to be in much of a hurry herself. Upon reaching the valley, she chose to relax for a while near a small stream.

Going to be a long day, Looper, but shouldn't be hard to get to Peak 5050 from here. Think we just need to head up this valley until we reach the pass next to it, then up we go!

A long day, but a gorgeous one, SPHP! Hasn't been this sunny since we got to the Brooks Range.

Wonder how close we are to Gates of the Arctic National Park, Loop? Wish we had a map. I'm dying to know, now that we've decided to do this.

Maps are your department, SPHP. Hope Peak 5050 does turn out to be in the park. Gates of the Arctic Northeast Peak (5050 feet) would be so cool!

That's for sure! Won't know, though, until we get back home and I can do some research, Looper. In any case, this is all incredible territory, park or no park. Hard to believe we're really here.

After a nice rest, Lupe headed southwest up the valley. The first part was sort of steep and a bit rocky. Before long, the stream disappeared and the valley widened. Climbing a broad slope of plants with white seedheads, it seemed clear that some kind of a top was just ahead.

Above the white-seedhead plants, the terrain did begin leveling out. An easy jaunt got Lupe to an enormous pass west of West Galbraith Peak.

Views of the territory Lupe was now approaching were most intriguing. A long valley did extend southwest toward the region where Peak 5050 was, but what SPHP hadn't expected was a giant gap of gently sloping terrain to the southeast.

*Wow! Look at that, SPHP! We could roam for forever and a day in these big valleys between the mountains.*

*Yes! Fires the imagination, doesn't it, Loop? This looks so much like the classic unspoiled Arctic we've always dreamed of.*

As Lupe stared out over the vast valleys between the mountains, nothing at all moved. No caribou, fox, musk ox, lynx, or bear in sight. Not even a snowshoe bunny. Stunningly gorgeous, but so empty! So quiet!

*Needs more squirrels, SPHP!*

*Heh, no trees, Loop.*

*How about some marmots or pikas then, SPHP?*

*You'd think we'd see something, wouldn't you, Loopster? But we don't. C'mon. Onward! Puppy, ho!*

Continuing southwest, Lupe headed for the valley leading to Peak 5050.

Super easy terrain! Even SPHP made rapid progress while Lupe roamed ahead.

Upon finally reaching the pass Lupe was bound for, a surprise was in store. A second pass was ahead beyond a 50-foot drop. This next region wasn't even part of the same valley, but drained into a narrow gorge to the north. Peak 5050 was right there, though. All Lupe had to do was get up to that final pass, and she'd be perfectly positioned to climb it. Fortunately, the



*In the giant pass west of West Galbraith Peak. Photo looks south.*

50-foot drop wasn't a sheer one. A steepish, rocky descent, and the American Dingo kept going.

When Lupe got there, the next pass proved to be as big as a football field in both width and length. Continuing across it, Peak 5176 was in view on the far side. Another slightly higher pass was also in sight, beyond a much deeper drop into another valley draining north.

As much fun as it would be to roam forever, Lupe didn't need to go any farther. Peak 5050 was immediately northwest of this second pass. Still 600 feet higher, only the lower slopes were visible from here.

Turning northwest, the Carolina Dog attacked the mountain. Tundra-covered slopes gave way to steep scree similar to that experienced on West Galbraith Peak. Utilizing lanes of vegetation whenever possible, Lupe scrambled higher. Once the rate of climb diminished, she angled west-southwest toward a south ridge where knobs of bedrock were visible.

Upon reaching this ridge, only another 200 feet of elevation gain remained. The rest of the ascent wasn't hard at all.

*7:09 p.m., 47°F, Peak 5050 – Dark clouds hung over the Brooks Range when Lupe reached the true summit on a short ridge running southwest/northeast. A reasonably large area of moderately sloping scree surrounded this ridge, providing plenty of space to move around. With scarcely a breeze, and sunnier skies north and east, conditions were still quite pleasant.*

The views were incredible! Eight miles southwest, a long, high ridge sporting a line of glaciers was among the first to grab attention.



*Surprise! Another pass ahead. Peak 5050 is at right. Photo looks southwest.*

*We've seen those glaciers before, SPHP, but from much farther away!*

*We have, Loopster, from Imnavait Mountain. That ridge is Peak 7386. [Ed. note: Dennis Schmitt called Peak 7386 Qaumaniq, Inupiaq for halo or brightness, after he climbed it in 1977.]*

The biggest glacier on Mount Kiev (7775 feet) that had been visible from West Galbraith Peak earlier today was also in view.

Having left the Galbraith Lake Campground more than 9 hours ago, Lupe was glad to see a couple patches of tundra on Peak 5050's summit ridge where she could rest. SPHP sat next to her, as the American Dingo made herself comfortable.

*Well, we made it to Peak 5050, SPHP! Wonder if we're in Gates of the Arctic National Park now?*

*Don't know, Looper. I'm certain we're at least seeing it from here when we look southwest.*

Congratulating Lupe on her successful ascent of magnificent Peak 5050, SPHP shook her paw, then shared a chocolate chip Clif bar with her. Basking now and then in evening sunshine, glory was all around!

Looking back to the northeast, West Galbraith Peak partially blocked the view of Galbraith Lake. Lake Benchmark Mountain (5050 feet) was lined up directly behind it.

Imnavait Mountain and Slope Mountain (4010 feet) were in view, too, way out on Alaska's North Slope.

Off to the southeast, nearly 1000 feet lower than Mount Kiev, which was always up in the clouds, Peak 6840's summit was cloud-free.

Sitting together on the biggest patch of brown tundra at the true summit, the sense of remote isolation was profound. Peak 5050 almost felt like a different world,

*Qaumaniq and the line of glaciers (center). Photo looks southwest.*



a new, unspoiled world of unknown and unsuspected mysteries, dangers, and epic beauty.

*It's like we could go on forever, and never see anyone again, Loop!*

*Forever wouldn't be nearly as long as you think, SPHP, once we ran out of supplies. Speaking of which, I'm famished! I sure hope you brought some!*

Lupe had some Taste of the Wild from her silver bowl. Must have been

enough to take the edge off her hunger. Eyes grown heavy, for a while the Carolina Dog snoozed on her soft, lofty perch on the north side of the Brooks Range.

Facing west-northwest toward the setting sun, SPHP gazed down an arm of the mountain that ended with a plunge into a deep canyon. Beyond the next ridge, a series of long, jagged ridges extended from the Brooks Range toward the North Slope where lakes and rivers Lupe had never seen before, not even from Imnavait Mountain, glistened.

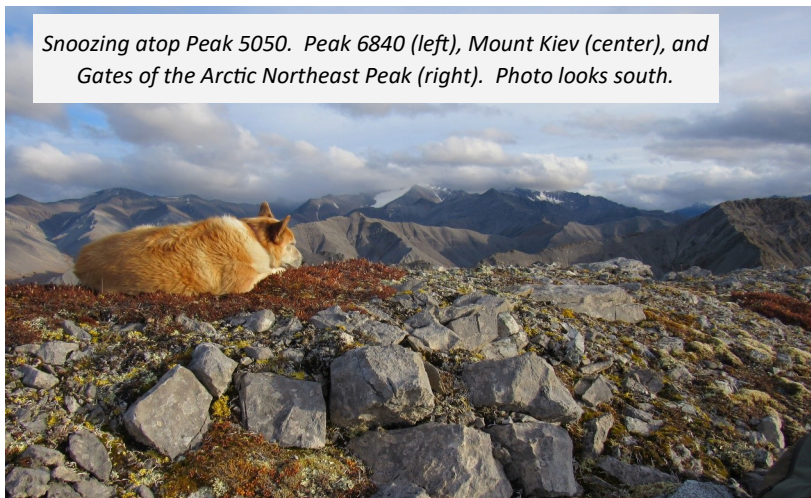
The American Dingo was most likely as close as she ever would be to that unknown land beckoning on this gorgeous late August evening. Technically, this wasn't a new world, but an ancient, yet still pristine, one. Entirely new to Lupe and SPHP, though, and that was all that mattered.

**Note:** *Months later, SPHP checked online and discovered that Peak 5050 was not in Gates of the Arctic National Park, and did not deserve the proposed name of Gates of the Arctic Northeast Peak). However, Peak 5176 less than a mile south-southwest is right on the boundary. As the highest mountain along or within*

*the boundary in that region, it would merit the name Gates of the Arctic Northeast Peak.*

*Revised and condensed from an original post on [adventuresoflupe.com](http://adventuresoflupe.com).*

*Snoozing atop Peak 5050. Peak 6840 (left), Mount Kiev (center), and Gates of the Arctic Northeast Peak (right). Photo looks south.*



## Frenchy Peak (5079 feet) Loop, Kenai Mountains

Text by Derik Egger



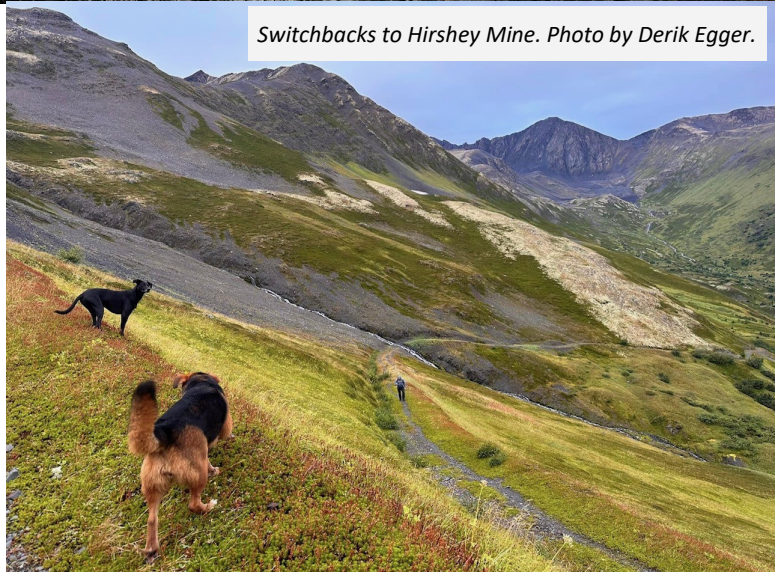
Frenchy Peak:  
60.74451,  
-149.53958

On September 4th I picked up Tyler Platt and drove down to Hope. We had the intent to do the full loop of Palmer Creek Lakes Trailhead, as well as a slight detour to bag Frenchy Peak. The route starts and ends at the Palmer Creek Trailhead parking area. It's an 11-mile loop with about 6,000 feet of elevation gain. From the trailhead we go barely up the Palmer Creek Trail, crossing the bridge and taking a faint junction to the left, heading up toward Hirshey Mine. It's a little brushy the first 300 feet or so,



*The north ridge up to Frenchy Peak. Photo by Derik Egger.*

but then it opens up into a mining trail along switchbacks. The mining trail ends on the north side of the creek, at around 3000 feet elevation. From here it's about half mile to the saddle at 3200 feet. It's a little over a mile along an easy-to-walk-on ridge to Peak 4310; there were maybe two spots I used my hands, mostly for balance. Peak 4310 to Peak 4851 involved some real annoying side-hilling below the sub-point between 4851 and 4310. Next time I plan on going directly up and over the sub-point. Side note, there is AT&T cell service once you get up to Peak 4310.

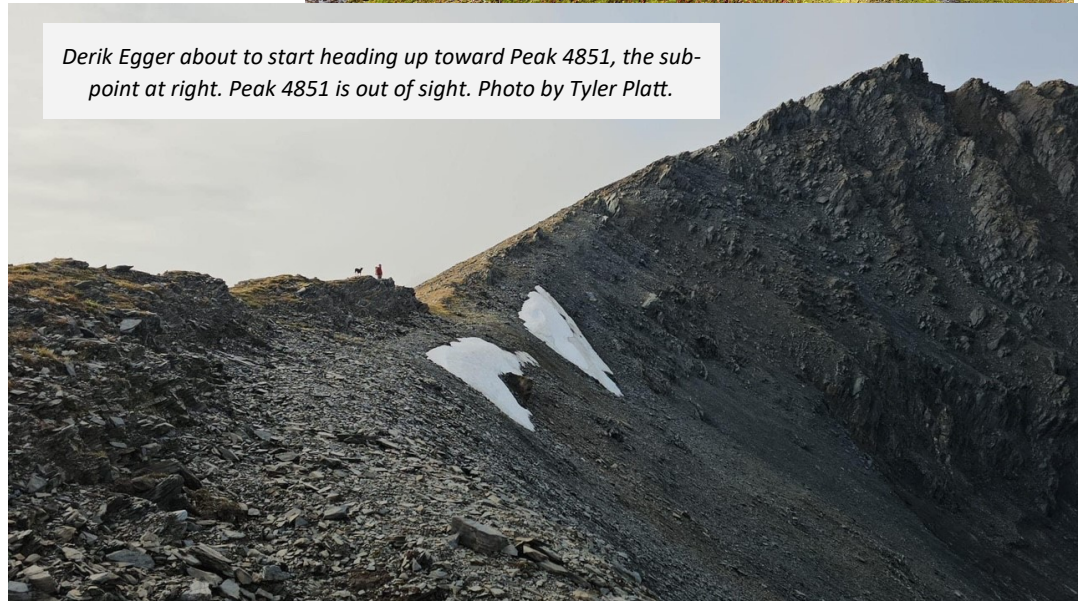


*Switchbacks to Hirshey Mine. Photo by Derik Egger.*

Dropping down from Peak 4851 to the saddle shared with Frenchy was a little slow going, trying to find the good chutes for plunge stepping ... but mostly going down bigger rocks, a little bigger than my foot, and they mostly didn't shift, so it was really annoying, but it's only 600 feet or so.

There was a nice snow patch for the dogs to cool off. Tyler did not continue on with me to Frenchy, a little too much exposure and he was needing a break as well.

From the saddle up to Frenchy involved some very exposed scrambling, the footing was nice and secure, but was definitely enough of a drop off that it would be very bad if you fell. One side was a hundred feet vertical, and the other was maybe 40 feet ... but kept going at a



*Derik Egger about to start heading up toward Peak 4851, the sub-point at right. Peak 4851 is out of sight. Photo by Tyler Platt.*

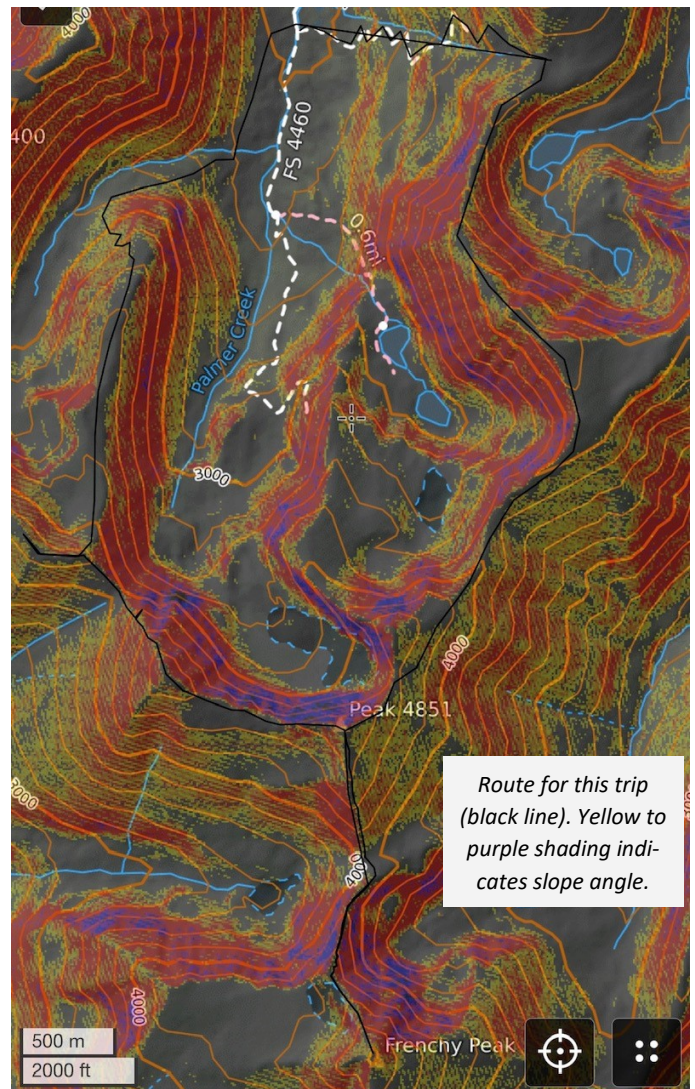
Tyler Platt on the cliff over the glacier behind Swetmann Mine. Halfway between Peak 4851 and Point 4850. Photo by Derik Egger.



enough to go on an adventure, so he did some steep-descent scrambling while the dogs and I took a faint switchback trail all the way down to the creek coming out of the valley west of the parking area. After a minor splash without wet feet, we were on a very well-established social trail all the way back to the trailhead. We probably could have kept our packs and after hitting Point 4310, continued along the ridge to Peaks 4515 and 4450, but I wasn't particularly thrilled about the vegetation and slope coming down from there, as I couldn't spot any trails going up. It was already a fairly long day trip as it was, going from Palmer to Hope and back. Still, a great day and a lovely vantage, as Frenchy is the highest peak between Cooper Landing and Hope, and west of the Seward Highway, obviously. Next time, if we get a long weekend with a halfway decent forecast, I'll probably rent a cabin or car camp and do other peaks on different days, to break up the long drive.

very steep grade for quite a way. I kept on the right hand for most of ridge until about 4400 feet, where I dropped left around a gendarme and cut between it and a second gendarme and ended up overlooking a small pocket glacier that is on the map and definitely still there. I stayed on the ridge and pushed up to the summit, which was very easy going; it was fully socked in on the summit. Bah. Then I retraced my steps. If you need water, you could drop down to the glacier and filter the sediment out from the runoff; it's only a couple hundred feet below where I topped out.

Once I linked back up with Tyler, who had started back up to Peak 4851 while I was halfway down from Frenchy, we had a summit beer and continued on our loop heading west to Point 4850. About halfway between Peak 4851 and Point 4850 there is a VERY nice approximately-300-degree cliff pinnacle that we could easily walk up and stand and look straight down at the bowl behind the Swetmann Mine, as well as a good vantage to look at the small glacier behind the mine. We had a short break on Point 4850, during which the clouds finally started to clear out. Once we got to the ridge junction just east of Point 4310, we dropped packs and bagged Point 4310 really fast; then we doubled back and picked up our packs and took a very mellow ridge descent back to the trailhead. Tyler decided he was rested





## “Blood From the Stone,” Second Ascent, Mount Dickey (9545 feet), Alaska Range

Text by Sam Hennessey

April 23 and 24, 2023



Mount Dickey:  
62.94549,  
-150.72137

It all came together so easily; we couldn't have planned it if we tried. After an unseasonably cold spring, ice conditions in the Ruth Gorge were about as good as anyone can remember. The only problem was, the weather was bad, and as soon as it cleared, I had to go to work. On our flight in to the Tokositna Glacier, my client and I stared out the window of the plane with wide eyes. The East Face of Mount Dickey dominates the Ruth Gorge and was covered in more ice than I had ever seen. The weather, which had been arctic cold for several weeks, broke just as we arrived into a beautiful high pressure, and we made a quick ascent of the Harvard Route on Mount Huntington. Along the way, I ran into my friend Matt Cornell, who was soloing on the West Face Couloir (and had just put up an impressive new route on Mount Dickey with Alan Rousseau and Jackson Marvel). Back down in basecamp, we plotted a potential meeting once my work trip wrapped up.

Back in Talkeetna, the weather aligned once again – cloudy, but cold, days that (we hoped) would preserve the ice on the East Face. My friend Rob Smith was planning to fly up in a few days, but I convinced him to change his ticket and get there as soon as possible, because a 48-hour spell of good weather looked to be our only opportunity to climb in the foreseeable future. The objective was never in doubt – “Blood From The Stone.” Put up in 2002 by the formidable duo of Sean Easton and Ueli Steck, and unrepeated since, it has a serious reputation from their must-read trip report in the 2003 *American Alpine Journal*. Not to mention, the East Face of Dickey is an honest 4,500 feet tall – Yosemite-scale granite capped with a diorite hat. And this year, streaked with ice from top to bottom, as Sean described hoping for (but not receiving) on his trip with Ueli. Dreamy. Rob pulled some strings with the airlines and shuttle services, and arrived just before midnight on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, tired, but psyched.

We flew in mid-morning on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, scooping Matt from his solitary abode on the Tokositna along the way. We spent a couple hours packing two overnight bags, along with a small leader pack. The reputation of the route had us going a bit heavier than I often do in the Alaska Range – a tent, single sleeping bag, haul line, and three days of food made their way into the bags, along with a double rack, 10 ice screws, and an assortment of pitons. As the face went fully into the shade, we set off. I got us off to a great start by immediately falling 20 feet into the bergschrund when overhanging, rotten snow gave way. Thankfully, I was fine, and soon surmounted this first obstacle, and started up the first steep pitch. As these pitches often are, its benign appearance disguised thin ice, bad protec-



Sam Hennessey heading up the exit pitch of “Blood From The Stone” on Mount Dickey. Photo by Matt Connell.

tion, and an angle that somehow pushed past vertical for a moment. Past this, however, a quick traverse and some easy mixed climbing brought us to the large snowfield at the base of the proper East Face, where I set to work chopping a tent platform while Matt and Rob fixed the next steep pitch. As far as they could see, the ice continued up!

After a comfortable night, we arose at 4:20 the next morning, full of psych for the ice runnel. Matt took the first block, up an amazing squeeze with just enough ice in the back to accept one tool, which gradually widened into pure-fun ice climbing up a wide chimney. His leads culminated with a steep and very melty ice runnel, with pro that left a lot to be desired. We later determined this to be the first of the M7+ pitches from the first ascent (FA) – covered with lots of ice so we couldn't take advantage of the bolts, although the technical grade was much easier. I took over as we turned the corner into the shade, and led pitch after pitch of great ice climbing. Sometimes steep, sometimes sparsely protected, but always beautiful, the ice

continued uninterrupted, bringing us through the steep face surprisingly quickly.

Toward the top, we encountered a choice between a chimney, and a thin ribbon that looked more like snow than ice. With Matt's and Rob's encouragement, I took the "ice" line, thankfully finding a bomber three-cam anchor just beneath. Another nice cam placement one meter up turned out to be the only other reliable piece of gear on the 50-meter pitch. A thin, delaminated curtain of ice turned to overhanging snice, bad sticks, and a mental struggle – grades don't matter much on these pitches, but I'll just say it's as serious climbing as I've ever done. We can only surmise that this was the original A2 and M7+ exit – covered with enough snice to climb directly without aiding, but to also hide the gear placements and bolts!

This took us to easier climbing and the top of the headwall, but several more pitches remained – A16 and tricky mixed climbing if the trip report were to be believed. Rob took us through a very snowy and balancy section of black diorite, and Matt dispatched

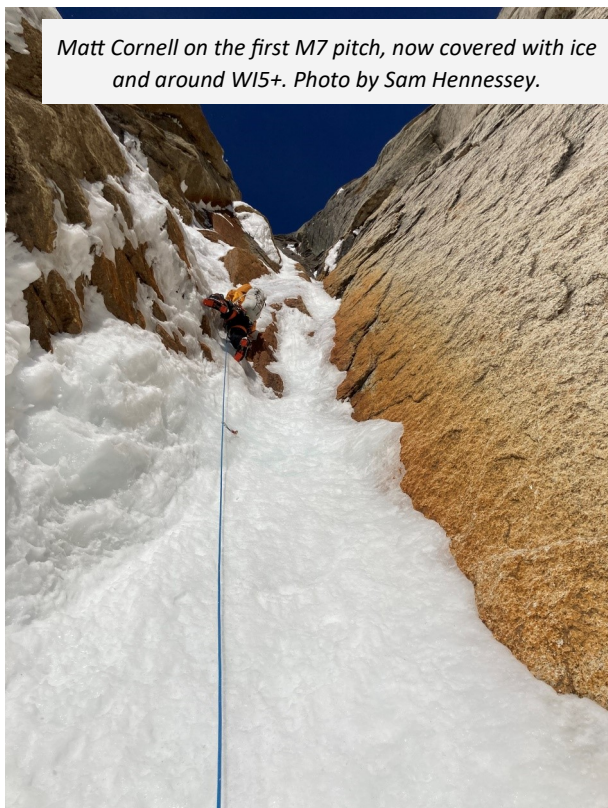


*Rob Smith on the first pitch off the bivy - steep névé! Photo by Sam Hennessey.*

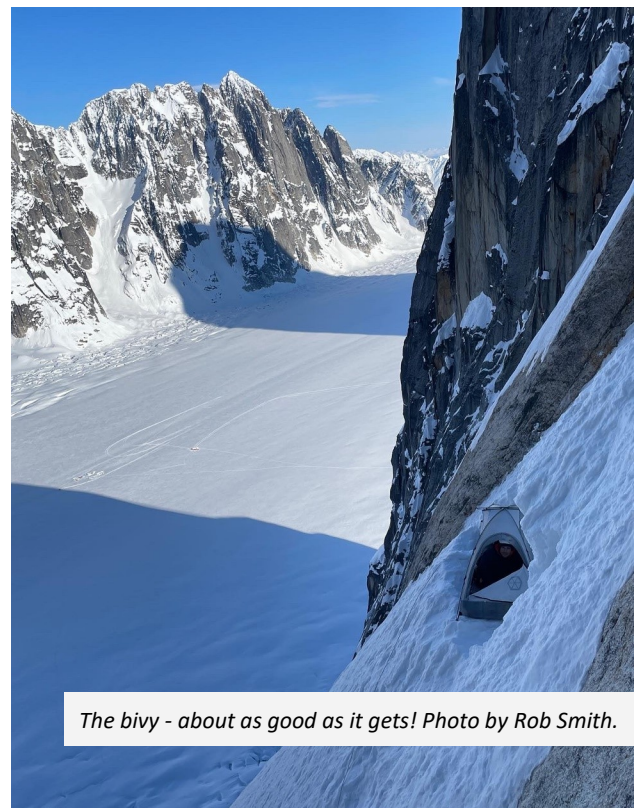
the final short curtain of bogus ice, and it was time to un-rope and wallow through faceted snow to the summit. Things had gone so smoothly that we were greeted by the evening sun as we stepped onto the summit – a fine treat! The descent went equally well, and by midnight we were eating quesadillas back on the glacier.

Round two of quesadillas the next morning was just enough to keep us busy until the plane arrived, and we landed back in Talkeetna scarcely 48 hours after we left, shaking our heads and scarcely able to believe what had just happened! We all agreed it was as quality of a route as we had ever done – continuous ice through an El Capitan-sized wall, what more could you want? Our conditions were much icier than encountered during the FA, allowing us to free climb (as much as ice/mixed climbing is "free"), and

climb without carrying, using, or even seeing any bolts. It's simply an unreal line, and we have so much respect for the vision of the FA team, who climbed in winter, with far less ice, and with great spirit and style!



*Matt Cornell on the first M7 pitch, now covered with ice and around W15+. Photo by Sam Hennessey.*



*The bivy - about as good as it gets! Photo by Rob Smith.*

# Synthesizer Peak (5638 feet), Grey Jay Peak (5780 feet), and Camp Robber Peak (5855 feet), Western Chugach Mountains



Text and photos by Mike Records

On a gorgeous weekend in July of 2023, Nyssa Landres, Erin Larson, Tom Flynn, and I drove southeast from Anchorage toward Girdwood. The weekend would start like so many others have for so many people: at the Crow Pass Trailhead at the top of the Crow Creek Road. With a general plan centered on a loop around Synthesizer Peak, we shouldered our light, weekend packs and started hiking toward Crow Pass.

The climb to the pass brought back so many familiar memories of trail running, peakbagging, backpacking, and backcountry skiing in this little corner of our paradise. At the pass there was still a bit of the last winter's snow as we left the Girdwood Valley behind and began to descend Raven Creek. After about a mile of descending we left the heavily used trail behind and followed a social trail contouring into the Clear Creek drainage. I have always liked the perspective that this trail has of the Raven Glacier.

Clear Creek was swollen by gray, summer meltwater, and we carefully crossed it before continuing to sidehill under Point 5465 toward Paradise Pass. Perched far above the Raven Creek valley, we stopped for lunch at a beautiful alpine bench draped in wildflowers. Above us, we looked up at the ant-sized specks of people working their way from Paradise Peak (5477 feet) to Delgga Mountain (5510 feet). Then we continued to follow the drainage to Paradise Pass. The ascent to the pass was straightforward and we were soon looking toward Moraine Pass and the headwaters of Camp Creek draining away from us.

Unlike, the east side of Paradise Pass, the descent off the west side was a mess of icy, wet, and loose scree. Descending directionally to avoid overhead hazard from each other, we watched rock missiles whistle past as we slipped our way down to the old bulbous moraines below. Travel on the old, vegetated moraines was much better, and our pace improved as we made



Camp Robber Peak:  
61.063, -149.17394

*Nyssa Landres near the summit of Camp Robber Peak with the Raven Peaks rising above her.*

our way north down Camp Creek. Covered in lush greenery and painted with wildflowers, the upper reaches of Camp Creek were absolutely spectacular.

Under, the southeast face of Organ Mountain (6980 feet), we left Camp Creek behind and started to climb toward the col between Organ Mountain and Synthesizer Peak. In this secluded valley we passed a large flock of sheep peacefully grazing for dinner in the early evening. At the col we dropped our packs for the quick job up smooth and efficient scree to the summit of Synthesizer. From the summit our eyes were drawn northeast toward Mount Beelzebub (7280 feet), Devil's Mistress (6710 feet), and the other iconic, giant peaks of Eagle River.

With dinner calling our names, we dragged ourselves away from the sublime summit, back to our bags, then began to descend toward the North Fork of Ship Creek. Consisting mostly of smooth, low-angle, summer snow, the descent was fun and

*The beautiful reaches of upper Camp Creek. Paradise Peak, Delgga Mountain, and Paradise Pass are visible right of center.*



fast. Once we had left the snow behind for good, we found a dry camp next to a picturesque little alpine tarn at around 3500 feet elevation. Feeling dwarfed by the towering massif of Organ to our north, we sat eating dinner and craning back our neck to look at its big south face of dead-end chutes.

Sunday morning, we packed up camp and continued toward Grizzly Bear Lake. By contouring along the valley wall, we were able to mostly stay above the alders until we reached the spectacular azure lake. Again, we dropped our packs, and climbed north toward Synclavier Mountain (5240 feet). The ascent was smooth and pretty, we each step bringing better views of the North Fork of Ship Creek. Soon we were at the summit looking south at the Kinglet Ridge and west at the Tail Feather Peaks. Looking north, brought a similar view as from Synthesizer, but this time with a better view of the Icicle Creek peaks. We considered following the ridge toward Pyramid Point (5205 feet), but were short on time, and not sure about the connecting ridge. So, instead we descended back to the impossibly blue water of Grizzly Bear Lake.

Shouldering our packs, we followed the rolling terrain up-valley toward Moraine Pass. At Moraine Pass, Nyssa and I turned south toward Grey Jay Peak (5780 feet) while Tom and Erin retraced our steps toward Paradise Pass. We ascended a smooth pocket glacier, before climbing a steep headwall of unpleasant scree to the plateau below the summit cone of Grey Jay. On top of Grey Jay, we looked back at our weekend tracks, then through the familiar names of the summit register. Next, we continued south toward Steamroller Pass. At the pass we stepped onto smooth and firm summer snow that would take us close to the summit of Camp Robber Peak (5855 feet). On top of Camp Robber, my eyes were pulled east toward intriguing ski lines on the Raven Peaks and south toward Magpie Peak (5812 feet).

Done feasting on the views, we slid down the snow back to Steamroller Pass, then turned east toward the Clear Creek drainage. Reaching Clear Creek, we hopped back and forth across the creek, kicked cobbles, scrambled down perched moraines, and crashed through young alders until we reached the social trail back to the Crow Pass Trail. In front of us we could see Tom and Erin climbing toward the pass, and with long strides up the fast trail, we soon caught them. Passing Crystal Lake, a large family of goats was feeding around the waterfalls as we began the last descent to the car. All too soon we were back at the parking lot and dreaming of pizza dinner and the next weekend in this wonderland.



*Above: Nyssa Landres and Tom Flynn looking northeast from the summit of Synthesizer Peak toward the Eagle River Valley.*



*Above: Nyssa Landres and Tom Flynn descending Synclavier Mountain toward Grizzly Bear Lake.*

## Mount Cook/Aoraki (12218 feet), Southern Alps Range, New Zealand

Text and photos by Wayne L. Todd, unless otherwise indicated

November 18-21, 2023



Mount Cook/  
Aoraki:  
-43.595,  
170.14194

The Department of Conservation (DoC) calls on the radio to relay that they will be conducting helicopter operations and want everyone to stay in the hut. A couple hours later a helo swings in from above with three people dangling below on a short haul line. One of them had taken a long cornice fall on the Mount Cook ridgeline.

We're here because Marcin Ksok wanted another go at Mount Cook, having tried it seven years previously. He is adamant that we hike into the Plateau Hut, the staging hut for Mount Cook. Carrie Wang, Marcin, and I closely monitor the weather for Mount Cook via [mountain-forecast.com](http://mountain-forecast.com) as we dabble the days away on New Zealand's South Island. As our vacation time dwindles, a solid good-weather system presents, but with a short, intense storm blob in the middle. After powwowing, we agree to fly in. I am quite relieved.

On the glacier, lake, and rugged peak-studded flight in I have unlimited views of the access route. That would have been quite sporty and physically demanding, further rationalization for the flight.

From the luxurious 30-person capacity hut at 7200 feet, our first task is to route-find up the glacier toward Mount Cook's northeast ridge. The previous day's storm dumped much snow on the upper mountain, adding avalanche danger to the list of risks. It's noon by the time we've landed and geared up for glacier travel under an intensely bright sunny day – direct and snow-reflected.

Carrie leads, Marcin trails, and I middle. Travel is efficient until we gain steeper ground, where we route-find around, and over, increasing crevasses and break trail in deepening snow. The day is warm and getting concerning warmer. Shortly after swapping

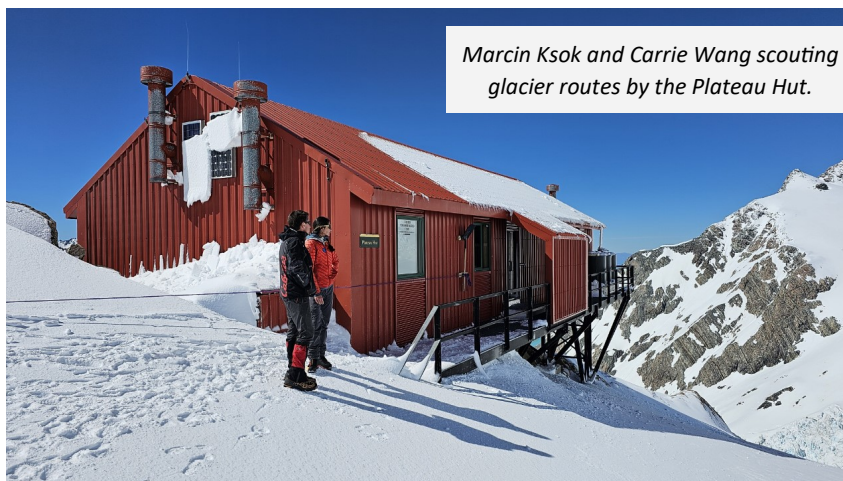


Lake Tasman and Mount Cook.

leads, below the Linda Glacier, the serac-fall danger has become too high, so we retreat to the hut. The hut has become a bustling place from the good weather and being a Friday. A pair of Austrians are heading up Mount Cook tonight, but disappointed that we'll be a day later.

After a relatively quiet night, except for the midnight-preparing Austrians and early-morning-preparing other parties, we hang in the hut for another blazingly sunny day. As with most mountain huts, there is interesting reading on hand, a poster history of this and other Southern Alps Range huts, and endless daunting views of Mount Cook, Mount Vancouver (10856 feet), Mount Haast (10217 feet), and to the east, non-glaciated, but just as rugged, peaks.

The Plateau Hut was rebuilt in 2005, at a cost of \$500,000 (US). Seems like a bargain for what and where it is. DoC has expended significant energy and time into their huts, numbering almost one thousand huts! (Admittedly, some get much more

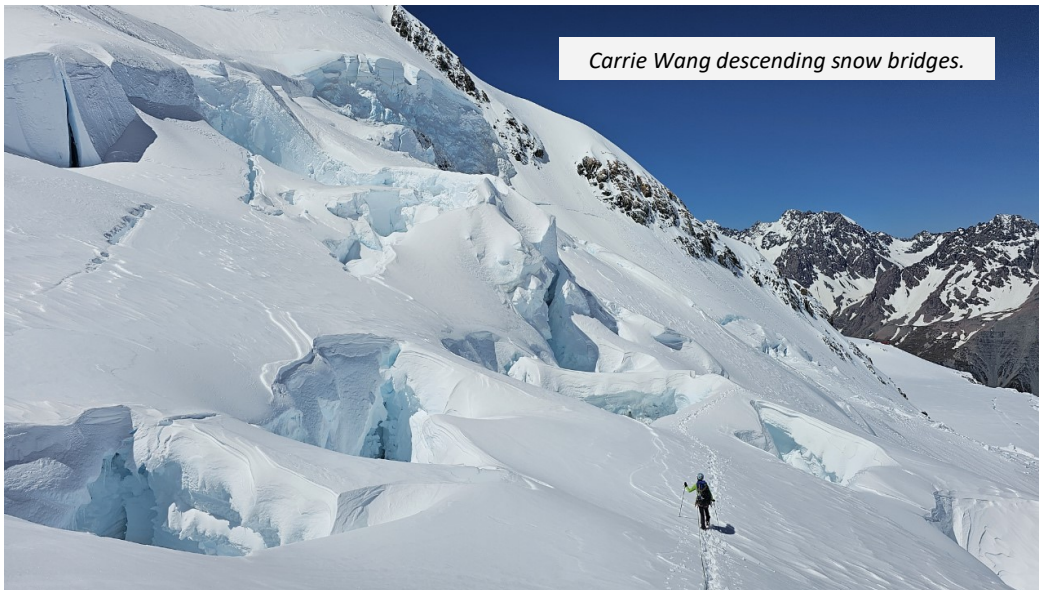


Marcin Ksok and Carrie Wang scouting glacier routes by the Plateau Hut.

attention than others.) In correspondence with Dave Staeheli, he has details and more personal stories about their huts, and the collapse of Mount Cook's summit, which lost 14 million cubic meters, as he was guiding in the range at that time.

We really want the Austrians to be successful, both

for altruistic and selfish reasons. A trail to the start of the rock climb would be wonderful. They trudge in early afternoon, which I assume means they've summited considering how long they've been gone. But no, they got off route in the dark and spent



*Carrie Wang descending snow bridges.*

we're still slow with three climbers at 30-meter pitches, and by a conservative safety standpoint, we should be heading down soon.

Upward we go, some pitches easier than others, but it's pleasantly warm, and two of us get belays.

time under the dangerous Gun Barrels. Dang it. I briefly consider not climbing tomorrow as I'm respiratory sick and now have an inkling of the time commitment.

We decide on a 1:30 a.m. start, considering all factors, so by headlamp, Carrie, then me, then Marcin, hike across the now foot-tracked-up lower bowl, with the ever-present rope in between. Having a trail to follow in the dark is a wonderful thing, especially as the snow bridges are more diminished. We're glad to have the Austrians' trail, above our two-days-previous high point. We need to split left at some point for the upper Linda Glacier route, but in the dark it's a guess, so we call a stop. With all layers on, we settle on our packs, amidst gusts. After half an hour, there's just a tinkling of nautical light, and we're getting cold, so we move again. It's now after 5 a.m.

We follow the Austrians' trail a bit higher, then turn for the upper Linda shelf. We come in too high on the edge, but Carrie leads a hard left traverse across near ice. We're relieved to get back on less-steep terrain with an upward trajectory, and now be above most of the serac-fall danger. At the northeast ridge-line, we transition to rock climbing under quickly brightening skies, and Marcin takes the lead. The route looks challenging from here, but Marcin makes it work. It's now after 8 a.m.

It's soon warm; we strip clothes and Marcin now locates the myriad bolted anchors for the 300-meter climb. Nice, the existing anchors speed things up, plus assure us we're on route. But,



*Marcin Ksok leading the first pitch.*

Marcin and I yell, "Rock, rock, rock!" at one belay station, as injury-size rockfall cascades our route. Yet another objective hazard on this climb.

After a Marcin-placed, overhang-protected belay spot, the terrain abates enough that we go with a full running belay for the last pitch. Despite being hours late, the upper section is so photo op, I have to get a few pictures as we pass alongside sword-length horizontal sastrugi backdropped by our ridge route with the jumbled glaciers below. I also acknowledge a phone drop would be a "never see your phone again" action. It's now after 12:30 p.m.

Above the rocks, despite being lower-angle terrain, near-ice horizontal sastrugi still mandates placing protection and is slow to walk through. At a natural bench in the ridge, Carrie insists on waiting, so as to speed Marcin and I up, hopefully, so we're off the upper Linda Glacier before dark. Marcin and I suggest otherwise but she's adamant.

Marcin leads out at full 60-meter rope length (a cornice fall would be drastic), placing appropriate protection of mostly screws, but a picket here and there. After another ¾ hour, Marcin tops out, then belays me up in swirling clouds and buffeting wind. It's now after 2 p.m.

A brief view and pictures, and then I lead down, setting similar protection. Reunited with Carrie, we take a food break, but now are on a mission to get somewhere before dark. It's now after 4 p.m.

From the gobsmack viewpoint, we have plenty of bolted anchors for rappelling (I can't imagine how much longer this

climb would be without them). Typically, Marcin or Carrie rap first, and are working on the next rap by my arrival. For a team of three, we are fairly efficient, but we make about a dozen rappels, 30 meters at a time. At a rappel where the fall line is off route and I'm first, I climb back to the ridge toward the bolts, but slip, and pendulum into the rock, hitting my back. With warning, the others do better. The temperatures, and then light, are fading.

We opt to skip the last two rock rappels, and instead make three rappels in a hard-snow gully with bolted anchors up the neighboring rock (not in the most logical places, perhaps placed before ice melt or factoring in higher snow levels). (This could also be used for the ascent, if not concerned about rockfall.)

Back on "snow-firma," we traverse back to the ridge, and transition to snow climbing. It's now after 7:30 p.m. Our down-and-slightly-climbers'-right descent is much faster than our ascent route. We still use four points of contact, crampons, and two tools, for most of this "snice" terrain. Debris chatters down to our right, but voila, we make it off



*Marcin Ksok belaying Carrie Wang.*



*Carrie Wang ascending the northeast ridge.*

the upper Linda Glacier traverse before dark.

We cross a large serac-debris pile that covers our up track, then opt for poles again, as this is most-annoying walking: steps vary from shin-deep on a now-frozen uptrack, to thigh-deep when the uptrack collapses, to toppling off one side or the other where the uptrack is firmly frozen, but at an angle. Coupled with being roped, we move like a bunch of drunken sailors.

Headlamps are needed as we approach the valley right turn, exiting the Linda Glacier. The walking slightly improves when we meet our up-trail highpoint. One of the snow bridges now has a visible gap but the night is calm, stars are fully out, and the moon arises behind as we descend. There is no light emanating from the hut, but it's easy to follow a trail down, across, and



*Crossing serac debris before nightfall.*

land, arranging our \$1,367 payment – seems a bargain to me for three. Our extra passenger lowered our cost slightly. I’m feeling more respiratory sick after our lengthy summit day, a predictable outcome.

I’m curious how the two Aussies’ exodus went. The adventures never end.

**Addendum:**

How to make this a faster summit day:

Two-person rope team vs. three, though the added security with three on the glaciers is comforting. If possible, climb it after an established trail is put in, or have a recent GPS track, or start early enough on a reconnaissance day to get to the base of the rock climbs. Consider using two 60-meter

ropes, so as to double rappel lengths. Cross your fingers that you’ll have snow rather than ice to snice conditions.

**Additional photos from this trip are on page 20.**

then up to the glorious hut.

Yes! Finally, 11:00 p.m., so that makes ... 21-½ hours. Whoa. We’re fairly quiet as we de-gear, re-dress, hydrate, and calorie up.

About 1 a.m., we bed down in a now-vacant room. Around 5 a.m., we hear the Aussies prepping for a day climb of Anzac Peak (8294 feet). They are now the only other group in the hut. It’s a bit odd to have just three of us in this huge, robust hut later in the morning.

We initially try InReaching our flight service, then cell-phone texting from the special southeast corner, but to no avail. Carrie and I then walk up the north ridge for “assured” cell reception, which we don’t get, but do have more splendid views, especially of the hut, Tasman Lake, and Mount Cook. We InReach DoC, asking if they’d contact our flight service. We felt using the hut radio is inappropriate for non-essential services. A bit later, we get a message for a late-afternoon retrieval. Yahoo!

We have a very relaxing day, and chat with the Aussies when they return from their aborted attempt of Anzac Peak. Two of them are thinking of hiking out, but one is amiss. She asks to join our departure flight. We’re in agreement if the pilot allows. Helicopters regularly fly over in a clockwise pattern on sightseeing tours. At 5 p.m., one of them lands. It’s ours.

The pilot is fine with an additional passenger. There is plenty of room for four with gear, as there’s a basket on the side. Our pilot is the same one that rescued the climbers from Mount Cook’s ridge.

We’re soon back at The Helicopter Line flight service in sheep



*Marcin Ksok and Wayne Todd below rock pitches. Photo by Carrie Wang.*



# Burns Glacier, Kenai Mountains: What Not to Do when Spring Snow

## Crust Beckons *A Cautionary Tale*

Text and photos by Frank E. Baker



Burns Glacier:  
60.7441,  
-148.7676

I don't think anyone likes admitting mistakes. After riding my 65-pound bike across frozen Portage Lake to the top of Portage Pass in 2022 on amazingly hard spring crust, I started to get the idea that just about anything is possible on crust— such as climbing the Burns Glacier at the south end of Portage Lake.

The idea came as Plan B on April 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2023, after failing my second attempt to bike to the top of Portage Pass. At 7 a.m., the crust was just as firm as the year before, but snow drifts had changed the land's contours and some of the hills were too steep, even with fat, studded tires—at least for this guy.

I rode over to the south end of the lake and the gorge that leads to the Burns Glacier, parked my bike, and started hiking with micro-spikes.

Located four miles southwest of Whittier, the three-mile-long Burns Glacier was named in 1915 by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (USC&GS) in honor of Robert Burns, the poet. Other area features named after English poets include Bard Peak, Shakespeare Glacier, and even the town of Whittier. My initial plan was only a short hike to the glacier toe since I left my bike unlocked. But the hard snow crust was seductive. It was just too easy to thread my way up through the steep slopes lined with brush, quickly gaining elevation. I soon saw ski tracks and like a hound on a trail, I started following them, skirting the chasm and waterfall to climber's right.

Before I knew it, I was approaching the glacier. The footing was firm and the ski tracks were easy to follow. Ascending higher with Bard Peak on climber's left, my better judgment fluttered



*The Burns Glacier at the southeast end of Portage Lake.*

away in the wind. *"It can't be that far to the divide where I'll have a great view of Blackstone Bay in Prince William Sound,"* I thought. The ski tracks just kept going, and so did I.

I soon approached a bergschrund that marked the beginning of the glacier. I knew it was an area that contained crevasses, but snow cover was extensive and the ski tracks deftly wound their way through the area, so I followed.

If I'd brought a map, or even looked at a map before I came, I would have realized that the hike from my bike to the divide was roughly 3-½ miles. At about 2000 feet elevation and two

miles of hiking, I thought I was getting close to the divide. But I was far from it. The slope was gentle and kept rolling back.

By about 10:30 a.m., the bullet-proof crust softened somewhat, signaling that I should probably turn around. I ascended another 500 feet and, though my goal looked enticingly near, I reluctantly retreated.

Now sinking into the snow about four inches, I retraced my steps down the glacier and past the bergschrund without any difficulty. I was relieved that at the bottom after 3-½ hours, my bike was still there.

I have a minimum amount of glacier experience. In retrospect, my solo hike on the Burns Glacier, hiking



*Ski tracks wend their way past the bergschrund.*



*Frank Baker's return footprints show that the snow was softening as morning progressed.*

alone and obviously unroped, was very poor judgment. Even with the massive snowfall the area received in late 2022 and early 2023, a concealed crevasse could have been waiting for me, especially hiking with no ski or snowshoe flotation. And being alone, with no SPOT or InReach unit, my fate would have been unknown for quite some time, perhaps forever.

In the outdoor realm, my father used to admonish me to stick with what I know. *"It doesn't mean you can't learn new things,"* he added. *"Just master what you learn and get comfortable with it."*

That advice has helped me reach quite a few mountain summits in Alaska, avoid avalanches and crevasses, and live to a ripe old age. It's doubtful, but if at my age I ever receive proper training and guidance to safely venture onto a glacier again, I might give it another go.

In the meantime, I'll confine my wanderings to snow and rock, not glacier ice.

*MCA member Frank E. Baker is a lifetime Alaskan and freelance writer who lives in Eagle River.*



*Frank Baker safely back on Portage Lake about 11 a.m.*

## Peak of the Month: Peak 5496

Text by Steve Gruhn; photo by Ann Marie Bailey

**Mountain Range:** Brooks Range; Philip Smith Mountains

**Borough:** North Slope Borough

**Drainages:** Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek

**Latitude/Longitude:** 68° 41' 50" North, 144° 53' 49" West

**Elevation:** 5496 feet



**Adjacent Peaks:**

Peak 5420 in the Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek drainages and Peak 4433 in the Cane Creek drainage

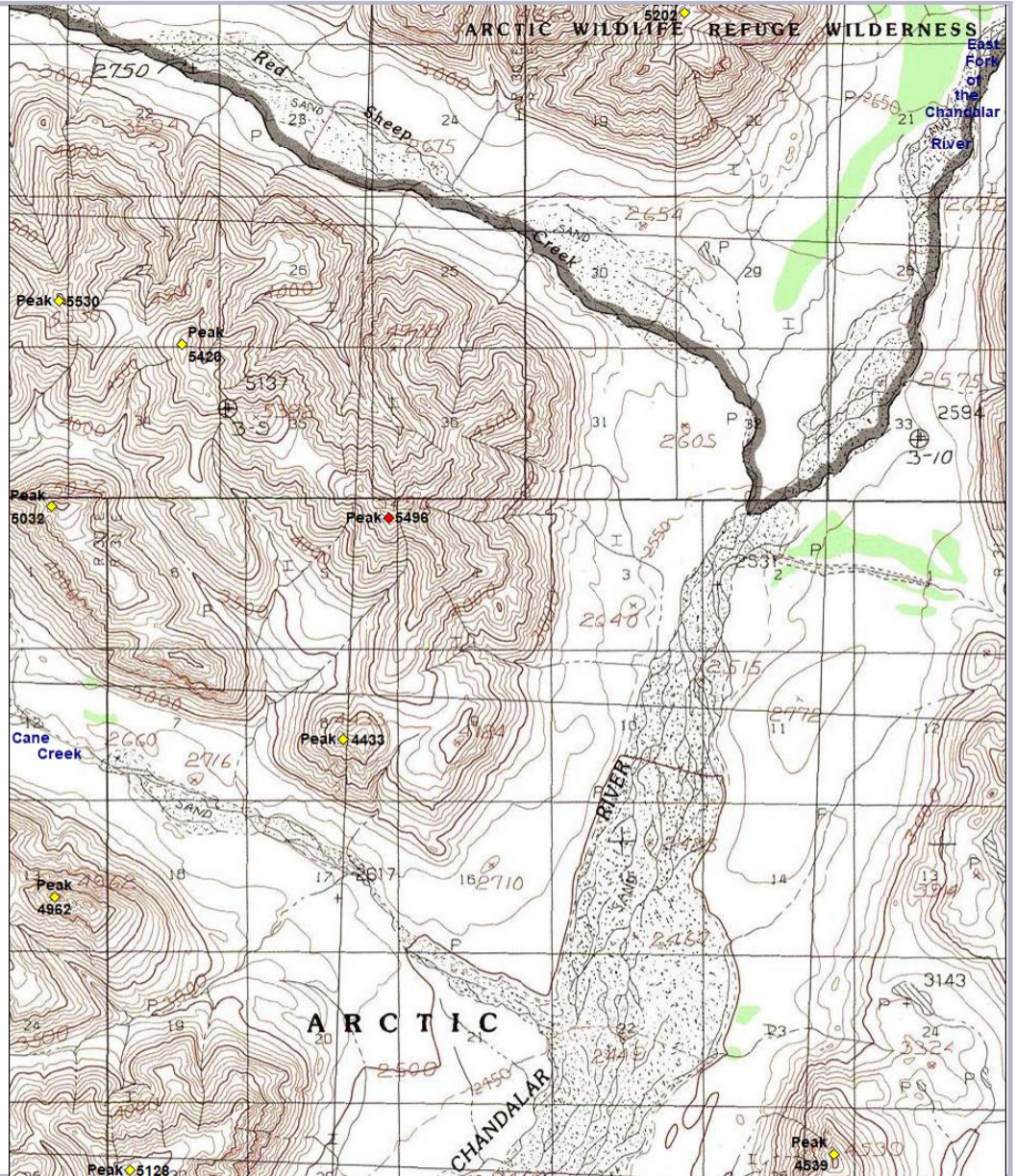
**Distinctness:** 651 feet from Peak 5420

**Prominence:** 651 feet from Peak 5530 in the Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek drainages

**USGS Maps:** 1:63,360: *Arctic (C-2)*, 1:25,000: *Arctic C-2 NE*

**First Recorded Ascent:** 1956 by a USGS party

**Route of First Recorded Ascent:** Southeast ridge



Located between Red Sheep Creek and Cane Creek in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Peak 5496 overlooks the East Fork of the Chandalar River from the west.

In 1956 a USGS survey party landed a helicopter southeast of the summit. From the landing site the team hiked 10 minutes up the ridge to the summit, where they established a survey station consisting of an aluminum pipe set in the ground. From this survey station, the party was able to extend its survey network 15 miles north of Tetsyeh Mountain (6526 feet).

Those interested in visiting Peak 5496 should note that the land encompassing the peak became part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 1980. With that status came management by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Currently the USF&WS restricts helicopter landings within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

I don't know of a second visit to the summit of Peak 5496. However, in 2009 Don Hansen led an MCA trip in the vicinity of Peak 5496.

On July 19, 2009, Kirk Sweetsir flew Ann Marie Bailey, Hansen, and Jim Szender from Fairbanks to an airstrip at about 3150 feet along Cane Creek. In the ensuing two weeks, the MCA party hiked several miles up Cane Creek, back down Cane Creek to the airstrip, crossed a pass to Red Sheep Creek, hiked down Red Sheep Creek to an airstrip near its mouth, hiked down the East Fork of the Chandalar River to the mouth of Cane Creek, and hiked a short distance up Cane Creek, thus nearly circumnavigating Peak

5496. On August 1 Sweetsir flew them from the airstrip near the mouth of Red Sheep Creek to Fort Yukon.

The information for this column came from USGS field notes transcribed at [https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/ds\\_mark.pl?PidBox=TT7605](https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/ds_mark.pl?PidBox=TT7605); from Hansen's trip report titled "Cane & Red Sheep Creek Drainages," which appeared in the November 2009 Scree; and from my correspondence with Szender.



*East aspect of Peak 5496 from the airstrip near the mouth of Red Sheep Creek. The summit is left of center.*

## **Additional photos by Wayne Todd from the Mount Cook/Aoraki trip report, page 13.**



*Marcin Ksok belaying above the rime.*



*Mid-morning views from the northeast ridge of Mount Cook/Aoraki.*



*Marcin Ksok belaying, with Mount Tasman backdrop.*

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2024 6:30-8:30 p.m. at 1628 Woodcutter Court, Anchorage

### Roll Call

Peter Taylor (President) – Present

Rebecca Marks (Vice President) – Absent

Donell Irwin (Secretary) – Present

Dominick Curtiss (Treasurer) – Present

Tom McIntyre (Director) – Absent

Andrew Holman (Director) – Present

Matt Nedom (Director) – Present

G Platt (Director) – Present

Reux Stearns (Director) – Absent

Lang Van Dommelen (Director) – Present

Guests in attendance: Annie Shane, Scott Parmelee, Steve Gruhn, Gerrit Verbeek, Josh Wilson

Scribed by: Donell Irwin

### Finance Report

- A new savings account will be opened for the Mint Hut funds. Dominick will transfer hut donations from YouTube to this account, also.
- Credit card payment status update: Dominick has a new credit card for auto-pay accounts.
- 2024 budget proposal presented and approved at January membership meeting.
- Thank you to Katherine Cooper for her excellent work on the 2023 budget.
- Google voice account for two-factor authentication is an idea we can use in the future as a potential solution for some issues we've been having with various accounts.

### General Membership

- **General Meetings** – BP Energy Center pricing is going up. We need to be open to looking for alternative venues. Some possible venues discussed included the Student Union at UAA, Anchorage Women's Club Pioneer Schoolhouse, REI, and First United Methodist Church. We can post in *the Scree*, and announce at membership meetings that we are looking for venues to get help from the membership.
- **Christmas Party Update** – Approximately 40 people in attendance, feedback that it wasn't advertised very well, and not many people knew it was potluck style. More chairs were needed.
- Discussed the lack of notifications when memberships are about to renew or need to be renewed.
- Total current membership 593 paid 11 free members on Memberspace.
- There have been multiple people providing feedback that we are not advertising general meetings clearly enough, or soon enough. We brainstormed ideas to help with this. For the website, Listserv, *Scree*, and Facebook. Two weeks out we will post the meetings on social media. When *the Scree* comes out, it will prompt us to make sure we have things posted. The President will remind the Vice-President two weeks before the meetings.

### Trips\Training

- **Update on Rigging International Group (RIG) Crevasse Rescue** – Rebecca having a conversation with Andy Kubic to discuss using the RIG Facility for a crevasse-rescue course aiming to take place in February or March.
- Update on Serenity Falls Cabin reservation for February 3-4, 2024. Thirteen bunk spaces posted on facebook; RSVP via email. Andrew and G will notify the board of the first aid and GPS communication status for the trip. They will have remote communication devices and will send an email to the board to confirm who has a first-aid certification.
- Gerrit Verbeek Ice Climbing Eklutna Canyon or Beer Climbs, depending on conditions, February 3, 2024. Three people have signed up; if more sign up, Gerrit will try to get another leader. Check who has first aid and the rules for first aid. Gerrit will fill out a trip proposal form. (Lang will have these filled out for both trips.)
- **Alaska Rock Gym (ARG) Update** – Could potentially host board meetings at a small fee.
- **Pat Schmalix** – April 10th and 13th for rock rescue training, trip proposal form filled out and sent to the board. Board voted yes to approve. Will be posted in the March *Scree* and advertised through the Listserv and Facebook. Email [mdirwin@yahoo.com](mailto:mdirwin@yahoo.com) to sign up.

## Speaker\Outreach

- **February Membership Meeting** - Kathy Still and Az Sellers will present on the 120 Chugach State Park peaks. Rebecca will create a Facebook event and update the website.
- Rebecca is currently working on the March, April, and May meeting speakers. If anyone has someone that they really want to hear from, please feel free to reach out to Rebecca!

## Advertising

- Will start advertising our meetings better on the website, Facebook, Listserv, and Scree.

## General Discussion

- Adding the library to the strategic plan. Discussion – Option to keep our library to Alaska items only. Is there a cost involved? Do we want to keep the library?

## Board Votes

- Voted yes for Lang Van Dommelen to become Trips Committee Chairman.
- Voted yes for Pat Schmalix to lead a Rock Rescue Clinic in April.

## Action items

- Gerrit to send out storage locker information.
- Lang to take on the position of Trips Committee Chairman.
- Dominick to open separate savings account for Mint Hut funds.
- Josh to forward email to Dominick for Squarespace for donations.
- Peter or Dominick to take care of any more issues with credit-card payments.
- Donell to send Josh an email of dates/times for meetings.
- Josh to put dates/times/locations of meetings on website.
- Josh is to check if he can send auto-renewal updates to members in regard to membership.
- Gerrit will get Annie and Josh what they need to access Mailchimp. Gerrit to coordinate with Scott, Josh, and Annie per membership management.
- Lang to ask ARG or Alaska Pacific University about taking library things.

## Previous/Upcoming Agenda

- Library
- Paid position
- Strategic plan
- Discuss Valdez chapter

## Time and Location of next Meeting

- **General Membership Meeting:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at BP Energy Center from 6-8 p.m.
- **Board meeting:** Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Location to be determined.

## General Membership Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2024, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the B.P. Energy Center, Anchorage

Approximately 85 to 90 people attended this meeting.

Five newcomers introduced themselves. Welcome!

### Announcements:

#### Mint Hut Announcement by Stan Olsen:

- If you are able to help with the following items, please contact Stan Olsen at [stan1olsen@yahoo.com](mailto:stan1olsen@yahoo.com).
- The fly-in date for the Mint Hut supplies has changed. All materials will be flown in July 19th, 2024. We need to have everything in the parking lot and staged by Thursday, July 18th.
- We will need to acquire a permit from the state to block off the parking lot. We are looking for someone to assist in this.
- Looking for people to help shuttle materials up to the parking lot and do the physical labor of blocking out the parking lot.
- Looking for two 10-foot-square indoor spaces to store the windows for the Mint Hut. Will need to pick it up in about three weeks (approximately the end of February).
- Also looking for two 10-foot-by-30-foot outdoor storage spaces for lumber.
- There will be a painting party for indoor items in June. Dave Staeheli is in charge of that. Contact Dave at [alpineak@aol.com](mailto:alpineak@aol.com).
- Lots of small items need to be purchased. If anyone is interested, we could use help with the purchase of these items. A list can be provided upon request.  
It will be a 10-day project to do the work out at the Mint Hut, let Stan know if you'd like to help.
- If you cannot help work on site, but would like to donate money to the project, you may do so.

#### Announcements by Donell Irwin:

- The club is brainstorming ideas for finding a new space to hold general membership meetings. The price on the BP Energy Center room is going up. If anyone has options, please let us know by emailing [board@mtnclubak.org](mailto:board@mtnclubak.org).
- Dave Staeheli will be leading a trip to the Mint Hut September 1-7th (later changed to August 1-7th), limited to 10 people. He is also looking for a couple of assistant instructors. Email Dave or Donell at [mdirwin@yahoo.com](mailto:mdirwin@yahoo.com) to get on the list for information and sign up.
- Pat Schmalix will be leading a two-day Rescue in Vertical Terrain Training Wednesday, April 10th (evening indoors) and Saturday, April 13th (all-day outdoors). Attending both days is mandatory for this class. This class is for people who are already familiar with outdoor climbing systems, belay and rappel and can lead climb a minimum of 5.7 outdoors. Email Donell at [mdirwin@yahoo.com](mailto:mdirwin@yahoo.com) for more information or to sign up. Limited to eight students.

#### Greg Bragiel Announcement:

- Eklutna Traverse Trip is April 15-21st. Please let Greg know if you are interested in going, but it may already be full. Please do not plan your personal trip to use the Eklutna Traverse huts during this time period. Club-sanctioned trips have priority for use of the huts.

#### Guest Speakers

- Kathy Still and Az Sellers presented on the 120 Chugach State Park peaks.

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Peter Taylor [president@mtnclubak.org](mailto:president@mtnclubak.org)  
Vice-President Rebecca Marks [vicepresident@mtnclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org)  
Secretary Donell Irwin [secretary@mtnclubak.org](mailto:secretary@mtnclubak.org)  
Treasurer Dominick Curtiss [treasurer@mtnclubak.org](mailto:treasurer@mtnclubak.org)  
Director 1 (term expires in 2025) Reux Stearns [board@mtnclubak.org](mailto:board@mtnclubak.org)  
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Director 6 (term expires in 2024) Tom McIntyre [board@mtnclubak.org](mailto:board@mtnclubak.org)

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*. Captions should accompany all submitted photos.

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: Annie Shane—[membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org)  
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Huts: Scott Parmelee—[huts@mtnclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtnclubak.org)  
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*Carrie Wang breaking trail up the lower glacier on Mount Cook/Aoraki. Photo by Wayne Todd.*

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