

SCREE

Editors: Helga Bading &
Marge Prescott, Box 2037
Anchorage, Alaska
Vol. 6, No. 19(2)

Mountaineering Club of Alaska
Box 2037
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
July, 1964

The next MCA meeting on July 20, 1964 will be held at AMU at the usual time, 8 p.m. We are featuring the rock climbing school (see below), show slides of the Peril Peak ascent and talk about safety in the mountains. All persons interested in the climbing school are urged to attend and register. Memberships available.

ROCK CLIMBING SCHOOL

July 20 - Registration: To be eligible, persons must be MCA members and must sign a liability release.

July 27 - Introduction: 7:30 p.m. at AMU. Introduction to the course and equipment. Available for purchase: Manual "Ropes, Knots and Slings for Climbers" at club prices.

Aug. 8/9 - Rock School: This will be held at the south east end of Eklutna Lake. Camp at the new BLM campground about 2 miles from the lake. School will be held on the rocks near snout of Eklutna Glacier.

Details for transportation, list of clothing and equipment, etc. at the July 20th meeting. The school will cover subjects listed below, though not necessarily in this order. There will be demonstrations followed by practice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Climbing free | 2) The climbing rope |
| a) walking and route finding | a) what it is made of, uses, sizes, length, strength |
| b) Hand and footholds | b) Never step on it! |
| c) Balance | c) Coiling it |
| d) Counterforce | |
| 3) Knots and Slings | 4) Rope team climbing |
| a) Types: over-handed bowline, bowline on a coil, middleman's-butterfly- square and others. | a) when to rope up |
| b) How to use the knots | b) traveling in unison |
| | c) when to belay |
| 5) Belaying with the rope | |
| a) Belay positions | |
| b) Rope handling | |
| c) Signals | |
| 6) Rappeling | |
| 7) Survival and First Aid - general concepts | |

MCA CABIN CONSTRUCTION TO GET UNDERWAY - EKLUTNA GLACIER

After a winter of anxious planning, hard work, and frustration our Eklutna Glacier cabin now appears destined for at least partial completion this summer. Inspection of the site earlier this spring revealed that during the winter our plywood had either been shaken or blown off its perch 400' above the site and, for all practical purposes, lost on the glacier below. The pre-cut beams and joists, however, survived; with these we intend to start construction over the weekend of July 18/19, continuing the 25th and 26th. Anyone interested in lending a hand over these two weekends, please contact Paul Crews at BR 58661 or FA 23643; or Gregg Erickson at FA 2-1378 after 6 pm. Required will be normal summer camp gear, crampons, ice axe, and a minimal amount of ice experience. If you are in doubt about your experience, give Paul or Gregg a call.

THE BOARD OF GEOGRAPHIC NAMES has accepted all names proposed by MCA with the exception of Rook Mtn. The names were published in the December 1963 issue of Scree

SNOWBIRD CABIN TRIP

June 13

by Marge Prescott

Seventeen people turned out for the hike to Snowbird Mine which is located west of Little Susitna Lodge and East of Independence Mine. Julius Moor had offered the MCA a cabin near Snowbird Mine and the purpose of the hike was to look it over.

Since there was a big washout near Little Susitna Lodge we left the cars and hiked about six miles along the old mine road. The cabin is at its end with a good stream nearby. It has a living room-kitchen, a bedroom and an attic as well as closets. It even comes equipped with stove, sink, "hot and cold running water", "electricity", "bed" and "easy chair" and a good clean-up will put it in good shape for use by MCA members.

The cabin gives easy access to Montana Peak and was used by Vin Hoeman and party last year when they made this climb. There are several other peaks in the area, one over 6000', as well as good hiking country.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: July 18/19 - Clean-up party at the Snowbird Mine cabin, rain or shine. Bring rags, cleanser, broom, mop and pail, food and overnight gear. Meet 7:30 a.m. Safeway parking lot, 9th and Gambell; call Marie Lundstrom for further information. (BR 80922)

MT. MARCUS BAKER ATTEMPT June 18 to 23 by Kelga Bading

The highest peak in the Chugach Range, Mount Marcus Baker - 13,176' - is often visible from our local mountains. But because of its inaccessibility it has not often been attempted. Unless one lands a ski-plane on a broad snowfield literally under the summit, a whole week of hard back-packing is necessary to get to Marcus Baker and back to civilization. Thus far, the main peak has only been climbed once (shame on us) and that was in 1938 by Brad Washburn. The lower North Peak was climbed in 1959 by Paul Crews and party, of which I was a member.

Last month, John Sousman came back to town and with him were Aaron and Ruth Schneider who had left their home near Walden Pond for a summer's climbing in Alaska and B.C. It didn't take them long to convince me to be the fourth member of a week-long expedition to Mt. Marcus Baker. I had looked over the proposed route before and the other three flew the route two days before our departure. It involved a Supercub landing at tiny Grasshopper Airstrip and then to work our way for at least two days up the very rugged lower portion of the Anik Glacier to a smooth snowfield beginning at about 7000'. From there it is still about 10 miles to the foot of the steep summit itself. We allowed 8 full days and took snowshoes with us, hoping that perhaps we would have time to climb Mt. Goode as well.

Our pilot, Dick Hamilton of Palmer, had never seen a "real" mountain climber. When he left the last passenger at Grasshopper (elev. 1200') Thursday noon he said he'd fly over us some time during the following days just to see what we were up to. It began to drizzle as we heaved our loads and slowly worked through brush and swamp onto the moraine. It looked most uninviting! We decided to cross onto the glacier ice itself ... but spent many hours zig-zagging around and over crevasses. Late at night, in pouring rain, we still hadn't reached solid ground. Instead, we travelled in a foot of slush. Snowshoes helped some to keep us above water, but when we found a spot of 'just' snow we made camp and sacked out.

At noon the next day we took off again. The rain had stopped. In June we have no problem with the light and it is possible to travel with the weather regardless of the time of day. A very crevassed area took us hours to cross and it was late afternoon when we crawled up the very steep brushy nose of a ridge that had served as headquarters for a Rescue training session in the spring of '62. At that time, everyone landed by helicopter! Ah well, stooped under my much too heavy kelly I could at least appreciate the solitude. Beyond and above this ridge we found smoother ground and wore snowshoes every inch of the way. Without them we may never have reached high camp in 4 days.

During the following two days we literally suffered our way up a gradual snowfield. We found ourselves 'surrounded' by an oven and our skin began to sizzle and lips blistered. But Aaron knew the perfect answer. I had made food sacks from old diapers and these were used to make head dresses the way Beduins wear them when riding camels across the desert. Sunday it rained in the lower Chugach, but up there we were afraid of sunstroke! In the afternoon that Sunday we had gone as far as we wanted and pitched high camp at 10,500' below a subsidiary summit of Mt. Marcus Baker. The route was clear ... up the headwall of the cirque, around the 12,500' peak, and to the foot of the REAL thing ... a 12 hour round trip, no more.

We felt tired and worn out by the infernal heat. But at night it got cold and extremely windy. Socks and boots would have frozen, had we not taken them into the sleepings bags. Monday morning we were still in a swirl of clouds, but the wind appeared to decrease and the weather below us looked promising.

At 8 a.m. we were ready to go, taking all spare clothes and socks as well as a bivouac sack. New snow had fallen and drifted deeply into our cirque. The terrain, though, was too steep for snowshoes and we left them to hold up the Logan tent. We started breaking trail through fluffy deep snow. Last in line, I dropped trailmarkers in our tracks.

Suddenly I heard a shout ... looking up I saw two figures where three should be. Ruth had disappeared into a crevasse. Later she told me she was just stepping forward to take her turn in breaking trail as she felt the snow give way. She thought it was just more soft snow yet and wanted to turn to make an angry remark ... and suddenly there was only air. An ice ledge caught Ruth before the rope did, and hit the inside of her thigh. We wasted not a minute to drop two rope-ends with loops in them, one for each foot to stand in, but Ruth called up her leg was hurt. Looking down into a crevasse that had no bottom, she never panicked a second. Instead she told us how she could best help us get her out. In about 10 minutes (they seemed very long indeed) she appeared over the rim, covered with snow. We laid her on the bivouac sack and wrapped down clothes around her. No bone seemed broken; so with help Ruth inched her way back to camp where a closer examination was made. Ruth's left leg was one blue bruise from the knee up and her muscles near the diaphragm were pulled. She was in no shape to make the long rugged trip back to Grasshopper Valley.

After tea and lunch we packed camp. The wind had stopped and again the furnace was with us. A toboggan was made, using a plastic tarp for a sliding surface. Ruth sat on ensolite and an air mattress and was tied in securely ... the arduous trip to the lower snowfield began. On snowshoes we pulled like sled-dogs, belaying from behind over the steeper pitches. Partial white-out conditions made slow going.

Opposite Mt. Goode, at 7500', we made camp. The area below is heavily crevassed and the three of us could take Ruth no further. We planned to leave Aaron and Ruth camped her with 4 days food and fuel. John and I would leave Wednesday morning for a two-day walk to Grasshopper and our rendezvous with Dick.

Tuesday morning was brilliant. Marcus Baker winked at us and grinned. And with Ruth resting on the air mattress and a whole day to spare, the three of us cast wishful glances at unclimbed Mt. Goode ... but then we heard the plane. Dick circled over us (the third time during the trip). With our four bodies we made an X (signal for 'unable to proceed') and then the three of us stood up, pointing at Ruth. The situation was obvious. Dick circled for altitude and started the radio. We could hear the voices through the clear air. But as he circled for more than half an hour, we got worried. (What is the signal for "go away"?)

An hour later, the Army chopper arrived. Out jumped a doctor, bag in hand. Without discussion, Ruth was snatched off the snow and placed into the bird. But wait a minute -- where are you taking her?? At last we succeeded in having them switch off the noisy wind-machine and settle down for a pow-wow. Ruth had indeed no place to go and it was best to send someone along. "We've got room for all of you", was the reply, " but hurry up, we don't have all day". So while Dick STILL circled overhead, we packed camp in haste and left the lovely spot without a chance to look back. We squeezed on top of our gear, a door fell shut -- and we soared over the terrain we had worked so hard to cross on foot. It was kind of fun, but back in Palmer we all felt dazed. Everything was unreal. We had come from 7500' to sea level in 15 minutes and the trip was over - just like that! Ruth flew with the chopper to Anchorage to see George Wichman, and we others drove the cars back to town, only to find we had made headlines without climbing the peak I had wished for years to stand on top of. But I have a hunch this was not the last "attempt" for me.

P.S. Ruth's injury was not dangerous, but very painful, and after a few days' rest in my home she was able to walk around, in a fashion. They then left for McKinley Park and B.C. Ruth writes she is doing exercises to perhaps do some moderate climbing at the end of the summer.