



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

NOVEMBER 1973

VOL. 16, No. 11

NOVEMBER MEETING...Thursday, November 15, 1973...8:00 PM...Central Junior High Multipurpose Room...(SAME TIME, SAME PLACE AS USUAL--BUT WATCH FOR A CHANGE BEGINNING WITH THE DECEMBER MEETING!)

MINI-SLIDE SHOW of the MCA mass assault on Goat Mountain above Girdwood...Business Meeting...Refreshments...MAIN PROGRAM: The film "Solo" the winner of Sunset Magazine's 1973 travel film grand prize, a philosophical and artistic portrayal of the life of a high-angle solo climber.

### M C A W I N T E R T R I P P I N G

Requirements: During the summer months MCA climbs are directed towards just about everyone; complete novices are normally welcomed on club climbs in the Chugach. The situation is not the same in the winter and the complete novice is only welcome on one-day ski tours. The specification of required equipment for an MCA winter climb should shed some light on this matter.

In addition to normal winter climbing clothing, the following items are required for one-day climbs: ice axe, crampons with boots to fit, two carabiners of unspecified type, ten to twenty feet of one-inch webbing, heavy lunch, at least one quart of water, day pack, skis and wax. Recommended items: Justrite battery headlamp (buy no other--can't be obtained in Anchorage buy from the Coop), double boots or bunny boots for extreme cold, a rope if you have one and would prefer not to use the Club's and last but not least, a big down parka. Over night trips demand even more and a person who doesn't know what to bring, shouldn't contemplate making the trip.

You owe the leader of a trip the courtesy of informing him that you are going to be in his party a day or two ahead of time.

### C L I M B I N G & S K I I N G S C H E D U L E

Saturday, NOVEMBER 17 -- O'MALLEY PEAK, a skyline peak, by the usual route. Leader & Meeting Place To Be Announced.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, NOVEMBER 23-25 -- SKI TOURING & CLIMBING FROM THE FERN MINE CABIN

The cabin will sleep only ten, so tentage arrangements may have to be made. The tour is about seven miles to the cabin and is one of the most pleasant to be found in the Talkeetnas. Climbs of Kiklekma, Yisbo and Kattatagona can be made easily from the cabin. This trip is suitable for climber and skier only alike. Don't feel obliged to come

for all three days. Since a trail will be broken on Friday, those who wish to tour only should find a nice trail Saturday morning and a super ski-out Sunday morning. A leader for the trip will be provided only to the group leaving Friday morning. Leader: Steve Jones PH: 272-2205. Meeting Place: Valu Mart 7:30 AM, November 23.

Saturday, DECEMBER 8 -- WOLVERINE PEAK. This is one of the skyline peaks of Anchorage. You can very nearly ski to the top of this one. Leader: John Merrick PH: 272-5243. Meeting Place: Valu Mart

Saturday, DECEMBER 15 -- PTARMIGAN PEAK. A skyline peak. Hopefully, by the gully. Skiing by headlamp in and out. Long day. Leader: Bill Barnes PH: 272-2205. Meeting Place: Valu Mart, 5:30 AM.

Saturday & Sunday, DECEMBER 22-23 -- ANNUAL FLATTOP SLEEP-IN. Bring wood & sustenance. No leader.

JANUARY -- VISTA PEAK  
PASTORAL  
TISKISHLA

FEBRUARY -- KICKSTEP. Leader: Bill Barnes  
MINT GLACIER Ski Tour

MARCH -- BYRON PEAK Leader: Bob Spurr  
MATANUSKA PEAK  
ARCTIC VALLEY-CROW PASS SKI TOUR

MORE WILL BE ADDED. Dona Agosti, Bill Stivers and Bill Barnes, Sr. are cooking up more ski tours.

CHILKOOT ADVISORY: For all hikers who intend to do the Chilkoot Trail with me next July (about the third week), required reading for the course will be THE TRAIL OF '98 by Lowell Thomas Jr. Our fellow MCA member wrote this Klondike anthology shortly after arriving in Alaska and I am ashamed to admit it took me 11 years longer to explore this fascinating piece of Alaskan history. Senator Thomas has selected some of the most informative literature for his anthology.

The second required book is THE KLONDIKE FEVER by Pierre Burton. The author is a well-known Canadian TV star and lived in Dawson City until he was 12. To give an example of Burton's thoroughness, it took him 5 years to write this book and his bibliography contains 192 authors and 46 newspapers and periodicals. I was certainly unaware of the volume of literature written on the Gold Rush until I counted the titles in Burton's bibliography. I didn't contract the fever until I drove to Dawson City this summer and meandered along the banks of the Bonanza and the Eldorado rivers. Hiking along the Taylor Highway and in the vicinity of Dawson City is good and becomes close to fascinating if you've bothered to study the history. By the way, if we find that there are Chilkoot hikers who have only two or three days to cover the trail and others who wish to meander, we'll divide into two contingents. Of one thing I am certain--I won't ever be doing Chilkoot in the winter.

-Dona Agosti-

## P R E S I D E N T ' S N

In reading past SCREEs, one is struck by the one problem which plagues volunteer organizations such as MCA year after year. The problem, of course, is the lack of volunteers. This problem made itself felt last year particularly in the area of Club-sponsored climbs and hikes. I do not expect any great change in the situation; however, I expect that this year we will have a full schedule of Club-sponsored climbs, ski tours and hikes. The activities essential to the functioning of MCA will be maintained.

While I have not yet filled all committee posts and do not expect to, our most important committee positions will be filled or at least maintained by myself. The appointees to committee posts will be announced at the November meeting, but I will take this opportunity to announce that Bob Spurr has consented to chair the Committee for Geographic Names. I am most pleased over this, as it is appropriate that MCA concern itself with naming of peaks in Southcentral Alaska, and Bob Spurr is a most appropriate choice of chairman for this committee.

I do not intend to make many changes during the year and some of the changes involve changing things back to the way they once were, as I tend to subscribe to tradition and the continuity it lends to life. Do look for a few changes.

Look to see a number of slide shows of climbs done in the Club's earlier days along with some professionally made climbing films. And look for a move of our meeting place and the reestablishment of a more intimate Club atmosphere. Look for more climb accounts and less "President's Pen."

- Bill Barnes, Jr. -

RENEW YOUR SCREE SUBSCRIPTION TODAY!

Mail your check/money order to MCA, Box 2037,

Anchorage, AK 99510. JANUARY 1st IS THE DEADLINE.

If your subscription renewal is not in by

January 1st, you will not receive a January

SCREE.

(This has been a "public service" spot announcement)

**BITS & PIECES:** Ed Coleman had a fine exhibit of mountaineering equipment in a window display at West High School. He earned credit for it in his geology class.

Sometime ago Joanne Merrick found a lens shade for a Hasselblad camera in the Hatcher Pass area. If it is yours, please identify and claim. If no one claims it, she will give it to someone who can use it on their camera so let Joanne know if you can use it.

**FOR SALE:** Brand new pair of black, Korean bunny boots. Never been used! Excellent condition. Size 11R. Army Type. Call 277-0354 after 5:00 PM.

CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 1973, MEETING

President Meacham called the meeting to order and apologized for the misunderstandings concerning the "lockout" in July and the change of location for August.

The Treasurer's report was as follows: Checking \$477.10, Savings \$168.34, Cash \$44.10.

Ludwig Ferche is interested in forming a group to do some ski mountaineering this winter. This is downhill skiing, but requires some mountaineering equipment including heavy double boots; also required are skis with cable bindings, marker toes, etc. A day's outing would include being dropped by helicopter, then spending the entire day skiing out. Sign-up sheets were provided.

Snowmachines in Chugach State Park were discussed. Division of Parks will reveal its policy at a public informational meeting soon. Maps were distributed showing that the only area closed to machines is the lower fork Campbell Creek. Ship Creek will be open. If you have any other ideas, write to Governor Egan with copies to Ted Smith and the Commissioner of Natural Resources.

PARC needs a representative from MCA. Group meets twice a month on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at noon in Student Union, AMU. They have a trails committee and Chugach State Park task force among others.

We hope to have summer schedule set up three months ahead and omit summer business meetings. In its place would be slide shows at the Museum to which the general public is invited.

We also hope to have a manual written to serve as a guide for leader of climbing schools in order that there can be continuity from year to year. It was discussed by the Board that an entrance exam be given to those contemplating attending the school which would require basic knowledge of knots and terminology before beginning the school.

Respectfully submitted, Dona Agosti, Secretary

CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 18, 1973, MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Meacham. Gil Todd, Treasurer, gave the financial report: Checking \$409.80; Savings \$168.35; Cash \$77.40.

Barbara Winkley, Conservation Committee Chairman, commended Tom Meacham for his factual and informative testimony at the Chugach State Park public meeting. She stated that it was still important to write letters to Governor Egan if snowmachines were to be prohibited in the South Fork Campbell Creek area. She also noted that the last of the wilderness proposal hearings, that involving Nunivak Island, was to take place Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Leo Hannan, Chairman of the Borough Parks & Recreation Committee, and also appointed by Mayor Roderick to the City-Borough Bi-Centennial Commission, asked MCA approval of a plan by the Borough to acquire land formerly called the Campbell Airstrip area. The 5,000 acres has been held by the BLM for the last three years and can be acquired for park use for nothing. It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed that MCA give its approval to the transfer of this land from BLM to the Borough for park use.

Tom informed the members that the Board is looking into the possibility of changing the meeting place to the Pioneer School House, and a possibility of changing the meeting night. Watch SCREE for changes.

President Meacham asked that the customary 30-day notice of election be waived. Motion was made, seconded and passed.

Elected by unanimous acclamation, with no nominations from the floor, were: Treasurer--Steve Jones, Secretary--Dona Agosti, Vice President--Gil Todd, President--Bill Barnes, Jr.

Bill Barnes took over the meeting and the following Board members were elected: Two-Year Term--Tom Meacham, Two-Year Term--Bill Stivers, One-Year Term--Joanne Merrick.

Respectfully submitted, Dona Agosti, Secretary

"CHARLOTTE'S WEBB," An Easy Fun Route on Pioneer Peak Will Cottrell

In late July, Jack Bruckner and I left at 2:00 AM to climb the central snow-filled couloirs on Pioneer's north face. We figured there would be little danger of rock fall and the spiderwebb-like snowfield would be firm for crampons. We were right. Don't get caught halfway up the snowfield in the noon-day sun or you'll wish your car had run out of gas.

The route is easy to find, it's the shortest way to the summit. After parking one block west of the old Knife River Bridge in a small turnoff, we stumbled up an old rock slide that later turned into a stream and then a waterfall. By passing the waterfall on the right, we cut through the alders and caught the stream about 200 vertical feet later. The stream led straight up to some very pleasant slab climbing (reminiscent of the Boulder Flatirons) and finally to the lowest limb of the snowfield at about 3000 feet. From there it was easy roped, but unprotected, snow climbing.

We heard a few "zings" and "whooshes" as the warmth loosened the mountain's face. Only the last 100 feet got a little tricky with slushy snow on black ice. We were amazed at our time of five hours considering I was fat and out of shape.

We descended by the standard N.E. Ridge and had enjoyable rock climbing on the spire and balanced along the north face as long as possible. Finally, we abandoned the ridge ethic and glissaded a few scree-filled couloirs. The rest is too miserable to recount. A very unaesthetic gully spewed us out about one-half mile east of the car.

I normally never write about climbs, but the fun and ease of the "diretessina" compared to the usual route would be unfair not to share.

(CHARLOTTE'S WEB is a children's story about a friendly spider.)

CROW PASS, CAMP CREEK, SHIP CREEK,  
BIRD CREEK

Bill Barnes, Sr.  
August 11-13, 1973

This trip was done by Clay Nunally, Bill Barnes, Sr. and Dick Hayak, a chap from Seattle who was a guest who wanted to go hiking with us, along with Frea, the Norwegian Elkhound.

My wife, Allegra, drove us to Crow Pass early in the morning and we left the foot of Crow Pass parking lot at 8:20 AM on August 11 and by 10:30 we were at the cabin. So we made it up in two hours. It was raining pretty steadily and so we stopped in the cabin and heated up some tea and had a bite of lunch with a couple of fellows about 18 or 19 who were going on further to go sheep hunting in the Camp Creek area. They told us that they knew the way into Camp Creek and would

guide us. So after lunch we all started out; map reference is Anchorage A6, Section No. 16.

We went down through Crow Pass traversing along the side of the mountains, covering sections 8, 5, 12, and trying to stay up high enough out of the alders. It wasn't such bad going until we got down to around Section 5 where we had to go up the side of a mountain about 1500 feet and the turf was pretty slick in the rain. I'm afraid if one of us had fallen down that we might have rolled down the grass-covered mountainside and been unable to stop. I had a fall when I stepped on a slippery rock, but didn't hurt myself at all.

You'll note on Section 32 there is a small stream which leads up to a glacier, and we found a sheen trail up about 2000 feet which led around the mountain into this valley. The valley is filled with scree and we climbed up to the top of the valley in the pouring rain. About 7:00 PM we made the last climb up a scree slope and looked down into the head waters of Camp Creek. While we didn't see much of the head waters of Camp Creek because it was full of clouds, we went down the slope across the snowfield and camped in sort of a shelf by a small lake.

The three tents were put up in the downpour and we crawled in and were not too uncomfortable. Frea, the Elkhound, slept in the tent with me and Clay. The following day, which was Sunday, the 23th, the two fellas who were going to hunt sheen remained in the tent while Dick, Clay and I packed up and went down the north fork of Ship Creek.

This is really a beautiful valley. We saw ducks in the lake which splits Sections 35 and 26 and there is a spectacular waterfall which runs down the hill. This is one of the most beautiful valleys that I have ever been in.

We continued down north fork of Ship Creek, going into the main valley of north fork of Ship Creek coming into this at probably about 2 in the afternoon and then walked west on Anchorage A7 quadrangle to Bird Creek Pass. Bird Creek Pass is easy to find and there is good trail which runs down along the side of the pass. Then we came down from the top of Bird Creek to the confluence of the one small stream of Bird Creek and got down around six o'clock at night and we were determined to walk as long as it took to get back to the bottom of Bird Creek where Allegra was going to pick us up.

Apparently, the map is incorrectly marked, because we could never find the trail on the south side of Bird Creek which is shown as marked on it and we wound up at about 8:30 at night floundering around looking for the trail. So we decided that what we'd do is to recross the river and simply stop for the night as it was getting dark and we made a campsite just by bedding down in the brush. Dick put his tent up; however, Clay and I simply slept out in our sleeping bags and it wasn't too bad as we only had some sprinkling of rain.

The next day we got up at 6:30 in the morning and came out on the 13th, arriving at the bottom of Bird Creek about 11:30 in the morning after a 5- or 6-hour walk to cover the 6 miles which were indicated on the map.

This was a great trip with the most spectacular scenery that I've seen in some time. The only thing that I would be cautious about, in thinking back on it, is that traversing across those slick slopes in the rain is a pretty dangerous thing and you should be roped up or possibly use crampons to keep you from slipping down the mountainside. Also, don't count on making much time across country where you're trying to work with a map. The trail on the lower part of Bird Creek

is on the north side of the Creek and there is a distinctly marked snowmachine crossing where there is a number of tape ribbons tied on the trees to get you across and from there on it is pretty good going.

#### TRAIL INFORMATION, 1973

D O N A A G O S T I

Here are a few updated items on trail conditions encountered during the hiking season 1973.

#### Cooper Lake-Upper Russian Trail (No. 8 in 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA)

Trail improvements were completed in 1972 and now that a hiker can concentrate on scenery rather than his feet, he will find many open vistas with great scenery along this 8-mile route. The trail now starts about one mile before Cooper Lake on the Snud Harbor Road, not at the power plant as indicated on many maps. As of September, the beginning of the trail was not marked, but I've called it to the attention of the Forest Service and expect it will be up soon. Upper Russian area shows the scars of this summer's fire, but there are camp sites available if you don't use the cabin. The log book indicates it was a popular spot for MCAers this summer. Saw zillions of sheep on the trail down from Upper Russian to Russian River Campground. They were concentrated on 4113 or Surprise Mountain as MCAers have dubbed it.

#### Russian Mountain

I have looked at the triple threat composed of Russian, Bear and Surprise from three angles--that mentioned above, from Cooper Landing and from Skilak Overlook. I wish I'd had this overview before my sons and I attempted to climb Russian en route to Surprise this summer. We crossed Russian River at its source near Lower Russian Lake. I can think of two major words to describe the trail; nonexistent and don't! If you're undaunted, here's the route: We veered far right on moose trails, all the while climbing, then switched back to a plateau at about 1000 feet which seemed to be a jumping off place for litterers, moose hunters and moose. I say jumping off because by this time we discovered that it was necessary to lose most of our altitude crossing a ravine infested with devil's club and alder. However, by peering through the jungle, we saw some moss-covered spots on the mountain above. Though we left Russian River Campground at 8:00 AM, it was 5:00 PM before we crawled onto a bench above timberline. We camped here overnight, but because the only water supply was in a steep gorge nearby, we cancelled our plans for Surprise and returned to Lower Russian--this time straight down. It was great fun jumping off moss-covered benches after we'd cleared the ravine. The descent was made in three hours.

Because I have considerable respect for the Kenai River and have been unable to commandeer a suitable boat for crossing it; my attempts to climb this trio via the Surprise Creek Trail have been frustrated for three years. I checked the water at Jim's Landing the last week in October and though it was extremely low, there were still deep, fast channels between me and the trail entrance. If there are others less chicken than I and blessed with a suitable crossing device, please contact. For information purposes, there are Class III and IV rapids just around the bend from Jim's Landing so a near miss doesn't count.



Stetson Creek Trail, Cooper Creek Trail (Near Cooper Landing, Kenai Peninsula)

I made a facetious remark about Stetson Creek last year, indicating that this trail seemed to go nowhere. After more extensive hiking in the Cooper Landing area this summer, I learned that it veers to Cooper Lake. I presume it was once a favorite for hunters and even prospectors, but it's heavily overgrown now. We again saw many caribou tracks, but no bodies.

By turning left (or south) just before the Cooper Creek bridge near the entrance of Cooper Creek Campground, you will discover an interesting short hike. Drive about a mile to the end of the road and park in the turnaround. Hike upstream on the same side of the stream, occasionally climbing up to the bank if water is high. There are small trout in the stream. About a mile upstream is a rock grotto which is a fund place for kids and fishermen as well as resting Moms. Lots of evidence of mining along this creek.

Running parallel to this road and maybe a mile nearer downtown Cooper Landing is an old jeep trail which supposedly ends at Cooper Lake. After hiking up through brush from the Cooper Creek trail for some distance, my husband and son came upon this road and couldn't believe their eyes when a small volkswagen chugged by en route to the summit.

Skilak Area (Hikes 3, 4 and 5 in 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTH-CENTRAL ALASKA)

Our party first tried the Hidden Creek-Skilak Overlook round trip described on Page 35 of 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA. We entered Hidden Creek Trail at about Mile 4.6 on Skilak Road. Upon arriving at Skilak Lake, we had no trouble locating the sign for the Kenai River Trail, but if there is a sign indicating a trail to Skilak Overlook, I was unable to find it. This is no problem, because most people would prefer the beach walk along Skilak Lake. On one of these walks, I watched a pair of bald eagles. I estimate that you can walk about 3/4 mile before rejoining the marked trail through the woods. If you suddenly find your beach walk interrupted by a rock wall, you've gone too far. Backtrack about 300 feet and find the well-marked forest trail. Or, if you're curious climb the wall and explore the cove on the other side, but be sure to return to find the trail markers. Orange diamonds or arrows point the way and the trail climbs steeply to the intersection with Skilak Overlook Trail. A left turn here takes you to the Overlook and a magnificent view from 1400 feet. Descending via the Overlook Trail leaves only a short 0.8 mile of road to get you back to your car.

Another good circuit hike is the Hidden Creek-Kenai River Trail, exiting from this trail at Entrance No. 2 about 2.5 miles in on Skilak Road. This is a good hike if you're camped at Hidden Creek Campground because it eliminates need for parking cars at trail ends. If you're lazy, get a ride for the 2 miles from Hidden Creek Campground to the trail entrance. Then you will have about a 2-mile walk when you exit from the Kenai River Trail.

Just before reaching Skilak Lake on the Hidden Creek Trail, you will see a brown and gold Kenai River Trail sign off to your left. 180 paces northwest on this trail, you will find a fork which in October, 1973, was still unmarked. Take the left fork to the Public Shelter Cabin. If any of you have read Ada White Sharple's "Two Against the North" which describes their homesteading on Skilak Lake, I think this



is the river cabin to which she frequently refers in her book. She spent many hours here waiting for the wild Skilak to calm down. By the way, the stream which flows by the front door of the cabin is not Hidden Creek as one would naturally assume, but a braid of the Kenai, into which Hidden flows a short distance up from the cabin. My son and I learned this the hard way in mid-October after the first snowfall. We decided to do a variation the Kenai River Trail by leaving it and following the river downstream to its mouth at Skilak Lake. Annie Oakley never had so many braids, and when we had to barefoot it through snow and icy water on that last braid, it was back to regulation trails for us.

Follow the trail around the right side of the cabin and a short distance behind it, you'll find a Kenai River Trail sign. A few yards ahead at the top of a rise you will see a fork. Go right if you intend to complete the Kenai River Trail. The left fork rejoins the Hidden Creek Trail and also makes a good short cut on the way down if you're not interested in seeing Skilak Lake.

The Kenai River Trail winds through bog and woods and across log bridges until the river itself is reached. Here it continues for several miles, then leaves the river and climbs steeply to a ridge. At the junction 2 1/2 miles further, take the left fork to Skilak Road a distance of about 1/2 mile. Go straight ahead at the junction if you intend to return to Hidden Creek Campground or if your car is parked at Hidden Creek Trail. This is an 8-10 mile round trip, depending on where your car is.

For another scenic route in this Skilak area, enter the Kenai River Trail at its first entrance .8 miles from Sterling Highway on Skilak Road. A vehicle road descends to a turnaround just above the river. The trail is not marked here, but arrows can be seen high up on the hill southwest of the parking lot. The trail follows a high ridge above the river and the Class III & IV rapids described in Way No. 7 can be seen far below. In about 1/2 mile, the trail descends steeply to the river. This is a favorite spot for fishermen and there is a neat camp area protected by towering trees. The trail continues around this wide cove and ascends again to the ridge. It meanders into the forest and eventually reaches the junction described in the previous hike. Turn right and reach Skilak Road in 1/2 mile. It's a mile or more between these two Skilak Road entrances to Kenai River Trail.

John L. Fillio, Assistant Refuge Manager, Kenai National Moose Range advised me in a recent letter that a new leaflet map for this area is "... planned and hopefully will be completed by next spring."

Bear Mt. Trail (Not to be confused with the official Bear Mt. in this area)

This is a neat short climb which provides a great view of the official Bear Mt. across the valley and also some great rock climbing for beginners. Park in the picnic area across from Rock Lake at about Mile 5.5 on Skilak Road. The trail is steep but well defined until reaching a rock outcropping below 1420. The Kenai B1 Quad map shows a circuitous trail around 1420 but we lost it and settled for the more than adequate view of Skilak from Peak 1420.

Seven Lakes Trail (No. 3)

The trail is exactly as described in 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA but believe it or not, we returned to the parking lot and found adult ice skaters on Engineer Lake October 28. Engineer

Lake was one of the few closed lakes at the time. Someone has really spruced up the campground at the west end of Hidden Lake. There is lots of wood cut, probably to stoke the smokehouse nearby. We also saw a cow moose at the Hidden Lake side trail junction. Official Moose Range signs say it is only 2 miles from Engineer Lake to this junction, but it seemed more like 2 1/2 to us.

SCREE is the montly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska.

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Please mail all material for the December SCREE to Kathy Causton, Box 2037, Anchorage, AK 99510, by Saturday, December 1st.

BOARD MEETING: Wednesday...December 5...Bob Spurr's, 5800 Kennyhill Dr  
7:30 PM.

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F I R S T C L A S S

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