



Vol. 9, No. 9
July 1967
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
P.O. Box 2037
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

EVENTS TO COME

JULY MEETING...After last month's Midsummer Eve meeting on Flattop members should be in fine shape and ready for more outdoor meetings, so the July session will be a picnic at Goose Lake at 6 p.m. July 17. Bring supper and some wood for a fire. As proof that some people like outdoor...even remote...meetings, twenty-five people showed up on Flattop for last month's meeting!

BOLD PEAK, July 15-16, Saturday and Sunday. Bold climbers who want to undertake this overnight trip should call leader HANS VAN DER LAAN at 277-7525 (work) or 277-4251 (home) to find out about meeting times and places and required equipment. Trail is taken from Eklutna Lake to the high valley. Camp on grassy slopes before the stream from the dead glacier disappears into the moraines. Climb next day to col below point 5281 and climb the long NE ridge. Ropes required for each two climbers. Excellent condition assumed. Total elevation gain -- approximately 6800'.

GLACIER SCHOOL, July 29-30, Saturday and Sunday. Paul Crews, leader (272-3581, wk, and 277-4076, home). Details to be arranged.

LYNX MOUNTAIN, August 5-6, Saturday and Sunday. A nice two-day outing above Snowbird Mine. Proceed to Reed Lakes and climb 1500' up the talus to a beautiful granite area. Resembles the High Sierra of California. Leader Bob Spurr 277-4401.

GLACIER SCHOOL, August 12-13, Saturday and Sunday.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, Tuesday August 1, 1601 F Street.

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON

THE RAMP (5240') and THE WEDGE (4660') July 4, 1967 Rod Wilson

Characteristically, an MCA scheduled climb did not go to the announced goal (Mary's Mountain), but at least it went somewhere. The group was small--Lottie Kramer, John Wolfe, and Rod Wilson, leader--and the weather dubious, so we elected an easier day than the steep brush and wet rocks of Mary's Mountain. Weather turned out to be mostly sunny, and the slopes of The Ramp and The Wedge green and flowery. The route taken is as described in Thirty Hikes in Alaska, No. 4. The name "The Ramp" was added to the register at the high point and an inadequate Coke-can register placed on The Wedge. From the big notch in The Wedge, we descended a grassy gully facing south to regain the powerline road and the cacophony of holiday motorcyclists.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, scheduled for Wednesday July 5, was finally cancelled--too many executive committee members were out climbing, notably President Hans Van der Laan, who was as yet then not back from the first ascent of "Skybuster" (see Dave Johnston's article).

ALASKAN ROUTE ON MT. VANCOUVER June 18-July 3

Vin Hoeman

North America's 15th highest mountain, Mt. Vancouver, 15,800', was named by W.H. Dall in 1874. He named nearby Mt. Cook (13,760') at the same time believing it to be the higher. Both of these peaks were later used by the joint commission surveying the Alaska-Canada border as boundary peaks, but they selected the lower southern peak of Vancouver to keep this border within the prescribed 25 miles of the coast. Not until 1948 was the ascent of Mt. Vancouver attempted, and on 5 July 1949 this NW Ridge route from Yukon's Seward Glacier was completed to the highest summit by Bruce-Robertson, Hainsworth, McCarter and Odell. They did not visit the two-mile distant border summit, which remained the highest unclimbed point on the U.S. border (where it is second only to Mt. St. Elias) until this summer.

For the main climb of the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition celebrating the centennials of Alaska and Canada, this border peak was chosen and called "Good Neighbor Peak". The new USGS advance proof shows its elevation to be 15,673'. Four Canadians were chosen by the Alpine Club of Canada and four Americans by the American Alpine Club to make the climb. Thus, on 18 June Monty Alford (Canadian co-leader), Alan Bruce-Robertson, MD, (only veteran of the 1949 climb), and I (American co-leader) flew to 7000' elevation on the large unexplored glacier on the southern Alaskan side of Vancouver where we were joined two days later by Glen Boles, Dan Davis, George Denton, Les McDonald, and Ted Williamson.

We relayed supplies up the glacier to a sharp rock ridge which led up to the tongue of the steep glacier on the southern slope of the Southeast Buttress, placing camps at 10,300', 11,800' and 14,000', using about 1000' of fixed rope. After a stormy night at the highcamp we took advantage of a good day, 25 June, quickly ascending this ridgecrest from the SE with interesting but not too difficult pitches. Les and I on the first rope arrived on top an hour ahead of the others and soon left to cross the five-summitted ridge to the higher North Peak. Dan and George followed later with Monty accompanying them as far as the Central Peak, about 15,700'. So four of us made the second ascent of Mt Vancouver by a new route, then had to make the long traverse back the way we'd come. Views of the other St. Elias giants riding on a cloud sea were terrific, but it was a good thing we made our climbs this day, for we were held all of the next two in our highcamp buffeted and buried by a storm that calmed enough for us to descend to the basecamp in the following two days, but then closed in till 3 July when we were all flown out to Kluane Lake.

Other major border peaks, Mts. Augusta, Cook, Alverstone, and Hubbard have yet to be climbed from their Alaskan sides and the South Rib on Mt Vancouver a fine unclimbed mixed rock and ice route. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of our climb was the welding of eight climbers (almost none of whom had met each other before) into an effective team.

Calliope

ICY PEAK, FIRST ASCENT, 6810' June 23-24

Bob Hansen

Bill Hauser and I drove into the south fork of Eagle River on the homesteaders' road Friday night and parked at the end of the road. It was very rough going in places. Permission was granted by a homesteader to park. We hiked into Eagle Lake and camped at the far end with fresh water stream nearby. Saturday morning we left at 4:30 a.m. and went up the river and past the waterfall approximately a half mile. We went to the right up a small canyon to the alpine meadows where we snacked. It was exceptionally colorful there with hundreds of small flowers in brilliant colors. These meadows were hard to leave! We continued up the canyon over rocks and snow. We gained the col between 6810 and 6410. We went from the col to the NE ridge and on to the summit at 10:30. A cairn was built big enough to keep Vin happy. There was no evidence of previous visits. A register was left naming it "Icy Peak" because the NW face is a massive sheet of ice of very high angle. We suggest the col be named "Sheep Col" because of much evidence of sheep hair and droppings. We happily left the summit in a snow storm later turning to rain, and hiked back to camp. There we had a cup of tea, marched out to the car and drove back to Anchorage in the early evening.

SCREE

JULY 1967

MT. WALLACE

June 18

Vin Hoeman

Climbers who drive the Alcan are apt to say as they pass the Kluane Ranges bordering the great St. Elias icecap, "Someday when the weather's good and I've got time I'll stop and climb something here". Few ever find these conditions, but I had half a day on June 18 before flying to Mt. Vancouver with the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition, so I decided to do the most accessible named peak, Mt. Wallace, immediately north of Slims River Bridge at the southern end of Lake Kluane.

Barry Bishop told me as I started that Walter Bonatti did it in an hour and 45 minutes two years ago. It was a hot day and I didn't want to get too sweaty, but I did hustle right along till I discovered I'd climbed Peak 6366 SE of Wallace and would have to descend 300 feet to a pass. Perhaps Bonatti avoided this; at any rate it took me 3 hours 10 minutes. A benchmark, 7726, is shown at the southern end of the summit ridge where there is a big cairn, but the northern end is actually a bit higher and there I built a cairn and left a Tang jar register. After enjoying the fine view of bigger peaks I descended the eastern slopes in 2½ hours.

SUMMIT MOUNTAIN, 5350'

June 24-25

Bill Hague

Seven p.m. Saturday evening found Steffen Haagoe, Roger Crosby, Dave Johnson, Hal Myers and me gathering at the Safeway lot (where else?). After driving to Girdwood and up the old mine road, we parked at a convenient spot across the second bridge. Gray skies and a drizzle failed to dampen our enthusiasm as we left the cars at 8:45; an hour and 45 minutes later we arrived at the MCA cabin, drenched either from the rain or from the sweat under our ponchos.

Despite the recent clean-up, the interior of the cabin was a shambles, with food cans and powdered chocolate strewn over the floor -- the culprit probably was a ground squirrel or very strong mouse. The cabin interior was dry however, which we much appreciated. Roger and I, who were bunked on the floor, had a visit from the mouse, who took delight in running over our faces. Roger stared him down, whereupon he (or she) retreated under the stove.

Sunday dawned gloomier than the previous day, with clouds engulfing the unnamed ice-field above the cabin. Peter Vlasveld joined us at the cabin about 7 a.m. to find Hal having eggs and bacon, Steffen lighting his pipe while still in the sack, and the rest of us groaning about the weather. By 8:30 all had decided that the clouds showed some promise of lifting so we proceeded up the ice-field roping as we spotted a modest but open crevasse. The snow was wet but firm as we went up the 25° slope and onto the sloping plateau above. At the head of this plateau the clouds lifted long enough for us to see what we felt must be the summit and the northeast ridge of our objective. The ridge was gained easily on the snow revealing an impressive drop to the southeast (to Milk Glacier). A short scramble over the broken ridge brought us to the peak at 10:30 a.m. The rain commenced again and regretting that we were missing the fine view that friends and map had promised, we retreated down the wet rock of the ridge and onto the steeper snow above the unnamed glacier roping to skirt the area of open bergschrund. We reached the cabin at noon and spent a leisurely period eating and drying off. The return trip was dry and relaxing with a brief interlude at its end enjoying Julian Maule's hospitality.

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M I S C E L L A N I E

Address changes:

Dan and Jan Wolfe, 2201 South Holly, Apt. 5, Denver Colorado, 80222

Ed Fisher & Family, 7632 Wandering Drive, Anchorage, 99502

H. Ruiz Robinson, 1507 Karluck, Anchorage.

New member:

Wayne Perry, Mt McKinley National Park, McKinley Park, Alaska

An out-of-state member, H. Ruiz Robinson, along with his parents, has moved to Anchorage temporarily. They will be living in Talkeetna in the fall. Watch Talkeetna grow!

John Burns writes of his travels with the Navy. He is on a cruise of the Western Pacific for six months, and has visited Taiwan where he did some climbing, and also Subic Bay, Philippine Islands, and Manila. He will be going to Hong Kong, Japan and back to San Diego. John is now married to Nancy Beechum of Michigan.

ICE CREAM CONE MOUNTAIN July 1 - 6, 1967
("Skybuster") 8675' NE Ridge NCCS IV, F6

Dave Johnston

Climbers had been looking for some time at the jutting virgin peak 8675', the highest of the Chugach border peaks between the Knik and Matanuska Glaciers. Our view of this spectacular peak from Skyscraper Mountain in the Talkeetnas inspired Vin Hoeman to call it tentatively "Skybuster Mountain." Now that it had a reference name, Peak 8675 received more and more attention, and by the end of June, the time seemed very right for an attempt.

"How about the 4th of July weekend?" Hans Van der Laan asked John Samuelson and me. "Great!" we replied. So we sardined ourselves and six days of food into Hans' Volvo sports car and zipped up to Mile 70 on the Glenn Highway, where we jumped out to ogle this fantastic peak looming at the head of Carpenter Creek. "Is that ours?" "Must be..." "Honcho boncho! What're we doin' here?"

We pulled into Buzz Bunnell's place at Mile 72 for river wading advice. Buzz assured us wading wasn't the way. To make his point, he led us down to the gray, churning Matanuska for a look. We were convinced. "You'll need a boat, boys..." So we drove down to Buzz's friend Joe Kruscavage's place and explained our plight. Joe took us out to show us his pink plywood rowboat. "There she is. You're welcome to her. But remember, if it comes to a choice between your lives and that boat, just forget that boat."

Hans drove 5 miles up to King Mountain Lodge for Off! and hamburgers while John and I towed our "pink submarine" (we hadn't yet complete confidence in our craft) through an archipelagic maze of sandbars, islands, and shallow sloughs to the main river channel. Hans caught us there and we downed our burgers before launching forth on our maiden voyage. By the time we got our 650 lbs of bods and gear loaded, our poor craft was indeed looking quite like a submarine--we had only 2 inches of freeboard! John shoved us out in the current, and the "Vulgar Boatmen" were off, pinwheeling and bobbing down the Matanuska. From the bow, Capt Samuelson shouted commands as he set the example for shoveling water with an oar. From amidships, Hans shoveled too, but 2 oars were all we had, so I sat in the stern poking uselessly at the bottom with a tree. Luck was with us though: we soon crashed into an island and all leaped ashore to haul our boat up and around to the next channel where we set sail again. After another twirling ride, we effected our last landing in one of the river's faster eddies, just above a cute little series of rapids. We pulled our pink submarine ashore and eased down to reflect on our 2-hour crossing.

We three landlubbers felt a lot more at home on the next stretch as we wandered up among cottonwoods, "quakies" and alders on the left shore of Carpenter Creek. Among the masses of flowers, there was plenty of fresh bear sign, and as we went up, the meandering moose trails began to converge into moose turnpikes. These moose turnpikes were great (3' wide) churned up cow paths that offered almost no brush resistance. But man, did they ever see--saw up and down the hillside! At 2300' we found an aluminum prop, turned up on each end, and some battered wing struts near an old camp...this gravel bar must look deceptively smooth from the air. At 2350' we pitched our two tents and cooked supper with silty water from Carpenter Creek. There were a few sprinkles as we sat outside, but not a single bug! Good thing Hans brought that Off! We slept well after 7 map miles and 1700' altitude gain.

July 1 we put in a fairly relaxed day carrying our camp up the east fork of Carpenter Creek to the glacier at its head and up that glacier (all unroped) to 6400' on the NE ridge of our peak. As we circled our peak, from west to north to east, it played hide and seek with the clouds. The whole day was a kaleidoscope of impressive partial views: a cobweb of white couloirs on a black face, a glinting blue hanging glacier, an angry gray buttress soaring steeply only to be chopped abruptly by cloud. We were beginning to feel pretty small and uncertain. As we set up camp in a snow saddle on the ridge that night, we all agreed this was one of our most spectacular camps ever. Our Chugach compares favorably with mountain scenery anywhere. We'd covered 5 map miles and 4050' in this, our second day.

John had breakfast brewing early July 3 and we were away by 6. Hans led for 1/2 mile or more diagonally upward on the hanging glacier that clings to the right side of the ridge. He must've kicked a million ankle- to knee-deep steps en route. Often we were out of sight of one another as we traversed into and out of deep avalanche chutes on the 40° slope. Hans gained the jagged ridge crest, and John took over the labors of leading. After some gentle ups and downs over ridgetop snow humps, we were forced back onto the hanging glacier on the right side of the ridge to avoid the rough crest. I considered this section, which John led with complete confidence, to be the most dangerous part of the climb. The 40-45° ice was overlaid by 8" of snow and really called for belays. But because this section was so long, we chose to move simultaneously, each man placing complete trust in his ropemates. It's a good feeling, facing danger united. But after some 5 rope lengths' concentration on ice, it felt good to follow John up a 55° snow rib to the 35-40° snow ridge. A pitch or two on the ridge brought us to the bottom of the steep rock section. There we lunched in airy bucket seats astride the snow arete. Above, rock melted into mists; beneath, rock and snow pillars plunged valleyward like the Eigerwand.

We dug out our iron and I tried leading. A 120-foot pitch over snow and rock, protected adequately with slings, led to another sling-protected pitch in a 70-foot couloir. We 12-pointed up the 45° ice overlaid by snow and belayed astride the snow knife edge where our couloir intersected the ridge. John tied into a good 1" angle to belay me as I slowly groped a way up the third lead. Technically this lead wasn't bad, but it was very slow. To find a hold or crack we had to brush away 8"-10" of snow. Only one out of the three pins placed on this third lead was good. I can't figure out how Hans and John waited so patiently below. The climbing and the snow which fell wetly had soaked us through, so sitting still quickly reduced one to uncontrollable shivering. But I never heard a complaint as I stretched our 150' rope to reach a belay in a shallow saddle on the ridge. Hans didn't like the accommodations at the little saddle where John and I were crammed, so he led through over more snow-covered rock to a better belay 50' above. I leapfrogged by him and 20' beyond to a good flake with which to protect the next lead, and brought John up to me. Above, a narrow c40' chimney split a near-vertical band of rock. To reach the chimney, I climbed 30' of rock along the side of a shallow ice gully. Two slings over shaky chockstones offered "protection." The bottom of the chimney was wide enough to allow easy progress. The back wall was ice and offered holds to the crampons we still wore. And the side walls, though well iced, offered adequate rock holds. Fifteen feet up, I placed a good 1" angle and moved up into the narrow section. It didn't take long to figure out I'd never make it with my pack on, so I backed down, took off the pack and suspended it below me on a stirrup. With pack and ice axe dangling out of the way below, things went better. The back of the chimney was wider here, but the only good holds were on the narrower outside so we kept our bodies tucked back inside while stretching outside with legs and arms for holds. I suppose this section would be F6 under good conditions, but icy as it was, I think it was a good F7.

In poor visibility, I emerged from the top of the chimney and happily followed a comparatively gentle snow rib 50' to the level ridge crest. No more rock in sight! We must be near the summit! But as I belayed John up to me, a rent in the clouds revealed a deep, rocky notch and another, higher ridge beyond. My heart sank. "If either Hans or John suggests retreat," I thought, "I won't hesitate to agree." They arrived and looked at our situation, but said nothing. Two days later, down in the valley, we discovered that each of us had had strong thoughts of retreat. But none of us wanted to be the one to bring it up. Guys with the power of non-negative thinking--those are the kind to climb with! Hans led down into the notch and climbed a snow arete to another peak only to discover still another deep notch. So down again. It was getting dark as I kicked steps out of this notch and up the soft, more gentle snow hump. "Gads, what an endless ridge!" I was thinking. As we rounded out onto the top of the snow hump, visibility was fairly good. We peered through the gloom at the next gentle notch, then beyond to the next snow hump. It was lower than the one on which we stood! And the one beyond that was lower too! We'd made it!

MISCELLANIE, cont.

BACKPACKERS, note.... Perma-Pak foods are now available from Arctic Orchard, 9108 Glendale Lane, Anchorage, TEL: 344-2162. These are low-moisture, dehydrated foods -- fresh fruits and vegetables, also cereals, dry milk, biscuits, corn bread, and nut-and-ginger bread mix which can be cooked in a fry pan. Excellent for hiking and camping.

Thirty Hikes in Alaska is available at last. Copies will be on newsstands and at bookstores this week, hopefully. Price to non-members will be \$2.50. Price to members will be considerably less, but is not yet determined. Full particulars AND books will be at the next meeting. Callie van der Laan is in charge of handling and selling books.

The MCA-McKinley Expedition is on its way. They are going by the Muldrow route. Members are Bill Babcock, leader, Jeff Babcock, Grace Hoeman, Chet Hackney, Leo Hannan, Hohn Ireton, and Gayle Nienhueser.

ICE CREAM CONE MOUNTAIN, cont.

We shook weary hands and filled out the register Hans had optimistically brought. Without much ceremony, Hans kicked a hole in the snow near some rocks and dropped the register in and turned to lead the way down. It had been a long 15-hour fight, and we were too tired to really appreciate our victory. Besides, our game was only half played--we had yet to descend.

During the hour it took us to traverse the notches to the top of the steep rock, the wind picked up and it began snowing in earnest. We found ourselves nodding off while on belay. To continue in such a sleepy state seemed dangerous, so we dug a shallow snow cave just above the chimney and crawled in to huddle up close and shiver away the 4 darkest hours. By 0300 on July 4, I was scrounging around under the new snow looking for our first rappel anchor, $\frac{1}{2}$ my swami belt around a large block. Frozen ropes slowed us down too on this first rappel. I went down first and set up the next anchor while Hans and John descended. And so it went for 5 rappels. Hans did a beautiful job pulling the ropes down--not a single hangup! And so, two swami belts, a few slings, and one $1\frac{1}{2}$ " angle later, we began moving simultaneously down snow ridges once more. After 13 hours of descending, we crawled into our tired camp and cooked and ate and drank and slept.

Rather than try to rush back to civilization in one long tiring day, we chose to make our exit in two long tiring days. So we spent July 5 and 6 walking, wading, tree climbing, and finally, boating. It was a happy walk out except for slight apprehension about "Toe-maine poisoning" and "Athlete's Mouth" after a dirty sock fell into the cream-of-wheat water!

..About the name ICE CREAM CONE MOUNTAIN.... We had told both Buzz and Joe of our objective peak at the head of Carpenter Creek. Both knew the peak well. "Yes, that's what people around here call 'Ice Cream Cone Mountain' or 'The Cone.'" We thought over the local name "Ice Cream Cone Mountain"...kind of a wimpy name for such a majestic peak, but still, a very descriptive one. The summit icefield does look like a big scoop of ice cream plopped down atop a rock pillar. And, too, local names should have priority. Even after we've climbed it, I can't help feeling that the peak is more Buzz's and Joe's than it is ours. When you live under a peak year after year, watching its changing moods and faces, you know it, it becomes part of you, and it's yours....

Scree is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Scree staff: Marie Lundstrom, Marge Maagoe, Callie van der Laan, Carol DeVoe. Articles on trips and other material to appear in Scree should be sent to Marie Lundstrom Box 4-964, Anchorage 99503, or call 277-0846 (home) or 272-0554 (work).