

SCREE

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

P. O. Box 2037, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

June 1970 - Vol. 13, No. 6

JUNE MEETING . . . Monday, June 8 at 7:30 P.M. . . . Ben Crawford Memorial Park (rear entrance), 3rd and Eagle . . . PHOTO GALLERY - All members bring your favorite pictures mounted on large (4 X 6 etc.) boards for showing, gallery style. Photos are not limited to climbing but can be anything you want to show. Nancy Simmerman (professional photographer) will give a talk on how to take pictures, what makes good pictures, etc.

CLIMBING AND HIKING SCHEDULE

Enjoy a Midweek Break!! Go BOULDERING along the Seward Highway every Wednesday night. An enthusiastic group of people are meeting at 6:30 P.M. at the NE corner of Sear's parking lot. Bring your cameras and join the fun!!

June 6-7 (Saturday and Sunday) CROW PASS area. Peak climbed will be determined by the ability of the party. Trip will be dependent on road and snow conditions. This is an easily accessible area for families and you can limit it to one day if you wish. Leader: Carol Phillips, 272-8386 (home), or 279-6451 (days).

June 13-14 (Saturday and Sunday) LOST LAKE area on the Kenai Peninsula. Rescheduled from May 29 because of too much snow on trail. Six mile trail with excellent views of Mount Ascension (5810') and Resurrection Peaks. For those wishing to climb, Mt. Ascension rises SW of the lake. Also a good hike for families. Leader: Randy Renner, 277-6686 (days).

June 20 (Saturday) Annual FLATTOP SLEEP-IN on the shortest night of the year. No leader, just go up the mountain during the day or evening. Bring a log or two for a fire on the top at night.

June 27-28 (Saturday and Sunday) Rescheduled MOUNTAINEERING SCHOOL (Intermediate and advanced rock climbing).

June 27 (Saturday) INDIAN VALLEY trail improvement. Families welcomed. Work party will try to clear and mark trail up Indian Valley to the pass. Leader: Sharon Cissna, 277-0124 (days) or 272-0858 (home).

June 30 (Tuesday) INDIAN VALLEY trail improvement. Meet at Safeway corner of 9th and Gamble at 6:00 P.M.

July 3-5 (Friday thru Sunday) MONTANA PEAK in the Talkeetnas. This would be a second ascent. A good climb.

August 15-16 (Saturday and Sunday) GLACIER SCHOOL.

August 29-30 (Saturday and Sunday) PIONEER PEAK.

If you have a special climb you would like to try or a certain area you wish to visit, contact Chuck Pease at 752-0209 (days) or 752-6468 (nights). People are also needed who are willing to lead club trips.

There is a lot more climbing being done than the above schedule would indicate. Contact individual MEA members for more information on what they are doing. And please, please, no matter what you do, write it up for SCREE!

The Alaska Rescue Group Presents . . .

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

SURVIVAL: THE CHALLENGE TO STAY ALIVE.

Any survival situation requires proper mental control over all physical movement. Conservation of body energy and body heat are absolutely necessary. In cold areas do not sweat (wet inner clothing causes freezing.) Slow down body movements - sweating also causes dehydration. Survival in this modern age is generally a short term situation. Usually an organized search is initiated as soon as you are reported overdue. Sheltering the body and conserving energy is your greatest concern. In any outdoor situation where temperature is less than 98 degrees (body temperature) expending muscle energy, touching something cooler than 98 degrees or standing still and letting the breeze blow your body heat away -- it all amounts to loss of energy. It's you against nature's weather elements -- outwitting them, trying to conserve your body heat and energy. The seriousness of your situation will depend upon the type of weather, terrain, your physical condition, and the natural resources at hand. The survival equipment, clothing, and the resources you carry will determine how much effort you must put into an emergency situation.

MT. MARCUS BAKER

March 14-23, 1970

Bob Spurr

Expedition Members: Chuck Pease, Bob Spurr, Nick Parker, Barry Kircher, Jim Kross, Russ McInnes, Art Ward, Bob Smith, and Wendell Oderkirk.

Bob Spurr has sent the following diary-excerpted account of the Mt. Marcus Baker expedition.

Sat., Mar. 14: Attempt to fly in gets as far as Palmer.

Sun., Mar. 15: Palmer again after penetrating clouds beyond Knik snout.

Mon., Mar. 16: Finally, on Monday morning all make it to base in 3 flights. We're at 8450' on Knik Glacier - weather clear and cold. Chuck, Nick, and Bob set up tent and depart to relay food and fuel up glacier. Bob Smith, Art, and Wendell follow soon. Cache 3 days food, fuel, and equipment, including extra shovel about 2 miles up glacier, returned as lenticulars build over Mt. Goode, etc. Whiteout on return at 4:00 P.M. Snow and winds soon after.

Tues., Mar. 17: Major storm developed Monday night - raging in morning - we dig out; grows worse. Tent 2 (Bob Smith, Art, Wendell) develops rip - start snow cave, by afternoon we all start to dig - only 2 shovels, however. Transfer of gear a real hassle while storm rages. Entrance requires shoveling all night in relays every 2 hours; roof settles a foot overnight.

Wed., Mar. 18: Tents 1 and 3 (Barry, Jim, and Russ) repitch while storm rages - brace with snow shoes inside; top link of center pole broken on each tent; so we have appropriate low profile. (We commandeered food boxes for interior toilets. In tent 1, Chuck also volunteers his water bottle . . .)

Thurs., Mar. 19: Storm continues unabated - digging out required every 2 hours or so, day and night. Snow cave entrance becomes veritable mine shaft - cave roof settles continually, so then just shave it down and fill up our empty chambers. Tent 1 plays "Hearts, Tent 2 debates; Tent 3 lounges in bags.

Fri., Mar. 20: Ditto Thursday.

Sat., Mar 21: Clears early Saturday morning. Great rejoicing! Tent 3 digs cave in improved snow. Tent 1 repitches and starts another game of "Hearts." Snow cavers improve their lengthy shaft entrance. The medical members discuss Chuck's storage capacities. Art, Nick, and both Bobs look for cache without success. Ten-foot high NEA flag is nowhere to be seen. It socks in again.

Sun., Mar. 22: Lifts by afternoon. Jim, Russ and Barry fly out.

Mon., Mar. 23: The rest of us fly out this morning.

Probably the spirit of our expedition was best summarized by Barry's horizontal sililoquy "sang" one 2:00 A.M. in snow and wind: (To the tune of "Jingle Bells")

Oh, standing in the snow
With shovel in my hand,
Fighting through the night
Just to make my damn tent stand!

The snow it blows right in
And chills me to the bone.
Why the hell did I ever come here,
Christ, I want to go home!!

PEAK 6620' - A FIRST ASCENT
Anchorage D-5 Quadrangle

May 10, 1970

Grace Hoeman

When you leave Maria's Delicatessen on a clear day, cross 4th Avenue and look at the Talkeetnas, Peak 6620 is the first mountain up-valley beyond Granite Peak. It isn't quite as high, but considerably harder to get at than Granite Peak. Several people considered the climb in the past, but nobody was fool enough to get earnestly involved.

It was Easter when I decided on a reconnaissance. Drove to Granite Creek, valley of which separates Granite Peak from Peak 6620. Turned on to the trail along Granite Creek and coached Redback along on the rocky road till she gave up. Walked upstream on anchor ice, farther and farther in, fascinated with my beautiful surroundings, wildlife (lots of moose feeding on willows there), canyons and rock bluffs, sturdy icebridges which made crossing of the stream easy. Took a side valley leading to the lower southwest ridge of 6620' and snowshoed and bushwacked up. I reached 3500' by "turn around" time and realized that it was still a long way to 6620, or what I then thought was 6620'.

On the 11th of April I was back again in the Granite Creek valley. There had been much melting, but still the going was swift and safe on the anchor ice. The gullies beyond the first side valley (which is unsuitable for climbing) all look the same and I missed the nice one I had selected on my reconnaissance. Landed in a brush and steep ice battle since I was too stubborn to retreat. I camped at 2500' that night. On the 12th of April I started my attack of the southwest ridge in poor weather, but I optimistically believed things would improve. Till I reached the upper southwest ridge and was literally blown off in a nasty gale. Despite heavy clothing I got chilled to the bone in minutes; it was time to give up. I took a look at the very upper ridge and the "summit" wall through my binoculars before I left: a tricky spot just under the wall . . . but . . . I might manage. I encountered a huge flock of white tail ptarmigan that day. Their behavior is so very different from that of the willow and rock variety: white tails will suddenly fly off in silence and startle you, since you hadn't noticed them, rock and willow ptarmigans will start a frightful racket when you get upon them, then sprint hither and yon and take to the air with wild wing flaps. On the way out I was fortunate to see a few water ouzels quite close by as I rested on a boulder. They have white flickering eyelids, bob up and down continually as they watch you, and then fly off close above the water, almost screeching as they go. Their preen glands are huge, I learned, and that must be, for they pick up their food from the icy water, actually walk on the bottom of fast flowing streams, but how they manage that is a puzzle to me.

On the 18th of April I headed once more for Granite Creek - isn't it said that Dutchmen are persistent? This time I brought rope and pitons; the increased weight didn't go too well with the thinned out icebridges and I realized that this was absolutely the last weekend for the Granite Creek iceroad. I camped a bit higher up this time and found my silly Salawa quanset type tent admired by rock and willow ptarmigan, who walked and sat around, discussing the advent of the featherless two-legged one with "Krakree's" and "Ko-Ko's," seeing to it that I didn't get much sleep. Next day I reached the "bad spot" quickly in barely passable weather. The bad spot turned out to be an overhang, and it's opposite side unclimbable. There were some granite patches there and I found nice cracks for a few pitons, strung out my rope. It didn't make the exposure any better, but it was good for the soul. The wall tolerated my staircase of steps and I was confident it wouldn't avalanche. I was on top of what I considered, still, 8620' a little later, happy with my achievement . . . but, what was that ridge beyond? That peak, farther away, in the clouds? Ah, it had to be 8200', east of the summit, or???? I really couldn't tell for sure, clouds were drifting past all the time and confusing me. I climbed off the wall, after I left a register, used the fixed rope to get past the overhang, then coiled the rope and stuck the pitons back on my sling, looking back up and hissing: "bas. . .". The ridge beyond the summit, impressing like nasty shark's teeth in the cloud shreds, obtruded on my mind all the way down. At home that night I looked once more at the map, magnifying glass in hand, fitting memories of terrain to contours on the map, and I had to conclude that I had not climbed 8620' - the summit was beyond the sharks teeth. The ego balloon deflated almost audibly that night.

True to Dutch tradition I was back again on the 9th of May. I had to search for the Chickaloon Trail, but finally found the right one (close to Kings River). Bud flying, Redback gloriously made a long stretch of soggy road. I parked her near an abandoned log cabin where Young Creek interrupts the road with a good sized flow. I proceeded on foot up Young Creek. Was pinched out of the streambed by a canyon at the bend to the east. Beyond the canyon I descended back to the creekbed, and found one solitary die-hard ice-bridge, which easily carried me across the creek. Then I stayed west of the West Fork of Young Creek, used a succession of moose trails, crossed a talus slope higher up and camped just before I collapsed under my load. Next morning, it was still night, I went up valley, soon had to put on snowshoes, followed the fresh tracks of a wolverine up the pass to Sheep Valley. To satisfy those who scold me for going alone on trips, I carried a bear bell with me this time, and in Sheep Valley, as I turned north, I drew quite a crowd of parka squirrels with my melodious bell. They emerged from their holes, swayed on their hind quarters, looked, ran back and forth and finally dove back into their holes. They live there in numbers and are not bashful at all. It was still early in the morning when I turned into the valley leading to 8620'; it was beautiful weather, not a cloud in the sky. I found myself due east of the shark teeth. Obviously I had not been anywhere near the summit on my last trip. There was no avalanche activity yet, but yesterday's big untidy snowmasses and soggy snowballs were testimony of what was to come today - there was no time to lose. I left my snowshoes in the care of a cony and started up the southeast face. Of course I wasted time by going too far to the east, then gendarmes forced me back down into the face again, tedious and treacherous it was as the snow became softer and wetter. Finally I reached the broad ramp leading to the summit. Peak 8620', at last - but I dared not stay long. Left a rockweighted plastic bag in a tiny cairn and hurried down the ramp. Straight down the face, carefully playing chess with the now beginning avalanches, seeking rest and protection at rock outcrops. It was far after the noon hour when I was below the reach of the big slides. I gratefully threw the cony some goodies as I had lunch.

Anyone for 8620', by way of the shark's teeth ridge?? The register has to be moved to the summit, you know!

VISTA PEAK (5070')

May 9, 1970

Chuck Pease

By four a.m. Bob Spurr, Nick Parker and I were heading for the Talkeetnas in Bob's recently acquired Jeep wagon. After experimenting with the four wheel drive and locking over the area, we decided to make an easy climb instead of a twenty-hour hard day. Back in the Chugach we selected Vista, a very prominent peak that is easily visible from Anchorage. Driving up Eagle River we took Eagle River Loop Road and then a side road that climbed the ridge below Blacktail Rocks. A four-mile hike and we were on the west side of Vista which we ascended. An hour and a half was spent basking in the sun and enjoying unlimited views in all directions. Marcus Baker was clear and sharp to the east, including the top of Knik Glacier where we sat for seven days in March. There was a cairn, but no sign of the register left by Vin and Grace Hoeman in February 1968, so another was left.

BITS AND PIECES

LOST: (or misplaced, borrowed, or stolen:) one pair of women's lightweight hiking boots with Vibram soles, about size 9. Helen Hienhueser vaguely recalls having lent them to someone. If you know of the whereabouts of these desperately needed boots, please tell her (or return them): 277-9330.

Bob Spurr is off to the Brooks Range for 3 weeks of climbing. His new address is - Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska, College, Alaska 99701.

Dave and Sally Johnston are back in town, staying at a cabin in the Rabbit Creek area.

SCREE is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, which is affiliated with the Anchorage Department of Parks and Recreation. Editor: Liska Snyder. Typist: Marty Corcoran. Staff: Carol DeVoe, Jeanne Merrick, Chuck Pease. Please send material for the July issue of SCREE to Liska Snyder, 2806 Alder Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99504 by Thursday, June 25.