

SCREE

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Mountaineering Club of Alaska
Box 2037
Anchorage, Alaska
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The next meeting of the Mountaineering Club will be held on November 18, at 8 p.m. in the Willow Park Hall. Hank Kaufman will show his photographs that he took on his climb of Pickersham Hall last day.

And do not forget the film on the same subject, SKIS OVER MT. MCKINLEY, narrated by Hans Gaoser personally, which will be shown November 22 at 8 p.m. in the Roving Mill Auditorium. This movie is sponsored by the MCA. Anybody wanting to sell tickets, contact Gregg or Hank Kaufman at A 22200. This is work phone for both. Tickets sell for \$1.90. And of course, we will all be there.

Our new Board of Directors was elected at the October meeting. President: Gregg Erickson. Vice-President: Dave DeVoe. Secretary: Vin Hoeman. Treasurer: Marie Lundstrom. Board member: Rod Wilson. 2nd Board member: Tony Bockstahler.

At the November meeting we will elect a new board for the Alaska Rescue Group - see separate announcement. Do not forget that MCA memberships are now due! If you haven't paid by December, you will not get the January Free. You may mail dues to the address given above.

FIRESIDE CLIMBING SESSIONS will be held throughout the winter. The next one will be held November 29 at Large Prescott's place, 400 - 11th Ave., Apt. C. at 8 p.m. For any consecutive FIRESIDE's call Gregg or Large or Dave DeVoe, or check at an MCA meeting.

MONTANA PEAK - 6950 ± 50' September 21, 63 by John Samuelson

According to Vin, this mountain has been attempted twice before by MCA members, in 1960 and 1961. Both attempts were made via the Little Susitna River valley and ended in climbs of other peaks for lack of time. After a look at the map, we decided this route was too long and vegetative, so we planned a side door approach.

Friday evening, Vin Hoeman, Cliff Ellis and I drove up the Willow Creek Road to the Fern Mine Road and then to where it forks. We drove the right fork as far as possible and walked the remaining half mile to its end, arriving about 9:30. We spent the night on some old mattresses in a mine shack, and at 6:30 a.m. we were off again. Eating our fill of blueberries along the way, we made good time through boulder strewn meadows along Reed Creek. Soon we found ourselves at the lake at its head. A 1000' talus climb brought us to the top of a 5400' pass overlooking the first of three glaciers we were to cross.

On the glacier we could see the remains of an aeroplane, and found it to be a four engined military plane, almost buried in the ice. We proceeded across the glacier which was very smooth and covered with six inches of new snow, then up to another pass, and down onto another glacier to its snout where we made camp at 4600'. It was 11:30 a.m.

After lunch we crossed the glacier coming off the west side of Montana Peak. We followed the north side of this glacier to the north-west ridge of the peak itself. At 6500' on the ridge we topped a point and got a good look at the peak. From where we stood, the rest of the way appeared steep and exposed, and in spite of the clear skies and warm sun was frosted with about 5" of snow. After some scouting we chose a route up the west face. We descended to the glacier and roped up for the remainder of the climb. We crossed a bergschrund and started up the face which was a mixture of broken granite and snow, a little steep, but easy except for some loose rock. We reached the summit ridge about half a rope length from the top. One belay, because of snow and exposure, brought us to the summit at 4:40. We found no signs of previous climbs. After building a small cairn and leaving a register, we started back down, recrossing the bergschrund just as the sun set. We reached camp at 7:15 with the northern lights blazing furiously overhead.

THE GREAT 7 PEAK TRAVERSE - BIVOUAC TRIP (fizzle) July 4 John Bousman

A plan of great ambition was formulated in the narrow minds of Lloyd Morris and myself to include a traverse of 4 Suicides and 3 O'Malleys with a minimal bivouac when tired (down parkas). With this we left the last homesteader's cabin on Rabbit Creek on the evening of July 3, proceeding across Cluga Creek (near the site of the June ICA meeting) and up the ridge south of Suicide Peak. At midnight, about 700 ft. below the summit, a bivouac was selected whose comfort can only be matched by tilting one's bed 13 degrees and filling it with ice boulders, then applying water at frequent intervals. Simultaneously we decided we either were refreshed or couldn't stand it any longer (depends on whom you ask), so we set out for Suicide #1.

4 a.m. found us on top of this monstrosity, deciding which register (I assume there are only 2) we would sign. I bet no one else has ever been foolish enough to arrive there so early - another first for us heroes! At 6:30 we sat on N. Suicide Peak cooking soup (ha, no one's done that either) and talking one another out of the truly horrible looking ridge leading over to Suicide #3 (south power pass peak). This was decided upon in mutual terror, so down the snow gulley we went - headed home. Ice axe belays worked superbly. The weather improved the farther down we got and after a short nap in the lush meadows of Rabbit Creek we stopped in to visit the last homesteader who, despite the belligerent attitude displayed on signs, treated us to beer and good conversation... true hospitality.-- A lovely trip. And we made it home and to bed before noon... another first!

RAGGEDTOP MOUNTAIN

October 13, 1963

by Zelja Bading

When we reached the top of Raggedtop - one of its many 'rags', that is - Gregg, drowning the howling of the wind, howled into my ear: that's one Vin didn't take, though he tried. It made me feel even better. Having been laid up all summer I had felt like climbing anything at all, even in the midst of a snowstorm. And that's exactly what I got into.

The start that morning was a bit delayed. John Bousman and I waited for Gregg, our third man, for almost an hour (the usual performance). Then, halfway down to Birdwood, the VW developed carburettor ice (no kidding) ! But John was prepared and soon we rattled on. Several hunters with guns in their arms strolled around the 'broken bridge' 8 miles past Birdwood. It made me realize there are certain dangers inherent to climbing.

Head-on we entered the brush at 8 a.m. When we left the brush we dove into the devils club, when we left it the alders began. But there was no more foliage and the grass is all washed down this late in the season, so it wasn't too bad. Soon we ambled uphill above timber- and brushline, with the sun shining warmly onto our sweating backs. Frequently we stopped to admire the view as it broadened. We were right across from the often-climbed peaks of Summit and Goat Mountains, all clad in their first white robe of winter.

But the weather, driving up from Turnagain Arm, was faster than we. Before we could get to the ridge proper we were enveloped in clouds and the cold wind forced us to don parkas, hats and mitts. Soon we were in snow up to our knees... fluffy and dry it was. The descent from one of the small peaks along the ridge proved difficult. New snow over ice-coated rock. The whiteout kept us guessing as to what awaited us below should we slip. Gregg went ahead. He hollered, "I'll glissade", and off he went -- with John and me following in exactly the same manner as our feet involuntarily slipped on the ice and we just 'came off'. Of course, that's what had happened to Gregg also. A pile of cold snow down in the notch cushioned our arrival.

Lunch could have been a miserable event amid the howling winds and driving snowflakes. But I pulled a gay-colored bivouac sack out of my pack and we all crawled under, sitting on our packs. No sense roughing it! Filled with sardines and water, we climbed up the ridge as the snow deepened and visibility shortened to several inches (+- 100). Shortly before one o'clock we reached the most prominent one of the 'rags'. Its

a full 15' shorter than the highest peak, but I proclaimed it the top. With our ice axes we pried a bunch of rocks from the icy slope to build a cairn; and we even inserted a summit register. As we turned to leave, the full fury of the wind was upon us. Snow pellets stung like a thousand needles. At times we had to turn our backs to it, to wait for a lull. At one point, Gregg slipped and sped downhill, but caught himself after about 15 feet or so. It went so fast, none of us saw the spectacle, so we have to take his word for it.

Once out of the cloud, the going was speedy. But the wind was cold and we didn't feel like stopping. By 3 o'clock we reached the road again and managed to sneak through the 'armed' forces without being hit.

And its a good thing FLAT TOP has a top that's flat ... quite a crowd congregated up there on Sunday, October 27. Latest count was 16 hikers, +- one or two, with another 3 or four climbing ROUND-top; some were even seen skiing the snowdrifts between black rocks. Conversation was such; and what is YOUR name? pleased to meet you. ^ABlack Tail Rocks (?)

Not a cloud hid the country from our view and thousands of peaks greeted us; many of them 'old' friends and many more waiting for a climber's footprint. We stood on top in the chill breeze and relived dear memories of great climbs, and made plans for new adventures.

A day of perfection! We ended it while sipping coffee in the magnificent house of Dr. & Mrs. Bach, experiencing another glorious, glowing sunset the way they come only in Alaska. A last ray of light tenderly brushed Denali's head before it sank into the cold, grey mist of the coming winter. And then the "earth sank into darkness and the universe appeared" (Nancy Pennell) ... such peaceful beauty will long be remembered.

JOHNSON'S PASS

October 12, 1963

by Marge Prescott

Just a walk in the wet woods and grass by four people and one dog: Marie Lundstrom, Joan Groom, Helen Wilson, myself and Jettie, the dog. The weather was rainy, but we started out on the old mail trail anyway. Its just across Granite Creek Bridge on the left side of the highway. After driving a few miles, we came to a river and noticed several buildings on the other side. They were locked tight, but apparently occupied. Searching the river for a suitable crossing, we found a windfall, but had to do a bit of 'bridge-construction' before able to cross. After lunch we started back for the cars ... a little wet, but glad for a nice little trip in the fresh fall air.