

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

AUGUST 2023

Volume 66, Number 7



“Technique and ability alone do not get you to the top; it is the willpower that is the most important. This willpower you cannot buy with money or be given by others... it rises from your heart.”

-Junko Tabei

September Meeting

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

6:00-8:00 pm at the BP Energy Center

Presentation: Climbing in the Cordillera Blanca with Jake Gano

### Contents:

Peak 5026, McKinley Pinnacles

Agisaq (5240 feet) and Qateriuq (5080 feet), Central Chugach Mountains

Hearth Mountain (6182 feet), Kenai Mountains

Peak 5464, Talkeetna Mountains

Point 6530, Western Chugach Mountains

Mount Goode (10610 feet) and Mount Marcus Baker (13176 feet), Central Chugach Mountains

Peaks near the Baldwin Glacier, Saint Elias Mountains

Drakensberg Mountains, South Africa

Peak of the Month: Ram Mountain (6530 feet), Neacola Mountains

*"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

From left: Rowland Powers, Nathan Fogell, and Melanie Sexton hiking up the four-wheeler track toward the McKinley Pinnacles in the Talkeetna Mountains. Photo by Justine Duchon.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday, September 6, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the B.P. Energy Center, 1014 Energy Ct, Anchorage, AK 99508.

### Presentation:

Jake Gano will discuss a summer trip spent alpine ice climbing in the high peaks of the Cordillera Blanca.

The September 6 general meeting will also include a vote to allow the board to explore adding a part-time paid administrator position to the club leadership. After discussion, the board has concluded this is an option to address membership needs and constraints on volunteer time.

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## Call for Volunteers

Everything the MCA provides is built by volunteers. We're currently seeking folks for these roles and more:

**Board Members:** Elections are coming up in October and multiple current board members are planning to step down for a break. If you're interested, please consider serving a two-year term.

More information to come in the next issue.

**Webmaster:** responsible for administering website content and member accounts via Squarespace and Memberspace. Time commitment: 1-2 hours per month minimum, with a stack of projects and ideas waiting if you want more!

## Geographic Name Change

At its December 8, 2022, meeting, the Domestic Names Committee of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names changed the name of Puntilla Creek in the Alaska Range to Lower Puntilla Creek. The stream, which flows through Puntilla Lake, had been called Squaw Creek until September 8, 2022, when the BGN changed the name pursuant to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland's determination that the word "squaw" was derogatory. However, the replacement name was identical to that of another stream with a source two miles to the northwest. The BGN has a long-standing policy that states that duplicate names in close proximity are undesirable, thus prompting the December 8 approval of the modification to the September replacement name. Both streams flow into the Happy River, with Lower Puntilla Creek entering downstream of the original Puntilla Creek.

Steve Gruhn



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.



## Upcoming Elections - October

The October 5th General Meeting will include votes on new Officers and Directors to join the MCA Board for a two-year term. If you would like more information or to express interest in running, feel free to contact a current Board member.

Many of the board members whose positions are up for election have expressed an intent to step down from the board. Please consider volunteering your skills to keep the club running!

### High turnout is critical

We will take nominations for candidates for two officer positions and three director positions. You may nominate yourself or another person, although they must accept the nomination in order to run. If they wish, candidates may make a short speech about their priorities and motivation for joining the Board before voting. The current positions up for election are:

President—Gerrit Verbeek

Treasurer—Peter Taylor

Director – Andy Kubic

Director – Heather Johnson

Director – Scott Parmelee

MCA Board Roles

President:

(a) To preside at all regular and executive meetings.

(b) To coordinate the efforts of the officers and committees.

Treasurer:

(a) To receive and disburse all club dues, fees, and other monies.

(b) To maintain complete financial records of the organization.

(c) All other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee.

Directors:

(a) To act as an advisor to the Executive Committee concerning matters of policy.

(b) All other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee

## Matanuska Glacier Ice Fest 2023

Want to learn to ice climb or improve your current techniques?

**Friday, September 22, 2023, 5:00 p.m., to Sunday, September 24, 2023, 4:00 p.m.**

66500 Glacier Park Road, Sutton-Alpine, Alaska, 99674

Learn modern ice climbing techniques, rope management skills, and socialize with other local climbers in a weekend. **All abilities** welcome. Must be 18 or older. Some equipment available.

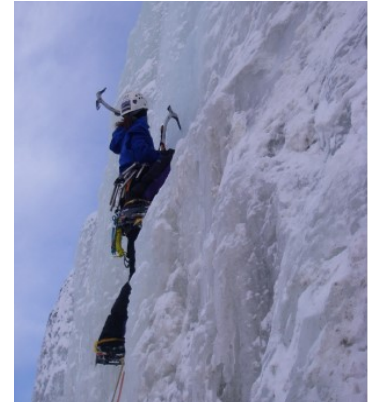
Cost: \$95. (MCA membership also requires \$20-30).

**Registration is only available online and will be open September 1st- 15th.**

Visit [mtnclubak.org](http://mtnclubak.org), the Training web-page, or Facebook to register, or for more info email

[mcaicefest@gmail.com](mailto:mcaicefest@gmail.com).

**Contact: Jayme Mack Fuller,  
907-382-0212**



Matanuska  
Glacier

## Letters to the Editor

### Correction Regarding Ascent of Middle Summit of Mount Marcus Baker

In the Peak-of-the-Month column on Icing Peak that appeared in the June 2022 Scree, I mentioned that Robin Bowen, Greg Durocher, and Brian Okonek had made the first ascent of the Middle Summit of Mount

Marcus Baker in February 1976. However, in preparing February's Peak-of-the-Month column on the North Peak of Mount Marcus Baker, I learned from Dennis Schmitt that Kate Allen, Randall Jones, John Wittmayer, and he had reached the Middle Summit of Mount Marcus Baker in August 1975 en route to the



Middle Summit  
of Mount Marcus  
Baker

true summit. The 1975 ascent of the Middle Summit had not been previously reported, so I felt it important to correct my previous error and update the historical record.

Steve Gruhn

### Arrigetch Peaks

*The following paragraphs are written in response to an article in the April Scree written by Cameron Jardell about his trip to the Arrigetch Peaks. In the article he proposed to compile the climbing information pertaining to the area since now it is not centralized, difficult to find, and incomplete. He suggested either a pdf format or online resource in the form of Mountain Project and asked for the opinions of the*

**Continued on page 4**

## Letters to the Editor, continued from page 3

*ty. Having spent some time in the area in the summer of 2009 (January 2010 Scree) with Bryan Friedrichs, Kelsey Gray, and Rob Litsenberger, I (Marcin Ksok) send the following thoughts along with those of my partners:*

The Arrigetch is a special place, difficult to approach, expensive, and mysterious; those are among the reasons why it is special. Prior to our trip, we had to pore over maps (yes, paper maps), mark the features with a pencil, dig up trip reports, make phone calls to those who had visited before us. The information was there, just took effort, it was not a "click-and-climb" trip. Personally, I think that making it a "click-and-climb" sort of place would dilute its character. There is a plethora of accessible climbing areas where one can know exactly what size cam to stick in which crack at what spot on the route; let's leave the Arrigetch out of that category, more inaccessible, mysterious, intimidating. The necessity of doing research prior to our adventure added to the experience, let's allow others the same chance. I would not mind if the route information and history of the place were preserved somewhere; it could be an interesting read. I personally still have a folder of compiled materials from our trip. Mountain Project does not seem a good place for it, in my opinion, though. I don't mind trip reports and magazine articles; they whet our appetites, inspire, and preserve the history. Mr. Jardell's article is a perfect way to share his experience and I enjoyed reading it. It brought back memories of our time there. Mountain Project, on the other hand, reduces climbing to a checklist and digitizes it; it's like a difference between a vinyl record and Spotify. Our trip was transformative, I believe the first big, remote climbing trip for all of us and it made a great impression on me, still fresh after the years, still strong in my mind. Others should have the opportunity to have the same experience. Often, when I try to summit a peak, I purposefully avoid doing research. I look at a map, pick a route, and go. Such approach leaves room for an adventure and exploration. The Arrigetch should remain an adventure, but that is just my opinion.

Marcin Ksok

*Editor's note—Marcin's letter included the following contributions:*

I'm more in the keep-it-mysterious camp. I don't have a problem with people writing trip reports and publishing route descriptions, but lack of information doesn't seem to be a major problem in the world these days. There are plenty of

options for places to climb with great guidebooks and beta (thanks, Kelsey). I don't see why the Arrigetch needs to be one of those places. If you put in the effort and money to get there, aren't you looking for some adventure?

Bryan Friedrichs

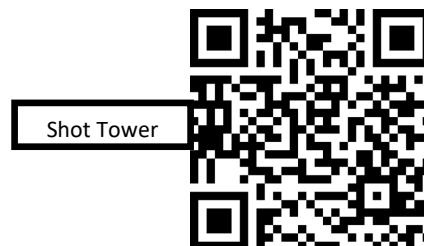
I told Cameron last year, and I think the year before, that he should put out the pdf guidebook on which he was working. Personally, I think it's great to keep that information recorded. And if it's in 15 people's hands, it just kind of disappears. But I really like having all of it recorded. And I would've liked to have a greater idea of other routes to get on while we were out there, as well. There was just so little done, which does have its bonuses, I will admit. And the idea of the adventure to meet isn't really taken out by having more of an idea of what's out there. It was great to know about Shot Tower before we went up it. I also think that it does take some of that majesty away from some people. But overall, I don't think most of those people will ever go back. And I would like to think that even having a pdf guidebook of it, wouldn't take away from a lot of that. We had that guidebook from Clint Cummings, and it still felt pretty adventuresome to me!

Kelsey Gray

I'm all for keeping the mystery of the area. It is all well and good to write up trip reports online (to do your own research), but I am of the opinion that creating a compendium (guidebook style) will only reduce the mystique and entrench the textbook feel for an area that I believe should be more shrouded in mystery and speculative adventure.

I have watched too many places become documented (under the pretense of creating compendiums of logged accomplishments) only to become overrun with people seeking to one-up those previous achievements and would be very sad to watch a place as shrouded in mystery and potential for adventure become unraveled by documenting and compiling all that has been done, thereby removing all the mystique, simply road-mapping the area for others.

Rob Litsenberger



# First Known Summit Adventure of Peak 5026, McKinley Pinnacles

Text by Justine Fogell (née Duchon); photos by Shane Ohms



62.95809,  
-149.49533



*Descending Peak 5026.*

ing which route to take to the summit. We found a nice snow ramp to a couloir that led straight to the peak. The snowpack was thin in some spots, allowing for bits of fun scree scrambling as well. We reached the peak around 3 p.m. and descended down the southwest face of the mountain. We hoped to avoid the gaping holes of the traverse and were successful in finding a slope with enough snow to glissade. We boot-packed back up to

On Saturday, September 25, 2021, Shane Ohms, Melanie Sexton, Rowland Powers, Nathan Fogell, and I set out from Fairbanks on a grand adventure to explore an unknown peak in the McKinley Pinnacles, just south of Hurricane Gulch. We parked in a large gravel lot, packed up our overnight gear and headed up the four-wheeler track for about 3 miles. We hiked up the valley, keeping the river on our left until the four-wheeler track disappeared and we navigated through the tundra to reach the alpine lakes where we intended to camp.

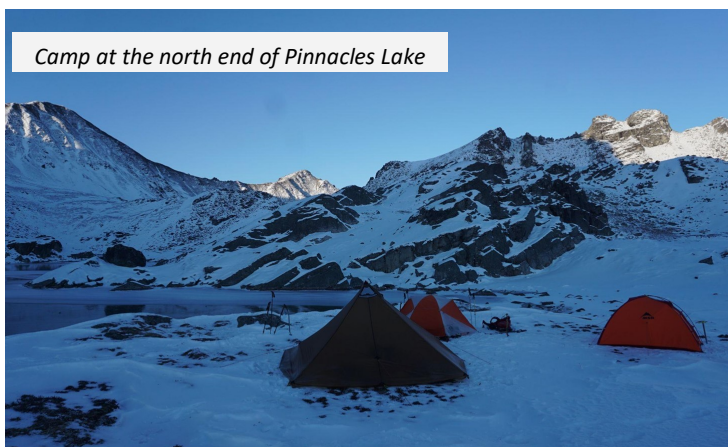
We stopped for a few minutes to drop our heavy gear and fuel up before heading farther to climb what we now know as Peak 5026. We began with a sidehill traverse above the lakes. Given it was early season snow, the snowpack was worse for wear. We made our way through snow-and-ice-covered rocks that often left gaping holes that could swallow an ankle or two, or maybe a pole.

The valley opened up north of the peak, giving us the first glimpse of what was ahead. We continued up the valley, decid-

ing which route to take to the summit. We found a nice snow ramp to a couloir that led straight to the peak. The snowpack was thin in some spots, allowing for bits of fun scree scrambling as well. We reached the peak around 3 p.m. and descended down the southwest face of the mountain. We hoped to avoid the gaping holes of the traverse and were successful in finding a slope with enough snow to glissade. We boot-packed back up to the saddle and made our way to our stashed gear. The sun was setting fast, so we packed up quickly and hiked to a flat spot on the north side of the lakes to set up camp.

We got our tents set up, water and bellies full, and settled in for a cozy, but cold, night's sleep. The next morning, the lake was completely frozen over with ice thicker than the night before. We chopped away at the ice to refill our waters before our trek out and took in the stunning mountain reflection on the lakes.

Before heading out, we explored the drainage of the lakes for potential ice-climbing adventures. However, there was no ice to be found, as the water flowed under the boulders, rather than over them. The blue skies in the valley offered us beautiful views of Denali as we retraced our steps down the valley, back to the four-wheeler track and back to the cars. Cheers to another weekend well spent with good friends in the mountains.



*Camp at the north end of Pinnacles Lake*



*Hiking out to a wonderful Denali view.*

## Browns Basin Ski Mountaineering, Central Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Mat Brunton



60.92725,  
-145.86646



Map of Browns Basin with Agisaaq (left) and Qateriuq (right).

Changing mindset (i.e., getting out of a rut) and recognizing opportunity in what may seem like challenging conditions takes conscious effort, but can be especially rewarding. Like driving my tiny Aveo from Anchorage to ski new lines at Hatcher Pass over a decade ago during a season when the studded tire ruts on the Glenn Highway were especially bad, recently I needed to make a conscious effort to shift lanes and get out of a rut.

Prior to March 2023, the snow season had been providing incredible powder skiing in the Central Chugach Mountains. Thus far, March had brought a lot of wind but little snow. For my partner Jess Tran's spring break week (the first week of March), after so much good powder skiing earlier this season, it was hard not to be bummed by snow conditions. The snow was in awful shape: beat by multiple wind events without the slightest refresh and highly processed by abnormally warm temperatures and intensifying spring sunshine.

But a forecast for several more days of sun and relatively warm temperatures meant it'd be comfortable in the mountains, especially for a multi-day trip that time of year. I just needed to change my mindset (shift lanes and get out of the rut from so much powder skiing) to recognize this opportunity: a fine one for snow camping and mountaineering. No trail breaking through powder and generally firm surface conditions make for efficient backcountry travel deeper into the mountains.

Considering that summer mountaineering trips have no fun descents, it's all about being in the mountains and the views. We recognized the opportunity and decided to ski up to Browns Basin for camping and mountaineering. With no beta available,

but the map suggesting a lot of reasonable options for ski-peakbagging appropriate to the conditions (recent high winds and an extreme temperature inversion with temperatures well above freezing at the upper elevations made for interesting avalanche conditions), we set out.

We spent a day skiing in, me towing the sled, and setup a relatively comfortable base camp. The next day we climbed a prominent 5240-foot peak (dubbed "Agisaaq," Alutiiq for "lookout" or "observation point"), which provided amazing views of Port Fidalgo. The third day we climbed a 5080-foot peak (dubbed "Qateriuq," Alutiiq for "ptarmigan") with over 1000 feet of prominence, which looks out over Port Gravina. It was surreal with only the high peaks poking through a stratus deck at about 4000 feet. The fourth day we exited, fortunately, as a bora wind event began that evening with winds to 80 miles per hour.

Surprisingly, while there was challenging snow to descend on our routes, there were some good turns to be had after all. As always, and most importantly, the Valdez-area Central Chugach provided big adventure with a second-to-none ambiance.

For more photos visit <https://chugachsnow.org/browns-basin/>.



*Above: Skinning out of the Browns Basin for-*

*Below: Qateriuq west glacier bench.*



## Hearth Mountain (6182 feet), Southwest Face, Kenai Mountains

Text by Joe Nyholm  
April 7-8, 2023

60.23118, -149.18888



In the week leading up to April 7<sup>th</sup>, I had noticed that the crust skiing on the Resurrection River bed was prime, which was my signal that the approaches to Seward-area peaks were good to go. During the week I tried to gather some partners and my sole victim was Laron Thomas. Our objective was one of the elusive 6000-foot Kenai peaks, Hearth Mountain, up the South Fork of the Snow River.

I sold Laron on the idea of a possibly unclimbed 3500-foot plumb line couloir to the summit, and also undersold the number of river crossings on the approach (I originally said there were maybe 12, but there were actually closer to 30! Funny how memory works!)

We started on Friday, the 7<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m. from the snow-machine pullout across from the Meridian and Grayling Lakes Trailhead. Fortunately, even so late in the day, we had a relatively good crust on the snowmachine trails and made great time to where we planned to camp, seven miles up the riverbed. Most of the crossings ended up being ankle deep and I didn't even need the overboot Wiggy Waders. The camping was luxurious on the packed snowmachine trails and we had a nice view of our route and the approach up into the southwest bowl.

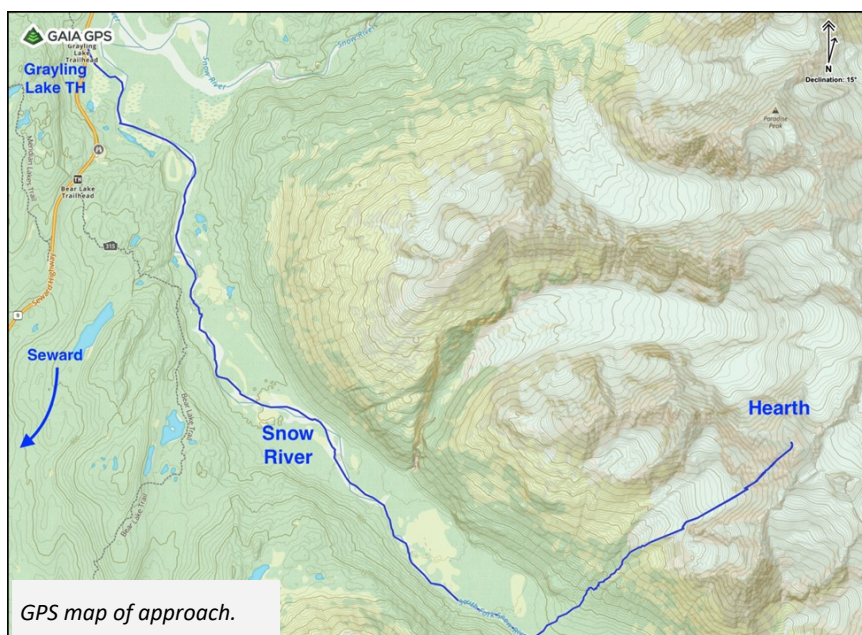
The forecast we had showed minimal snow overnight and then snow coming in at around 1 p.m. on our summit push. We awoke at 5 a.m. to overcast skies that looked worrisome with the plan of heading out at 6 a.m. By 6:30 there was some heavier snow starting to fall as we worked our way up the riverbed draining from the bowl, at this point we couldn't see any peaks or the valley wall behind us, and in an unspoken way, we both accepted that this would turn into a reconnaissance for a future attempt. We found easy passage on snowshoes up the steep slopes and headed toward a knife-edged moraine that offered a straight shot back to the route. Once we had accessed the moraine, we noticed a widening sucker hole in the clouds above Hearth's summit, and by the time we were off the moraine, the whole sky had cleared.

With the odds back in our favor, we both agreed to proceed and to keep a close eye on the weather. We got below the route on a small glacier in the bowl and roped up with a skinny RAD line and



Southwest face with obvious line to the summit (2022). Photo by Joe Nyholm.

three pickets, donned our crampons, and ditched the snowshoes. From there the route went up a 1000-foot snow cone/avalanche field before narrowing down into a less-than-50-foot-wide rock-walled couloir. That went fairly quickly until we started to run into a couple bergschrunds; we had seen these from camp and were aware of them, but the size of the lower one proved to be quite the obstacle at over five feet across and what seemed like over 100 feet deep in places. Luckily after poking my head over the lip, I saw some avy debris to the left

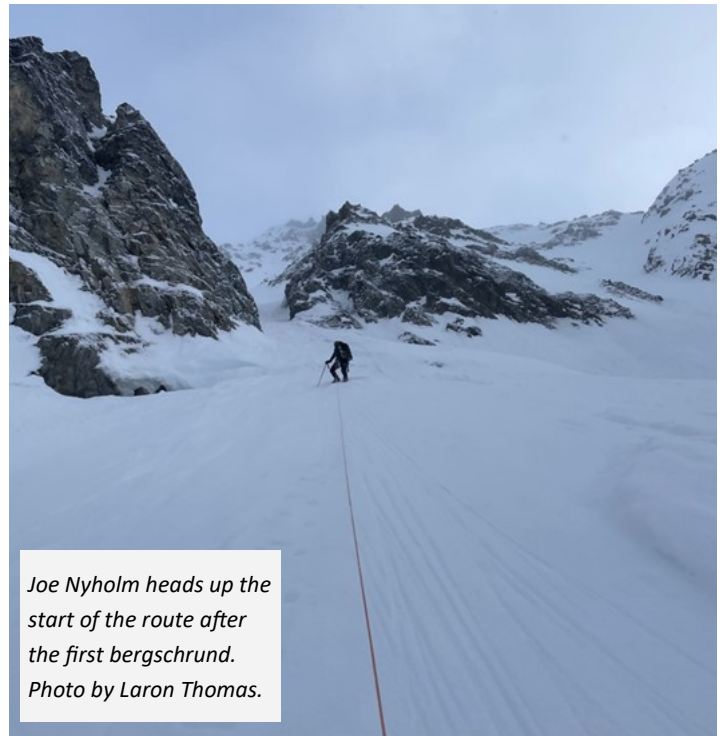


GPS map of approach.





*Joe Nyholm thinking the weather wasn't looking good down low.  
Photo by Laron Thomas.*



*Joe Nyholm heads up the start of the route after the first bergschrund.  
Photo by Laron Thomas.*

that reached the top of the crack to form a snow bridge. We crossed cautiously and by the time Laron followed over the crack I was already at the second crossing, although that one was smaller and easier to cross.

Once across the bergschrunds, we found firm snow conditions for the next 500 feet or so until the couloir opened up temporarily. For the next 1000 feet, we had a mix of firm conditions and powder where avalanches had not scoured the route. We stayed roped up in case the conditions got too firm and icy and were prepared to set pickets, but we never found the need to place any on the ascent. The final 1000 feet of the route changed to almost knee-deep powder. By that time the length of the route started to cause some fatigue and our pace slowed, but eventually we made it to the top-out, which curved to the left to avoid some bus-sized cornices and steepened a bit. Before there the slope had been fairly consistent at 45 to 50 degrees, that final 50 feet being more than 60 degrees.

During that whole time in the couloir, the weather had deteriorated and gone through a couple of spells of moderate snow with visibility at the top being close to a whiteout. We pulled up onto the summit ridge and I gave Laron a hip belay up and over. We both decided it would be best to not linger up on the summit, especially with no view. After a quick refuel we stated down at around 12:15 p.m.

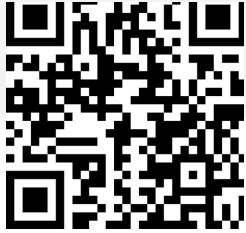
We placed one picket to protect the steep top out, but for the most of the descent, we casually made our way down in softer conditions. We also experienced quite a few small slough avalanches that were mostly near misses with a couple of direct hits that were fortunately easy to brace for. When we got to the 500

feet of firm snow at the start of the couloir, we placed a few more pickets in that section and watched as a couple of larger and scarier avalanches went past and covered the bergschrunds. That was problematic because they covered our tracks that led to the crossing locations that we knew were solid. We devised a plan to place a picket above each bergschrund and to belay over the larger lower bergschrund.

After crossing with no issue, we went into full whiteout ping-pong ball conditions and followed our tracks out of the bowl. From there we descended on our snowshoes to our camp. At that point we were maybe 9 or 10 hours into our day and both decided to take a longer break before the long trek out. The extra Mountain House and oatmeal hit the spot, and after some tea and coffee, we packed up camp and started the long trek back.

Unfortunately, the conditions were much softer than on the way in, we suspected that the snow up high was actually rain down on the riverbed. Conditions were brutal with unexpected postholing up to the knee or hip happening frequently, but maybe it all just felt worse due to the fact we had just climbed 6000 feet. Somehow, we made it out in roughly the same time as on the approach and ended the day at 14 hours of moving time.

Another great trip on the Kenai Peninsula! This may have been the third ascent of the peak with the other two ascents being on from the north and west. Credit should be given to Dano Michaud for the vision and inspiration for the line. Maybe the fourth ascent will take the west ridge that follows a hanging glacier arête feature!



## Peak 5464, Talkeetna Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn; photos by Shane Ohms

63.34092,  
-148.38395

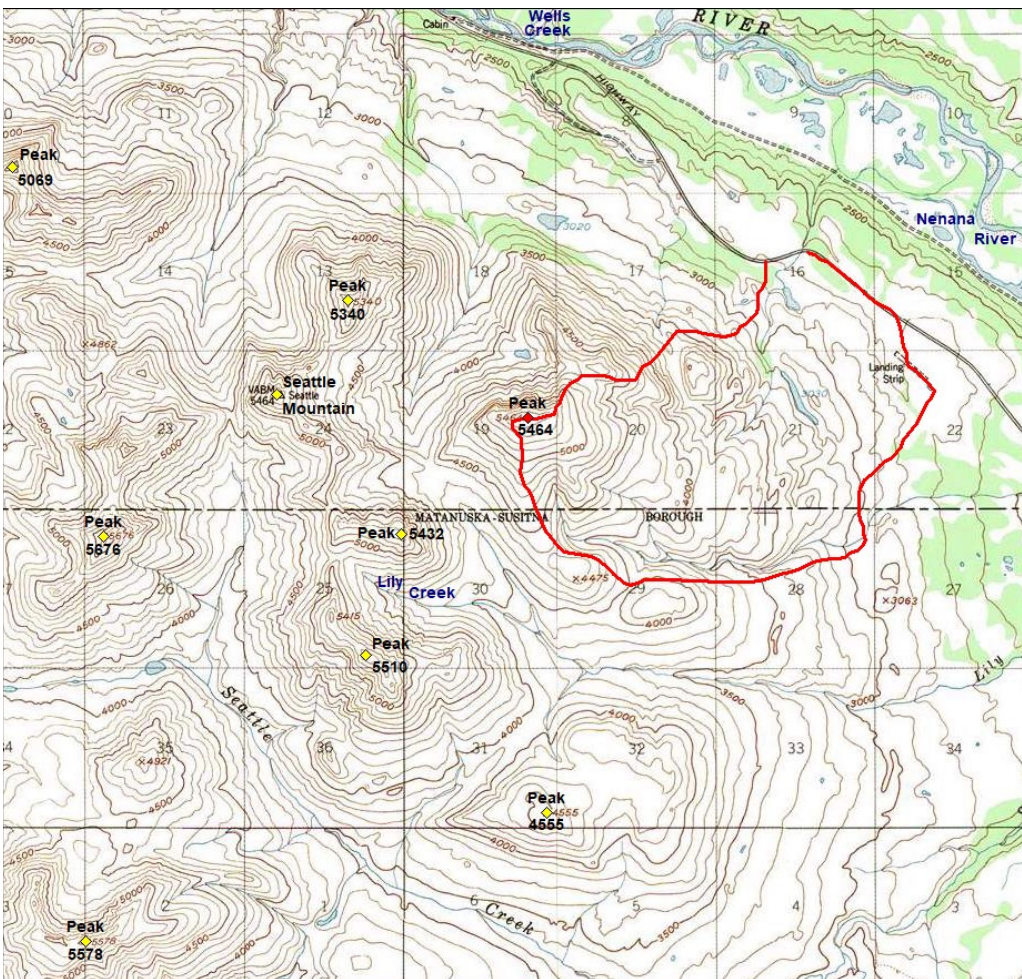
On August 19, 2022, I drove north to Cantwell, where I met Shane Ohms, who had driven south from Fairbanks. He drove us east on the Denali Highway for about 19 miles, eventually pulling off where the highway turned left to park amid the scrub brush on the south side of the highway at an elevation of about 2700 feet.



Steve Gruhn above the Nenana River valley, viewing northeast.

Our objective for the afternoon was a 5464-foot peak about a mile and a half east of Seattle Mountain, so named due to the name of the summit benchmark shown on the Healy (B-3) USGS map.

We hiked through the marshy alders, heading first south, then southwest as we ascended the slope. After skirting the north side of a 4000-foot hill, we paused as we broke out of the brush to watch a couple caribou descend the hill. We made our way up the boulder-strewn slope to a 4800-foot point that provided some nice views of the area. From that point we headed southwest, as we ascended the easy northeast ridge of Peak 5464.



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

On the flat summit we noticed a benchmark disk that had been placed in 1950 by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. The benchmark disk was labeled “Seattle 1950,” which perplexed us. We double-checked the map and we were not on Seattle Mountain, yet there was no denying that the benchmark disk that had lent its name to that mountain lay at our feet, a mile and a half east of where the map purported it to be. That was certainly a head scratcher. Could the cartographers have misidentified the benchmark location?

We looked to the west and noted that we were higher than Seattle Mountain. In fact, we were higher than any peak on the next ridge to our west, save for a peak about two miles south-southwest of us on the other side of Lily Creek.

We had gotten a mid-afternoon start and my aching right knee had slowed us on the ascent, so foregoing any additional ascents, we turned southward and descended the south aspect of Peak 5464. We opted for this route because it looked like it might be easier on my knee, albeit a fair bit longer than our ascent route. We followed the slope as it turned first south-east, then east, and found a caribou trail that led us across a north-facing slope above a canyon. Once below the canyon, we crossed the stream and stumbled upon a muddy all-terrain vehicle trail, which we followed to the northwest until we reached an abandoned airstrip. The ATV trail was muddy enough that we startled some ducks that had taken up residence in the tracks. From the airstrip, we followed an old roadbed to the Denali Highway. Shane had gotten a little bit ahead of me and caught a ride on an ATV for the couple miles back to his truck. Too slow for the assist, I walked along the highway until Shane drove up with the truck to rescue my knee. Our round trip had taken six hours and twenty minutes.

The trip had been a pleasant return to the mountains after nearly a year of babying my knee. In fact, it whetted my appetite for more exploration in this area. That higher peak (Peak 5510) across Lily Creek from Peak 5464 began to tug at my desires. There are plenty of summits to visit that are in close proximity to that part of the Denali Highway. Perhaps I'll find myself in that neck of the woods again with more time and a healthier knee.

There is a patchwork of private and Native corporation land along the western end of the Denali Highway, but our trip avoided those properties, staying entirely on lands owned by the State of Alaska.

At home I did a little bit of research and found that Philip C. Doran and a USC&GS party had placed the Seattle benchmark in 1950, some seven years before the Denali Highway opened to traffic. I checked the benchmark coordinates written in Doran's field notes (adjusted from the North American Datum of 1928 to NAD 83) and found that they matched nicely with those of the peak that we climbed ( $63^{\circ} 20' 29.45''$  North,  $148^{\circ} 23' 1.27''$  West). I can only conclude that the USGS cartographer had made an error in identifying which peak was the site of the benchmark and that the Healy (B-3) USGS map inaccurately depicts the location of the monumented Seattle benchmark disk.

Doran's party's route had started at the northwest end of the airstrip (not yet abandoned in 1950) and continued southwest up the slope to the west end of a skinny lake, and thence southwest up a creek bed east of the 4000-foot hill that we had skirted to its north. The USC&GS party had continued southwest and then west directly to the summit. The USC&GS party's ascent from the airstrip took four hours.

*Steve Gruhn ascending the boulder-strewn slope on the northwest ridge of Peak 5464 with Monahan Flat in the background, viewing east.*



## Point 6530 Winter Ascent and Ski Descent, Western Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Mike Records

February 25, 2023



61.26772, -148.86188



*Nyssa Landres, Mike Shelman, and Austin Hart ascending Point 6530 in the cold shadows of mid-winter framed by the Baleful Peak massif.*

ter, we turned east and began the climb into the hanging valley. Leaving the East Fork behind, we passed an awesome 100-foot-tall frozen waterfall where water sprayed vertically upward like a fire hydrant as it rebounded off rocks at the bottom.

Clinging to the steep and thick alders, we quickly realized that skinning was hopeless and switched to booting through feet of faceted sugar snow while fighting the brush that clung to our skis. Given the temperature and wind forecast, wild card that snowmobiles always are, and general uncertainty about conditions in the zone, I had low expectations for the day and figured that the alders would probably be the final straw for us. But Austin was particularly motivated, and we could only chase after him as he crashed up-

wards through the nasty brush. A couple hours later I was shocked to emerge from the wall of vegetation into the hanging valley.

The amphitheater was absolutely incredible with the south wall of Bashful Peak rising 4500 vertical feet straight above us. The peaks were all bejeweled in fresh snow and looked really incredible in the midwinter light. The northwest winds were clearly cranking above us with plumes of snow hundreds of feet long streaming off the tops of Bashful, Benevolent Peak, and Baneful Peak. Seeing this rapid loading of southerly aspects, we all immediately knew that climbing the southwest couloir of Benevolent was not an avalanche-safe option for the day. Again, my low expectations were not surprised, but the day was still young, we were in a beautiful spot, and the B.S. of the approach was over. We figured we might as well keep ascending toward the northwest face of Point 6530, which was not being loaded by the prevailing wind direction.

The strong north wind that was scouring the snow from the peaks was also bringing in frigid arctic air, and we shivered in our puffy jackets as we made our way upvalley. In a sort of trance from breathing the fresh cold air and the huge mountain amphitheater, the gradual ascent to the face seemed to fly by and we were soon transitioning onto the glaciated northwest face of Point 6530. We worked climber's left up the lower face to avoid an open moulin and exposed ice, then crossed a lower-

Point 6530 first came into my awareness years ago while looking south from the summit of Bashful Peak with my good friend Charlie Procknow on a perfect midsummer day in the Chugach Mountains. I thought that its northwest face, draped with a bulbous glacier, looked like an aesthetic ski line, but figured it was guarded well enough by a long approach and thick alders that it would remain a nice pipe dream for me.

In February 2023, the zone came back to into my mind for winter objectives upon a recommendation of Benevolent Peak from Aaron Thrasher while chatting at the Alaska Rock Gym. With clear skies, but also the possibility of wind, in the weekend weather forecast, we decided to check out the East Fork of the Eklutna River. By 9 a.m. on Saturday, were at the Eklutna Lake parking lot and unloading the sleds as large snowflakes lazily fell around us. With the insulating clouds still holding in some heat, it was relatively warm as Nyssa Landres, Mike Shelman, Austin Hart, and I sledged across the lake to park at the East Fork Trailhead. We knew it wouldn't stay warm for long.

At the bridge over the East Fork, we parked the sleds, shed layers, and skinned into the unbroken snow of the incised valley. I was impressed with the trail winding past the peaceful river and tucked under the giant walls of The Mitre as we followed the tracks of moose and wolverine upvalley through the mixed forest of birch, spruce, and cottonwood. At the creek that drains the Bashful-Benevolent-Point 6530-Baneful amphitheater,



*Harassed by arctic winds, Austin Hart hurries to remove his climbing skins on the summit of Point 6530. Behind Austin are the beautiful headwaters of the East Fork of the Eklutna River.*

angle bench of snow-covered ice to reach the nose that would lead us to the summit.

At the nose the slope suddenly pitched up to 45 or 50 degrees and we switched from skinning to booting for this steep pitch. Plunging our feet and hands deep into the cold and deep mid-winter snow, we all immediately realized how cold it was. Progress slowed as we took turns to warm our hands and feet before continuing. Additionally, each step higher meant a step farther into the upper-level winds. At the top of the nose, our cold hands fumbled to transition back to skinning for the last few hundred vertical feet to the summit. Based on local weather stations, lapse rates, and forecast temperatures, I think it was no warmer than -10 or -15 degrees Fahrenheit and blowing 25 miles per hour at this point. We rushed to finish the climb to the summit from where we started into the otherworldly headwaters of the East Fork. Combined with the time (5 p.m.) and

weather, we did not linger at the summit, but quickly transitioned for the ski back the way we came.

Skiing the summit cone was a mix of sastrugi, breakable crust, and watering eyes as we rushed to descend below the highest winds. By the time we reached the nose, the snow had transitioned back to ultra-cold and light powder. We skied the steep pitch of the nose one-by-one, rendezvousing at a flat safe spot on the buttress-like nunatak that splits the upper face. From the nunatak we skied right, working to avoid the steep exposed ice and moulin we'd seen on the way up. I skied a steep section of glacier adjacent to the moulin, crossing a thin snow bridge, and scraping across thin snow to exposed ice before rejoining the rest of the group who had taken a better low-angle route to the skier's right.

At that point we knew we were in a race against the setting sun, and party skied toward the alders and the descent to the East Fork. At some point in the alders, and with skis still on our



*Nyssa Landres rips blower powder on the Red Spot Glacier.*

feet, we got passed by Mike, who had given up on skiing through the tangled nest of branches and was going faster on foot. That was a signal for the rest of us to switch to walking as well!

We were out of the alders and back on the riverside trail as the last pink, purple, and gold light of the day kissed the summits of the peaks above us. We ate a snack in the fading daylight, then under the peace of a new moon, we kicked and glided back down the trail to the bridge and our waiting snowmobiles. Sledding back across the lake, it was cold enough that Mike and Austin had to stop every few miles, warm up, and trade who was in front. Eleven hours after leaving, we were back at the parking lot, surprised that we had ever made it out of the alders, let alone topped out a beautiful point in the Western Chugach.

# Mount Goode (10610 feet) and Mount Marcus Baker (13176 feet), Central Chugach Mountains

61.32612, -147.98543



Text and photos by Travis Powell

On April 11, 2022, Matt Kogel and Travis Powell flew in and climbed the first known ascent of the north ridge of Mount. Goode in the Central Chugach Mountains (AK 1, 60-degree snow and ice). The ridge is striking and beckons to be climbed. From the summit, they managed an engaging ski descent over sastrugi and around crevasses down the standard East Ridge route.

On April 13 they summited Mount Marcus Baker (13176 feet), the highest peak in the Chugach Mountains. Over the following three days, they traversed the entire Knik Glacier, skiing and hiking 46 miles to Travis Powell's front door in Knik, Alaska.

One memorable crux of their trip was rappelling off dead bushes locked in frozen mud, then barefoot fording a river through the ice canyon of Grasshopper Valley.



*Above: Heading up the lower ridge, Mount Marcus Baker in the background.*



*Left: Mount Goode with the north ridge being the right sun/shade line.*



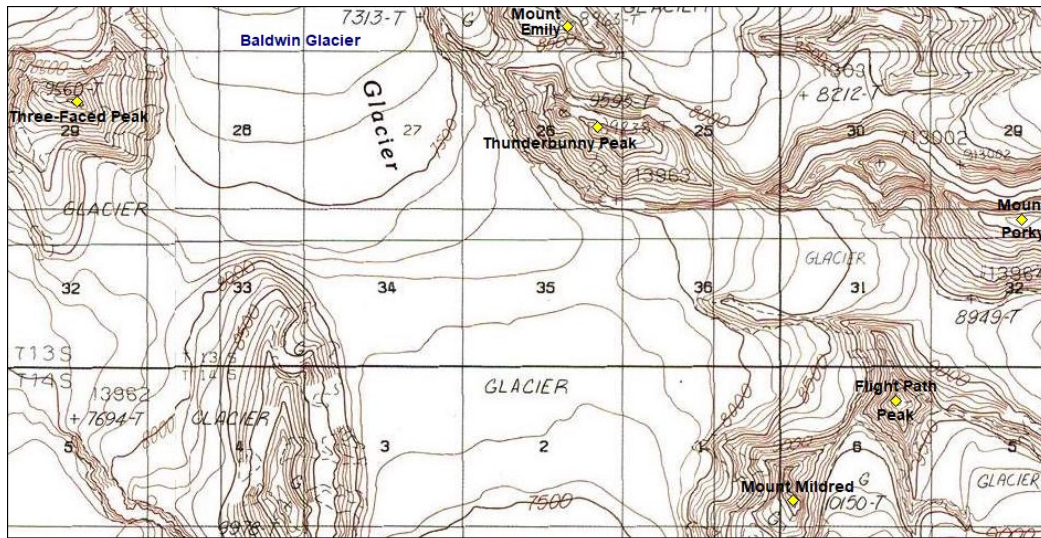
*The ice canyon of Grasshopper Valley!*

# Peaks near the Baldwin Glacier, Saint Elias Mountains

Text and photos by Chip DuRoss



60.7082,  
-141.21999

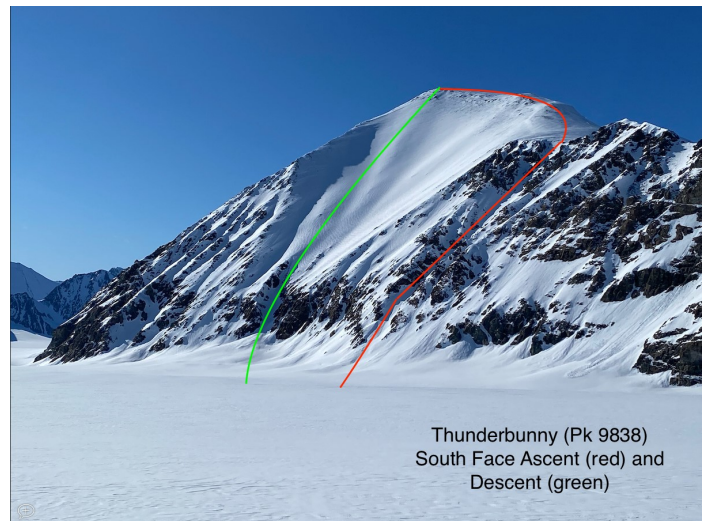


Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

Flying out of McCarthy with the legendary Paul Claus, Roland Gilmore and I (Chip DuRoss) were deposited onto the upper Baldwin Glacier on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Over the next 10 days, we experienced beautiful weather and excellent climbing and skiing conditions. I believe all of those peaks had been climbed in the past, outlined by trip reports, blogs, and oral history from Paul. However, our true excitement was sourced from the interesting ski descents we were able to make in that area. I know other groups have ski toured in the area, but to my knowledge, there have not been recorded ski descents from the summits, or on many of the ski lines we encountered. However, as Paul had preached on the McCarthy Airstrip, whether or not someone had been there before us was irrelevant to our 10 days on the glacier, in which we saw no other sign of life outside of the wayward little green bird that ended up in our tent vestibule for the night. Here is a summary of what we ended up doing:

- Ascent of Thunderbunny Peak (9838 feet) via its east ridge with a ski descent of the south face from the summit;
- Ascent of Mount Emily (8963 feet) with a ski descent from just below the rocky peak;
- Ascent of Three-Faced Peak (9560 feet) with a ski descent of its southeast face from the summit;
- Ascent of Mount Mildred (10150 feet) via the west ridge "ramp" with a ski descent of the same long ramp from the summit;
- Ascent of Mount Porky (10650 feet) that sits between the Fraser and Baldwin Glaciers, north of Flight Path Peak (10420 feet) via its west ramp with a ski descent of the south face; and

- Multiple other ski tours including: a tour down and onto the upper Fraser Glacier, a great descent down a long, winding couloir north of Thunderbunny, and a day exploring the ridgeline north of Three-Faced Peak, with great east-facing powder.



Thunderbunny (Pk 9838)  
South Face Ascent (red) and  
Descent (green)

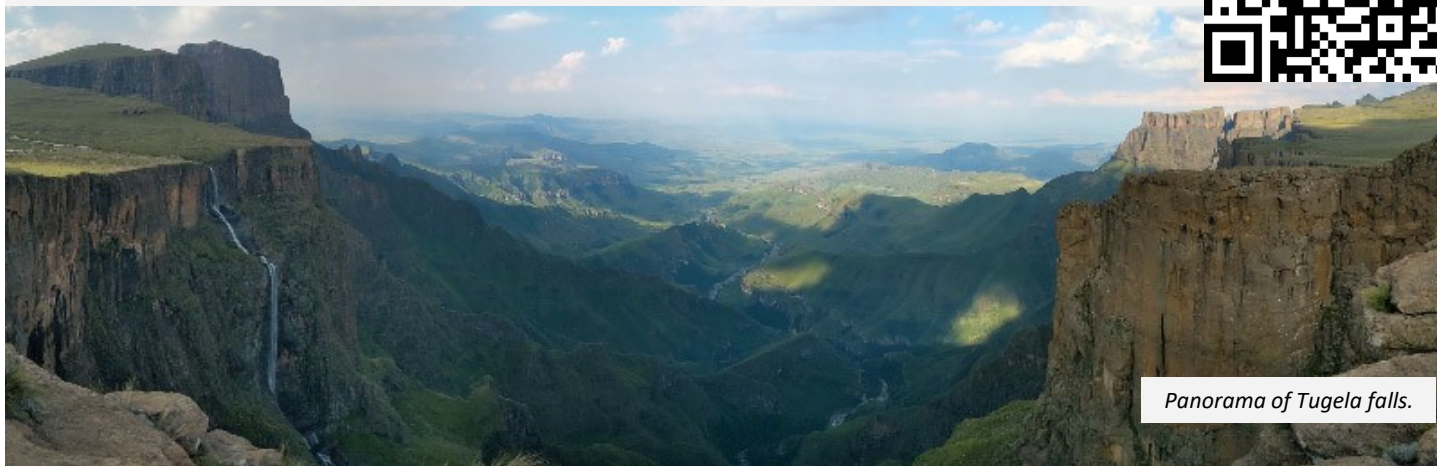


Three-Faced Peak (Pk 9450)  
Ascent of South Ridge (red) and  
Descent of SE Face (green)

## Northern Escarpment Traverse, Drakensberg Mountains, South Africa

Text and photos by Wayne Todd  
December 19-25, 2022

-28.91362, 29.06302



*Panorama of Tugela falls.*

My buddy Tim Griffin has been infatuated with the Drakensberg Mountains for over 20 years after watching a David Attenborough documentary on the South African mountain range.

With three different groups already having other Africa plans, Tim, his friends Eric Derylo and Kathi Merchant, and I meet up mid-December in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. After a shuttle by Billy, who works for Ian Shooter, we find ourselves at the northern\* trailhead for the Northern Escarpment Traverse.

The drive was already visually intriguing with greenery and blooming flowers on steepish terrain. More flowers abound, along with shy lizards, as we walk on a very good low-angle trail with glimpses of near-vertical terrain (look up escarpment). Around a corner, a set of near-vertical hanging ladders are a fun full-body jostle, even with weeklong outfitted packs.

Just after, we view the underwhelming “tallest falls in the world.” Pretty, but somehow we expected more. Across the plateau we go, toward more expansive escarpment views, and aha, the “real” tallest falls in the world (Tugela Falls, 983 meters). That is impressive, even with the lower flow rate from recent good weather.

A brief stop at a nearby hut, which we’d been warned to avoid because of neglect, finds it is occupied by a couple who have strung a canopy, which seems to work. We don’t find a definitive trail from there and begin utilizing the essential GAIA track that we’ve acquired. We also have a serious fear of mean Saint Bernard dogs that guard the locals’ cattle. No direct experience yet, but nevertheless, it’s on our minds.

At a dip in this plateau, a field of exuberant tall alpine flowers waylays us for some minutes. We take a more direct route from the track to the next ridge. There we see human habita-

tion and cattle and hear barking dogs. We beeline down and away from the humanized ridge. Glancing behind, we see a human heading our way. We increase speed, cross the mini-valley stream and keep up the pace, eventually losing our pursuer.

Daylight is waning, and despite still being in view of the hut, we accept the need to camp before crossing the next ridge. And, a menacing looking storm is quickly approaching. An okay spot is found, but perhaps something up one more bump is better... It’s getting rather dark, both from sunset and dark gray clouds that are spitting thunder and lightning, very close by. Finally, in



*Kathi Merchant and Tim Griffin on the ladders.*



near panic, we all agree, Here! Tents go up amazingly fast as the sky unleashes some serious nature. The storm doesn't last long, but we've learned a few lessons already. We hear cattle bells during the night, but don't have any unwanted visitors.

The morning is clear and crisp with fog fading away from above and below, and birds chirping about. We break camp as direct sun motivates us for our journey to Fangs Cave. Descending the backside of the gentle ridge, a stream below relieves any concerns about finding readily available water sources on route. As the route approaches another escarpment edge, a tent is noted above in a slight overhang. Upward rolling clouds from below to the escarpment edge becomes one of the standards for the traverse. Up and over a couple more passes we go, with myriad blossoming flowers (also one of the trip standards).

Topping out on another ridge, we see cattle below. To avoid the man-eating dogs, we venture hard right on a very good trail. Tempting as the trail is, we know to gradually veer back to the left to stay on course. Well, we didn't quite venture left enough or soon enough, so some miles later we find ourselves back on route having completed a large backwards "C." It's been a lovely, but long enough, day so we're excited to find Fangs Cave, the first of many planned cave stays. Ascending the ridge to the cave waypoint, we make guesses as to where the cave is. As we approach the escarpment top with no caves in sight, Tim discovers via Thatch that the cave is actually down a few hundred feet on the escarpment side. The least steep access is found and confirmed by prior boot tracks to which we descend to, a rather small cave, dispersing a nearby hyrax family. Here we learn the caves are actually overhangs and a tight fit for three small tents. This is cave-ish enough that we repeatedly whack our heads on the low roof, though. Aggressive animal sounds are heard from above, not sure if they are birds or baboons.

A large spire appearing and disappearing in the swirling clouds is quite photo worthy and a reminder how steep the terrain is on the escarpment side. After a pleasant and decent weather evening we tuck, and duck, into our respective tents. Unfortu-



*The spire by Fangs Cave.*

nately, mid-night, I have the urge to visit the bush so venture out in heavy mist by headlamp on rather slick and steep vegetation. I'm quite relieved to squirm back in my bag, in the tent, under an overhang.

The morning shows no respite in the weather, so we fully don rain gear (that means tops and bottoms). 'Tis reassuring to have quality gear when it's wet and windy. The wet day passes with minor ridge crossings and the sun sporadically trying to break through, but never making a direct appearance. A long, gradual descent leads to a very picturesque, foggy bog that eliminates any thoughts of having dry feet. Horses are glimpsed nearby, as are various birds. (This was the only section where the track didn't seem to make sense). I'm getting more concerned about a serious rash on the back of my hands.

We're ready for Mponjwane Cave and we get plenty warm hiking up to it. Another smallish overhang awaits, but we're glad it's not occupied. (We see only a few other hikers the entire trip). Kathi gets occasional cell service and reports good weather for the morning, but a deluge for three days out. I discover my rash is sunburn.

Another rewarding morning with direct sun warmth draws us out to views of sun reflecting on upper escarpment above the cloud-blanketed lowlands. We dry tents and such, and make photo forays onto the nearby ridge prow. Tim's sunbrella, soon coined Timbrella, is unveiled. Various blooming flowers are a near constant joy. 'Tis so rewarding to see terrain that we "mist" (ha) on our hike up. We decide to skip the extra two-day lowlands loop, considering it's all clouded and the terrible forecast for Day 7.

After a corner and short up hike, we have commanding views of the escarpment dropping off below with a few places to skootch to the very edge. Large birds soar about. (Hiking tip: pay fairly close attention to the track as at times, the natural inclination is to follow a ridge or fall line, which may not be the correct direction.)

We opt to climb North Peak (3153 meters), which is close to the trail, so drop packs and hike up through heavily yellow-flowered fields. At a pinch point just below the summit block,



*Eric Derylo, Tim Griffin, and Kathi Merchant hiking up North Peak.*

we decide it's definitely not worth the risk of a serious fall from a short, steep, slick section. Back at our stashed packs, we snack on peanut butter in a sack—messy but tasty. The clouds/fog quickly roll in, which reinforces our turn-around decision.

Having lessened our fear of imminent death from the dogs, we drop to a creek below a herd of sheep. Well, and we didn't hear any barking, either. Using the track, we find a faint trail, as there is for much of the traverse. We encounter a very young male herder and try to communicate, but a language barrier belies any real communication. Shortly thereafter we hear a friendly adult, perhaps his father, and spy a few horses. This is a humid and oddly too-warm section with very short views. Fortunately, at the next ridge we segue to sunny weather, and normal heat. Descending leftish down this ridge, we encounter another baboon troop. They are mostly fearful of humans and after some loud barking by the leader, they traipse away.

At a ridge pass, deep parallel trails run perpendicular to our travel (perhaps from elands or cattle). We're then on a seriously good trail around to yet another scenic creek, where we decide to camp at Twins Annex Cave (TAC). After a short up hike, and into clouds, we have a steep down hike to TAC. This is a small overhang, but we manage to get three tents in there, semi-stacked. Twins Cave (not Annex), which was down and right, looked to be larger, but less protected

Another gorgeous morning greets us, so we charge devices\*\*, rinse, decide on route and Kathi arranges travel and lodging. The view out from here is of a long, green, quasi-steep, dropping valley. At our

later departure of 9:30, it's already quite warm, so we're clothed with sun shirts and hats, Timbrella, and sunscreen. Eric and Tim continue their shorts wearing with rather tanned/burned calves. We're skipping the technical Bell Traverse for the more assured Contour Path. This descent is splendidly scenic, but very steep and rough. We make only about ½ mile an hour, but reward ourselves with dips in a rare natural pool along the cascading creek. The trail decline abates but we still pass through various vegetative zones, with even more different blooming flowers, and occasional brightly colored birds.

After the last crossing of uMlambonja River, we ascend a most steady gradual incline for some miles, passing over numerous ridgelets. This trail is the antithesis to our earlier descent trail. The knees are thankful. More baboons are encountered and a lone eland walks the trail ahead. We gamble where to fill water as to what will be "the last stream." A minor annoyance is the prevalent stiff grass, which bends onto the trail and is quite poky on the legs and face. A major bonus is we've had almost no annoying flying insects the entire trip.



*The very gradual, good-on-knees trail.*

When we intersect the Cathedral Peak Trail, we set camp, with water carried from the almost-to-last stream crossing, with views below of mellowing terrain. I'm not the only tired one. I relish my freeze-dried spaghetti du jour. Another good oddity, Tim and I are still on our first 4-ounce fuel can, despite boiling water at breakfasts and dinners, and at about 10000 feet (Day 7 we barely start on a second can). The Jetboil is quite efficient. At bag time, a large brown grasshopper stares at me from inside my tent. After some antics, it is vanquished outdoors. A

pleasant star-filled sky awaits with just hints of human lights in the distance for nighttime enjoyment.

With warm temperatures before our pre-8 a.m. departure, this looks to be another hot (by Alaskan standards) and sunny day. As we hike toward Cathedral Peak (3005 meters), flowers and butterflies dot the trailside. A short, steep section plops us out on a plateau with views of Cathedral Peak. Yikes, it looks foreboding and seriously steep. As we approach it, a few omens present: Eric has a serious headache, Tim gets a nasty something in the eye, and clouds start swirling around the summit block. Despite this section looking drier, we still cross a creek.



Cathedral Peak.

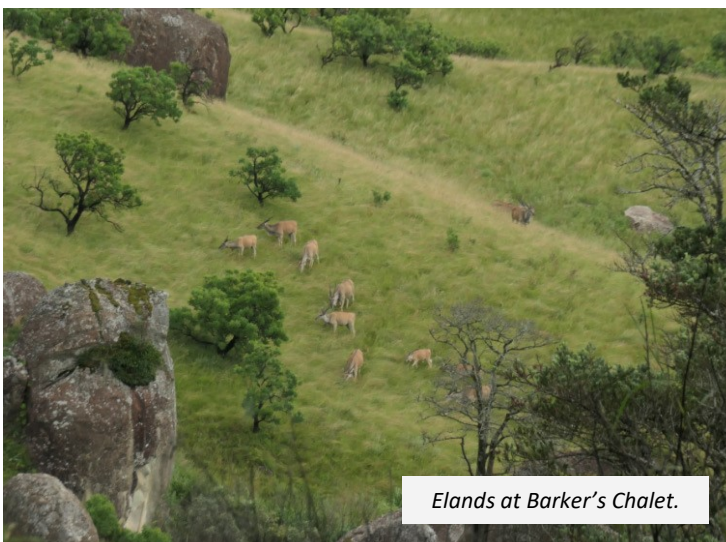
At the start of the summit trail, a steep, wet section causes Eric, who's known as a gecko on steeper terrain, to pause. After safety rationalization, we decide to abort summit attempts, so hike up the close by Bugger's Gully. There we have a long, relaxed yack and snack. As we descend the gully, I notice a rock bench that segues to terrain above the wet spot. From there, the terrain above looks drier and less steep. With yelling for communications, I continue on, not sure who else is coming. I see at least two continuing to

descend. I discover a very good trail, but still a few wet places on sloped rock. Not wanting folks to wait for long, and the weather still a bit ominous, I move as expediently as possible. After a quick summit gander and photo op, with large birds soaring very close by, I descend in haste to find Eric loping up. After an unplanned slightly alternative descent route, we reunite for the return hike to grasslands camp, under returning pleasant skies.

But alas, we have more terrain to descend as tomorrow's threatening weather forecast is a good motivator. So down the grassy ridge trail we go, with more baboons, and a lone eland (the same ones?). Sherman's Camp actually has an inhabitant, plus it's in the shade, so we camp trailside on the ridge above, close to yet another lovely stream.

After bag nestling, I see frequent mini-flashes of light on the tent, but no sound. One ridiculous thought is, *there are many folks passing by with headlamps*. Poking my head out of the tent, at quite some distance, I see extremely frequent lightning. "I'm glad it's way over there," as I view the stars above.

After a few hours of sleep, I awake to increasing bouts of wind. Each round is windier than the last. As concern for tent integrity grows, and accept it's time to gear up for a vacate, I hear Tim telling Kathi and Eric the same. When bracing my tent against the wind, I then prep more expediently. The inevitable flashes get rather close, now with sound, along with rain and pro-



Elands at Barker's Chalet.

Panorama of the area by Barker's Chalet.



longed high winds. We're packed up within minutes, and by headlamp, descend the trail off the ridge. The trail hiking is actually fairly pleasant out of the winds, except for myriad insects darting for the headlamps and hitting the nearby eyes.

We briefly overshoot Barker's Chalet, backtrack, and hike to an overhang. By then the weather has abated and light is returning to the sky. We have a good breakfast, quasi-dry out and Tim spies a large herd of elands, so we're entertained for a bit. We learn some of the sounds we've heard are elands, not baboons, though we did see numerous troupes of baboons. The terrain is fairly verdant, with large rounded boulders about, with a smattering of isolated trees (i.e., quite scenic).

Something seems slightly incomplete, though, so we continue on this short trail to the "real" Barker's: a cove large enough for numerous tents tucked in behind trees, and a waterfall cascading above the tent sites. Dang, that's the place to camp. After mini-exploring, the weather again warrants rain gear, so we head down for the Cathedral Hotel. The trail is good, but a bit slick with the rain. The uMlambonja is now a river which we need to cross. At a likely spot, we ford relatively safely.

While waiting for our pick up by Ian, we have a very nice Christmas lunch at the hotel while getting glances by the hotel guests. If only they knew the scenery and adventures of our last week. Driving away, a deluge unleashes from the skies.

Trip participants: Tim Griffin, Eric Derylo, and Kathi Merchant

Shuttle company owner: Ian Shooter. [Drakensberghiker.co.za](http://Drakensberghiker.co.za)

\*Our original plan was to hike south to north for various reasons. After chatting with Ian, we learn going north to south is the standard. One reason, you only gain about 2000 feet the first day, as opposed to 5000-6000 feet, and the overall gain is less, etc., etc. His company offers shuttle, lightly-guided trips, and highly-supported trips for this area.

\*\*I purchased a \$25, 4-ounce solar panel for the trip, which worked amazingly well.

We averaged around 10 miles and 2000 feet of elevation gain per day.

Kathi Merchant, Tim Griffin, and Eric Derylo above the Escarpment.



## Peak of the Month: Ram Mountain

Text by Steve Gruhn, photos by Chris Kerth

**Mountain Range:** Aleutian Range; Neacola Mountains

**Borough:** Lake and Peninsula Borough

**Drainages:** Emerson Creek and Turquoise River

**Latitude/Longitude:** 60° 43' 33" North, 153° 49' 23" West

**Elevation:**  
6530±30 feet

**Adjacent Peaks:**  
Peak 6620 in the Turquoise River drainage, Peak 6530 in the Emerson Creek drainage, and Peak 6485 in the Beatrice Creek and Turquoise River drainages

**Distinctness:** 480 feet from Peak 6620

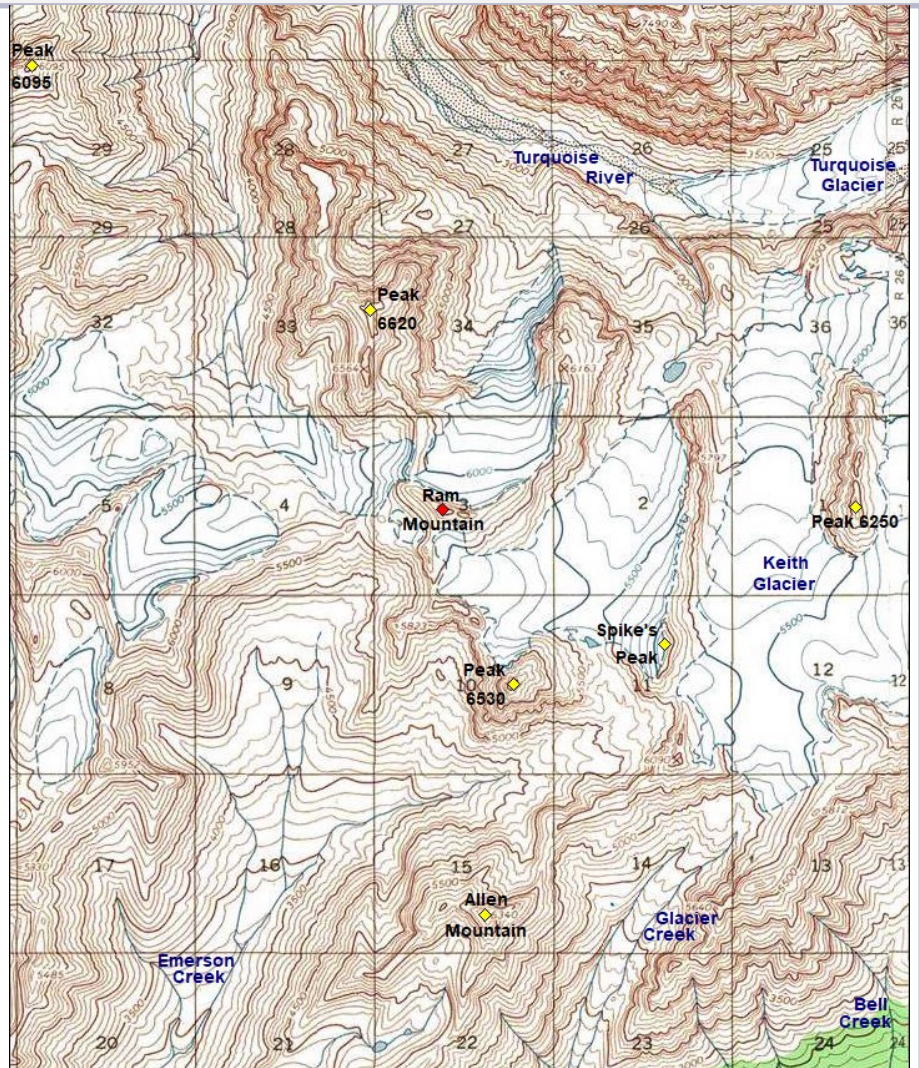
**Prominence:** 480 feet from Peak 6620

**USGS Maps:** 1:63,360: Lake Clark (C-3), 1:25,000: Lake Clark C-3 NE

**First Recorded Ascent:** July 22, 2019, by Chris Kerth and William Kerth

**Route of First Recorded Ascent:** From the Turquoise River via the unnamed glacier on the peak's southeast aspect

**Access Point:** Telaquana Lake



In 1962 Gale H. "Spike" Carrithers brought Richard L. "Dick" Proenneke to his cabin at Upper Twin Lake. Proenneke subsequently returned several times to vacation at Carrithers's cabin. In late March 1967, Proenneke began to set down roots by locating a suitable site for his own cabin and cutting logs for the following year's construction of that cabin, where he hoped to live out his retirement years. Proenneke kept journals throughout his stay at Upper Twin Lake and documented his observations of flora and fauna, as well as his descriptions of his daily activities and the unofficial names he used for geographic features in the area. Those journals were later compiled and published into several volumes.

In 1973 Proenneke's friend Sam Keith edited and published the first volume, titled One Man's Wilderness: An Alaskan Odyssey, which covered the journal entries from 1968 and 1969. After Proenneke complained that Keith had embellished some of the content from Proenneke's journals, John Branson compiled and edited the first seven years of Proenneke's journals into a 2010 volume titled The Early Years: The Journals of Richard L.

Proenneke, 1967-1973. That volume was essentially a reprinting of Proenneke's journals. Other volumes of Proenneke's journals were subsequently edited by Branson and published in a similar manner.

Among the unofficial names of geographic features that Proenneke reported was the name Ram Mountain for a summit near the head of Emerson Creek (the stream originally called *Ts'izdlen*, meaning "flows straight," by the Dena'ina). The summit to which Proenneke referred was actually a 5823-foot point on the south ridge of the 6530-foot peak. It is possible that Carrithers or someone else was the source of the name Ram Mountain, but the earliest written record of that name appeared in Proenneke's journal entry for May 14, 1967.

On July 20, 2019, Lake Clark Air flew Bill Kerth and his son Chris Kerth from Port Alsworth to Telaquana Lake, where the Kerths began a hike to Twin Lakes. En route they climbed Point 11 (5580 feet) in the Trail Creek drainage. They then descended to Turquoise Lake, camping on the northeast side of the mouth of the Turquoise River on July 21.



*South aspect of Ram Mountain (right) from the unnamed glacier that flows to its southeast.*

The next day they descended Emerson Creek to a point where they could access Camp Creek, which they ascended and placed a camp near 3400 feet. From that campsite the Kerths climbed Peak 5720 northwest of Wrong Pass and Peak 5550 south of Wrong Pass. After placing a camp on the south side of the Connecting Stream near the mouth of Upper Twin Lake, the Kerths climbed Fashion 2-20 Mountain (4420 feet) in the Beech Creek and Dry Creek drainages and Peak 5330 in the Beech Creek and K'dalghektanu drainages. They then pack rafted the length of Lower Twin Lake and the Chilikadrotna River from Lower Twin Lake to its confluence with the Mulchatna River. They floated the Mulchatna River to the Marabou Landing Strip, downstream of Springway Creek and upstream of Keefer Creek. Lake Clark Air picked them up from the Marabou Landing Strip on July 30 in a wheeled aircraft, returning them to Port Alsworth.

On July 22, after crossing the Turquoise River, the Kerths ascended the unnamed glacier east of Ram Mountain, following the northern edge of the glacier as it curved westward and then northward to the summit. Chris Kerth described the portion between the top of the glacier and the summit as an easy scramble from the south. The Kerths descended Ram Mountain to the base of an unnamed pocket glacier to its southwest, where they camped at a small proglacial lake.

I don't know of a second ascent of Ram Mountain.

The information for this column came from Keith's 1973 [One Man's Wilderness](#), from Branson's 2005 [More Readings from One Man's Wilderness](#), from Branson's 2010 [The Early Years](#), from Branson's 2016 [A Life in Full-Stride](#), and from my correspondence with Chris Kerth.



*Above: View to the south from the summit of Ram Mountain, showing the route of the Kerths' ascent via the unnamed glacier to the southeast. Peak 6530 is in the foreground at left and Allen Mountain is to the right of that in the mid-distance. Upper Twin Lake is in the distance.*

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 31, 2023, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at 500 West International Airport Road, Anchorage

### Roll Call

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

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

Scribe: Donell

### Announcements

- Welcome new *Scree* Editor Amy Coleman.
- Still looking for a Vice President for the club.

### Financial report

- Financial report is on budget. Nothing exceptional to report.
- Eventbrite site up and running for refundable deposits for trips/training.

### General Membership

- Discussed membership numbers, ways to determine out-of-state members and ways to retain/renew current members when memberships expire. Discussed ways to encourage more members to sign up for auto-renewal.
- Gerrit took an action item to check if prompts are being sent to members when it's time to renew, and after looking at the website, it appears it should be working.
- *The Scree* has a difficult process to send out to members (Scott is still looking into scripts to help automate this process).
- Heather will post Solstice hike reminder on Facebook.
- Scheduling of summer barbecue for July 29th at Palmer Ale House with possible hike beforehand. Music starts at 7 p.m. Gerrit will be there.
- Mid-August hike somewhere or MCA night at the Alaska Rock Gym event Andy can ask Eric Wickenheiser.
- Heather will update July calendar events.

### Huts

- Need to pay hut leases in July.
- Scott has access to wag bags for huts.

### Trips\ Training

- Bi-weekly Tuesday and Thursday climbing meetups for families with Marcin Ksok; Matt will email him and ask for his proposal.
- Gerrit to send notes to Matt and Matt will reach out.

### Speaker\Outreach

- General membership meeting speakers covered through September.
- Zoom meeting will be scheduled with Valdez people to discuss Valdez chapter of MCA.

### General Discussion

- Discussed order of operations for paid position and developing a job description and submitting it.

### Time and Location of next Meeting

- Board Meeting: Wednesday, August 30, 2023. Location 500 West International Airport Road, Suite A
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Location BP Energy Center Birch Room

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Gerrit Verbeek [president@mtclubak.org](mailto:president@mtclubak.org)  
Vice-President Rebecca Marks [vicepresident@mtclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtclubak.org)  
Secretary Donell Irwin [secretary@mtclubak.org](mailto:secretary@mtclubak.org)  
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Director 3 (term expires in 2023) Scott Parmelee [board@mtclubak.org](mailto:board@mtclubak.org)  
Director 4 (term expires in 2024) Andrew Holman [board@mtclubak.org](mailto:board@mtclubak.org)  
Director 5 (term expires in 2024) Matt Nedom [board@mtclubak.org](mailto:board@mtclubak.org)  
Director 6 (term expires in 2024) Tom McIntyre [board@mtclubak.org](mailto:board@mtclubak.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@mtclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtclubak.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@mtclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtclubak.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: Peter Taylor, [membership@mtclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtclubak.org)  
Hiking and Climbing Committee: *Vacant*—[training@mtclubak.org](mailto:training@mtclubak.org)  
Huts: Scott Parmelee or [huts@mtclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtclubak.org)  
Calendar: Lexi Trainer  
Librarian: Gwen Higgins—[library@mtclubak.org](mailto:library@mtclubak.org)  
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Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.io/g/MCAK>.

*Windy summit approach to Mount Goode. Photo by Travis Powell.*

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