

the SCREE



Mountaineering Club of Alaska

May 2023

Volume 66, Number 5

**“You can’t conquer a
mountain, though it
may conquer you.”**

– Jimmy Chin

Contents:

Peak of the Month: South Peak of Mount Salisbury, Saint Elias Mountains

Cover: “West Fork Hunter Glacier - Taken from Hunter Pass (Chugach Mountains) several summers ago.”

Photo by Frank E. Baker.

"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."

Full issues of *the Scree* will resume when enough volunteer time is found for monthly editing, layout, and distribution duties.
To volunteer, please write to board@mtnclubak.org, or MCAScree@gmail.com

GENERAL MEETING

General meetings will resume in September. Keep an eye out for summer events!

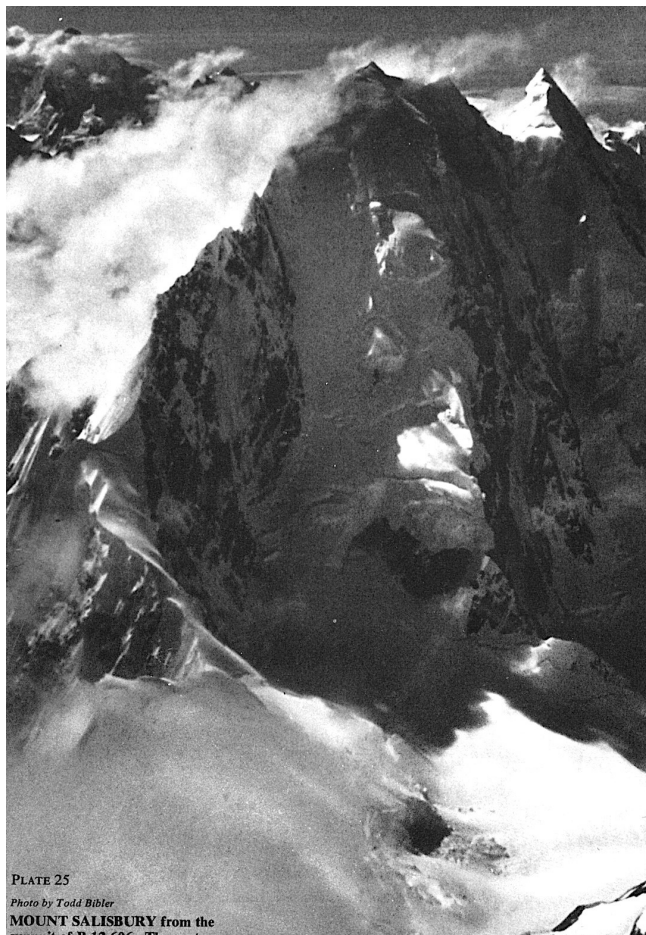


PLATE 25

Photo by Todd Bibler

MOUNT SALISBURY from the summit of Mount Tlingit

Mount Salisbury and South Peak of Mount Salisbury (right) from the summit of Mount Tlingit. Photo from the 1978 AAJ.

Member Survey Results

Text by Rebecca Marks

The most recent member survey was very helpful in gauging members' opinions on important decisions as well as their driving interest for being a part of the MCA. Huts are one of the main reasons many of you joined the club and why you continue to be involved. Many members are concerned about the overuse of Mint Hut and consequently the environmental impacts. All of the solutions being considered can be broken down into two categories - 1) Hut (expand, move or disassemble) and 2) People (reservations, fees, enforcement of membership for use policy). Over 60% of individuals who participated in the survey thought the Mint Hut should be both renovated and remain in its current location compared with 20% desiring the hut to be both renovated and moved to a new location. With regards to who uses the Mint Hut, over 80% of surveyors thought huts should strictly be available to members of the MCA compared with 7% who thought no membership should be required. Another main takeaway from this survey was the interest and availability of members to participate in and lead trips. Eleven individuals volunteered to lead trips and many more expressed interest in participating in skills clinics and a variety of trips. We will be in contact with those who volunteered themselves, but please reach out if you have any desire to lead any trip or skills clinic. The ways members recreate goes far beyond extreme mountaineering. The majority of members prefer to spend their time hiking, climbing and skiing. Participation in surveys such as these proves to be an enormous help in utilizing our budget and resources to create a mountaineering club that reflects our members' passions and goals and helps them to grow. Please keep on participating!

Contents

South Peak of Mount Salisbury (11970 feet), Saint Elias Mountains 3

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.



Peak of the Month: South Peak of Mount Salisbury (11970 feet), Saint Elias Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Saint Elias Mountains; Fairweather Range

Drainages: Fairweather Glacier and Johns Hopkins Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 58° 50' 25" North, 137° 22' 41" West

Elevation: 11970 feet

Distinctness & Prominence: 835 feet from Mount Salisbury

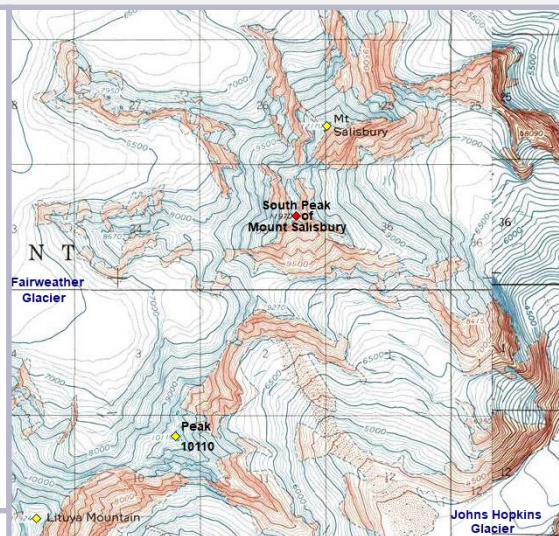
Adjacent Peaks: Mount Salisbury (12170 feet) and Peak 10110 in the Fairweather Glacier and Johns Hopkins Glacier drainages

USGS Maps: 1:63,360: Mt. Fairweather (D-5), 1:25,000: Mount Fairweather D-5 SE

First Recorded Ascent: June 20, 1979, by Daniel Cauthorn, Benjamin Dobbin, Michael Friedman, Ernest Jones, and Peter A. Speer

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Northwest ridge and north face

Access Point: Lituya Bay



With a summit elevation of 11970 feet, the South Peak of Mount Salisbury is the 10th highest peak in the Fairweather Range, the 38th highest peak in the Saint Elias Mountains, and the 96th highest peak in Alaska.

In 1936 ecologist and botanist William S. Cooper and geologist William Field, Jr., both of whom had successfully lobbied President Calvin Coolidge to establish Glacier Bay National Monument (which later became Glacier Bay National Park) in 1925, named Mount Salisbury in honor of Rollin Daniel Salisbury, a professor of geology at the University of Chicago and an “eminent student of Pleistocene and Recent glaciology.”

James F. Wickwire reported hearing in mid-March 1973 that Fred Beckey had for years proclaimed that the two summits of Mount Salisbury were the finest unclimbed mountains in Alaska. Heeding Beckey’s siren call, Jerome Eberharter, James T. Nelson, Steven J. Swenson, and Greg Thompson climbed the north (and highest) peak of Mount Salisbury (12170 feet) on June 17, 1977. More than two years later, the South Peak’s summit – only 200 feet lower than the north peak – remained free of footprints. However, that untrodden status was about to change.

On June 6, 1979, Dan Cauthorn, Ben Dobbin, Mike Friedman, Ernie Jones, Thomas Nelson, and Pete Speer were flown in a floatplane from Juneau to Lituya Bay. They began the arduous trek along the coast to reach the Fairweather Glacier. A week later they placed a base camp at an elevation of 6550 feet northwest of the col between Mount Salisbury’s two summits, where they collected supplies that had been air dropped. On June 16 Cauthorn and Speer climbed halfway up the north face of the South Peak, only to be turned back by a storm the next day. On June 19, while Tom Nelson remained in camp nursing an eye injury, the two set out again, followed by the rope team of Dobbin, Friedman, and Jones. Speer described the climbing from the glacier to a notch on the northwest ridge of the South Peak as “really spectacular.” Once on the northwest ridge, they then traversed three-quarters of a mile along the corniced ridge crest. The five climbers bivouacked in a cave some 2500 feet above the glacier.

The morning of June 20, 1979, the two rope teams set out from the cave with Cauthorn and Speer in the lead and the three-man team following up the steepening upper slopes of the north face. As the angle steepened, the party began using ice screws instead of flukes; after seven pitches of climbing, the snow gave way to hard ice. Cauthorn led the party up the 60-degree hard water-ice slope that was covered with two inches of snow that quickly petered out. After swapping leads a couple times, Cauthorn led onto the top of a rocky outcrop that gave access to the north ridge of the South Peak. Although the slope of the ridge was relatively gentle, immense cornices drooped from it. As they ascended, the ridge narrowed to a knife edge with over 4500 feet of exposure on either side – one face of rotten snow and the other of rotten rock. They gingerly reached the base of the huge cornice that comprised the summit massif – a huge cornice atop a wafer-thin peak. They used a fluke to protect their belay as they ascended the final steps to reach the summit some thirty feet overhead.

I don’t know of a second ascent of the peak.

The information for this column came from Cooper’s article “The Problem of Glacier Bay: A Study of Glacier Variations,” (*The Geographical Review*, January 1937, 37-62); from Donald J. Orth’s 1967 “Dictionary of Alaska Place Names” (USGS Professional Paper 567); from Wickwire’s “An Alpine Traverse of Fairweather and Quincy Adams,” (*American Alpine Journal*, 1974, 11-18) from Jim Nelson’s and Swenson’s “Mount Salisbury and P12,606,” (*AAJ*, 1978, 387-391); from an unattributed article “Alaska,” (*Climbing* No. 56, September-October 1979, 3); from an unattributed announcement “First Ascent on South Summit, Mt. Salisbury,” (*Summit*, October-November 1979, 9); from an unattributed announcement titled “Salisbury, South Peak,” (*Mountain* No. 71, January/February 1980, 15); from Speer’s “The Sirens of Mount Salisbury,” (*AAJ*, 1980, 490-493); from Tom Connor’s “Regional Notes” (*Alpine Journal*, 1980, 227); from the National Park Service’s webpage “[Glacier Bay National Park research legacy](#)”; from the NPS’s webpage “[William S. Cooper: A Vision of Preservation](#)”; and from my correspondence with Cauthorn, Friedman, and Speer.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 29, 2023, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at 500 W. International Airport Rd., Anchorage

Roll Call

Gerrit Verbeek (President) – Absent
Vice President (Vacant)
Donell Irwin (Secretary) – Present
Peter Taylor (Treasurer) – Present
Tom McIntyre (Director) – Absent

Andrew Holman (Director) – Present
Matt Nedom (Director) – Present
Heather Johnson (Director) – Present
Andy Kubic (Director) – Absent
Scott Parmelee (Director) - Present

Scribe: Donell

Announcements

- Looking for Vice President, a Scree editor, and speakers

Board Reports and Discussion

- **Finances:** Annual income to date: \$3,662.39; Total operating expenses: 475.63; Net income: \$3,186.76
- **General Membership:**
 - Plan to release the membership survey by the April 6th meeting. Drawing for coffee gift cards and a calendar as incentive.
 - Automatic membership renewal option on the website is disabled, members must opt into this.
 - Discussed adding a question on the website to help determine the number of out of state members using huts
- **Huts:**
 - Greg Bragiel is stepping down as Huts Chairman and Scott Parmelee is taking over.
 - Suggestion that we keep our website updated for huts needs.
 - Liability waiver still issue (discussed QR code as option again).
- **Trips and Training:**
 - Questioned the status of Clint Helander teaching ice climbing.
 - Matt suggested we look into a glacier travel class.
 - Snow safety/backcountry education for Backcountry Hunters and Anglers with Heather went really well on March 22.
 - Discussed encouraging members to seek partners through unofficial trips using the listserv or Facebook
 - Discussed approving payment of CPR/First Aid training to anyone who needs it if they commit to leading (requires a vote).
 - Discussed recording videos for training trip leaders. Discussed trying to find old scripts.
- **Speakers and Outreach:**
 - Discussed options for future presenters
 - Discussed being more vocal at meetings and assertive online about recruiting people.
 - Discussed the production of our speaker videos and audio equipment needed.
 - Discussed using funds from fundraiser for more high profile speakers in the future
- **General Discussion:**
 - Discussed hiring a paid position for the club
 - Need a board member whose term lasts into 2024 to learn how to manage Memberspace, Mailchimp, and Newtek
 - Need job descriptions for board positions before October elections

Action Items

- Scott- Membership Survey
- Matt- Look to find old scripts for training videos
- Peter- Start Google Doc for paid job description

Time and location of next meeting

- General Meeting - Thursday April 6, 2023.
- Next Board Meeting on April 26, 2023, 500 W. Int'l Airport Rd.