



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

APRIL, 1973

VOL. 16, No. 4

IMPORTANT!! CHANGE OF MEETING DATE

APRIL MEETING WILL BE FOURTH THURSDAY (INSTEAD OF THIRD) THIS MONTH ONLY.

APRIL MEETING...Thursday, April 26, 1973...8:00 PM...Central Junior High Multipurpose Room...Business Meeting...Refreshments...Maxi-slide presentation by Steve Hackett of climbing in the Napals.

BOARD MEETING - Monday, May 7, 1973, at Tom Meacham's, 7:30 PM, 1410 H Street.

CLIMBING & HIKING SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 21 - WOLVERINE PEAK 4455 Wear skis for this climb of the peak between the north and south forks of Campbell Creek. Bring crampons if you want to climb to the top. There will be no sign-up sheet at the meeting so be sure to call the leader. LEADER: Rollin Dal Piaz home ph: 344-8685. Meet at Valu-Mart Parking lot at 7:00 AM.

STANDBY FOR DETAILS FOR THE BACKPACKING SCHOOL TO BE TAUGHT BY BILL BARNES, SR.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING OF MCA HELD MARCH 15, 1973

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Bill Barnes, Jr. in the absence of the President. Gil Todd gave the treasurer's report - Cash on Hand \$157.64; Checking \$394.49 and Savings \$1198.62, the latter includes royalties due the authors of 55 WAYS TO THE WILDERNESS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA. Conservation Chairman, Barb Winkley stated that 4/5 of Chugach State Park is now open to snowmachines and the remaining 1/5 would soon be opened if no objections were forthcoming. It was moved seconded, and unanimously passed that the Mountaineering Club write a letter to Ted Smith, Director of Parks and to the Commissioner of Natural Resources asking that South Fork Campbell and Ship Creek drainages remain closed to motorized vehicles. The fate of Pt. Woronzoff was discussed; it appears that the north-south runway is a reality and the one-time Nordic ski trail will be no more. However, if a public hearing is request, perhaps some land might be left for a park. It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed that MCA write to the Director of the Division of Aviation asking for a hearing on this subject.

RUTH-BUCKSKIN SKI TOUR Mar. 25 - Apr. 9, 1972

Dave Johnston

When you live 9.3 miles from Ruth Glacier, with a panorama of the Alaska Range, dreaming up trips and convincing people to go on them is easy. Rationalizing your way out of a trip that's already planned is hard, but we really did need a cabin roof before the spring rains came. The boys wouldn't hear of it though, and didn't have too much trouble correcting my thinking: of course mountains are more important than roofs; besides, they'd help with the roof when we returned.

It had been perfect for a month. We knew we'd pay for it, but we started anyway. March 25th, 10" of wet snow falls. We try every wax in the rainbow and results are all the same: great clots of ice underski that yield only to a knife wielded every half hour. Tony Bockstahler had said it took him five hours to ski the 11 miles from Chulitna River bridge to the two A-frames he'd prefabricated on the Tokositna one mile East of the mouth of Alder Creek. Our first place finishers take six hours and it's nine hours before everyone arrives. And I'd hauled our loads up by snow popper yesterday. Next time we'd better train with Tony! But nothing like a long hard trail to make you appreciate a snug A-frame with a big barrel stove to dry out around.

26 March Still snowing/ We trade lead often as it's a bit of a slog being out front. 16" of wet heavy snow now, calf to knee deep on skis. It's easy to avoid the few black patches of open water when we cross the Tokositna to head up Alder Creek which climbs alongside the Ruth for five miles. The creek is beautiful, mostly open crystal water shimmering over black and white cobbles with occasional snow bridges we use to keep our route straight. Ousels dip and glide and we see snow bunting, raven, Bohemian waxwings and a mosquito! Tall bottomland cottonwood give way to birch as we leave the creek and begin climbing the low ridge just east of the creek. From the hillside, we get views out over the bumpy lower Ruth Glacier where alder, cottonwood and even spruce are growing. Our goal for the day, lake 1270', lies below impressive blue ice cliffs we can just make out through the veil of falling snow. We camp by an open trickle east of the lake. 5.5 miles/8 hours.

27 March Wet snow falls all day (25 1/2" of new snow by 1700 Hrs.) and the trail breaker is knee deep or worse. Packs have soaked up enough extra weight that Ted Moore institutes what is to become standard procedure. Leaving his pack, he breaks trail in incredible distances (eg. 1/2 mile), then zooms effortlessly back down to retrieve his pack. With Ted's counselling, waxing isn't causing so much trouble now, but we've yet to solve the bugaboo of snow balling between ski and boot. We still follow Alder Creek (except for the bit where we wander up a side valley in the white-out) although it's not following the Ruth now. Pete Robinson and I both had a Super Cub look at the lower Ruth and agreed the creeks looked much more straightforward. Camp tonight at 1800' at the mouth of Slide Creek. 4.2 miles/8 hours.

28 March Still snowing early this morn, but lo and behold, it begins breaking up! By 1000, the sun peeks through and we put everything out to dry. Perhaps I should say who "we" are: Aside from Ted Moore (Engineer, Anchorage), Pete Robinson (bush rat) and

myself (same), "we" are Rick Ernst (bush rat who lives 4 miles SW of us), George Menard ("Raunchy Lake" bush rat) and John Metzger, our National Geographic photographer who hails from Fairbanks. In a not-too-dire effort in warm sunshine we move 2.3 miles up Slide Creek in some 7 hours on the trail. Camp just above a huge talus slice for which our creek is no doubt named. Again we find water, our last for 10 days. Caveman Ernst mashes out a trail a mile beyond camp before coming in to eat.

When I read of Larry Swanson's ski cable trouble in Scree, I just knew he was using Silvrettas. Anyway, we six are using Silvrettas. Rick has the \$30 model, the rest of us the \$20. Today my 2 1/2 day old cable broke. I wouldn't even bother telling you about it except that binding problems were to become as common as derogatory comments about Ted's bomb shelter. In 15 days and 76.8 miles, five of us broke eight cables, two toe pieces, and two plates that go under the foot on the \$30 model. The hinges on my toe pieces weren't far from disintegration. The Silvretta design is very functional but materials are about worthless. Until they improve, it'll be the last trip we take on them. Luckily Pete had talked with experienced Silvretta users in Aspen, so we came prepared with extra cables, toe pieces, screws, pliers and homesteader ingenuity. But \$20 for 15 days is \$1.33/day without extra cables, etc. I've got to check into the kind of bindings Dad's been using 50 years without failure!

29 March Sun has been shining on the heavily laden slopes at the head of the valley for some time by the time we start up them, so it's a relief to gain the low-angled glacier that leads to the 5050+ pass at the head of Slide Creek. The view from here of the Ruth Gorge Peaks, Denali, Hunter and clear 'round to the Talkeetnas is so good we decide to camp despite ominous deep gouged sastrugi. All stays calm though as it dips to -22F. 4.4 miles/8 1/2 Hours.

30 March We anticipate a fine ski run down slopes and gullies to 35° back down to the Ruth, but most of us wind up mushing down through heavy, calf deep snow. Only the last 2 or 3 get a glide at all. One look up through the Gorge as we exit onto the Ruth and the discouraging ski 'run' is forgotten. Wow! I'll wait until we get closer for descriptions though. Weather is perfect as we wind along the lateral moraine on the East side of the glacier. With new snow only a foot deep and those giant Ruth walls to ogle, leading from now on is a joy. As we ski past the Ruth's NE fork, we get a glimpse of Dr. Cook's dinky little Fake Peak. We'd planned to visit it, but the deep snow and sloth have us behind schedule. Camp on a 3600' moraine jump just above Glacier Point with super views both up and down glacier. 5.3 miles/6:45.

31 March We sidehill the base of beautiful granite virgin Pk. 7979' above slots and towers of the Ruth til a route through the crevasses at 3700' affords access to the glacier's smooth center. Rolls of film wind through our cameras at vistas out across the blue and white glacial chaos to the flawless 4500' granite faces only 1 1/2 miles away. In linesouth to north, Pks. 8233', 8450', 9150'+, 9545'+, Mt. Dickey and way up, 7650' Mt Barille, only the last two climbed or named. All fine peaks, none offering a walkup route. Incidentally, Cook dubbed the now-un-named peaks with ridiculous "people names". Thank goodness they didn't stick. After lunch, we wander up the smooth, ankle deep snow, necks craned upward except when Sheldon buzzes us. Then we duck. Below the great 5000' face of Dickey we camp at midafternoon to gawk, photograph and dream. 4.6 miles/5 1/2 hours.

1 April Through Rick's binocs we plan routes up Dickey's graceful aretes and wonder why none of the two or three parties that've tried the S face of Moose's Tooth haven't succeeded. That rock sure looks good! Finally get away at 1130. A mile ahead and almost a mile above us, an ice avalanche tumbles from the summit of Dickey. By the time it reaches the flat, every mighty block is pulverized - an ice cloud which billows out across the glacier a good two to three miles! We skirt tightly 'round Barille's northern rampart entering Ruth Amphitheater and swing SW to reach Sheldon to his mountain haus. He wins, but rewards our efforts with ice cream, oranges, apples and bananas. And moose chunks in the glop tonight! 5.3 miles/5 1/2 hrs.

2 April Pete boils our eggs pink for Easter breakfast before he, George, Ted and I tour around past Rooster's Comb for a peek at majestic Mt. Huntington. Pose on classic snow bridges as we race the sun back to camp. Moose steaks, then sleep on 3" thick foam pads borrowed from the blown over mountain haus. 6.4 miles.

3-4 April With jacks, ropes and timbers flown in by Don, we raise the mtn. haus from a 33° slant to level. John Metzger flies out, a snow bunting flies in. Our last night here, we sit around the hooded birch fire washing down moose steaks delicately barbecued by Rick with rum-laced lemonade. Aye, rough trip! And then those 3" thick pads...

5 April Finishing touches on the Mtn Haus and away at 1100, across the Gateway of the Ruth and up the glacier arm N of Pk 8010' (climbed by Swiss 3 Aug. 68). We trade skis for crampons to negotiate snow covered ice at 7600' and a snow traverse on a rock face at the 7950' "pass" to the NW Fork of the Buckskin. We call this "Window Pass" for the small rock arch on the ridge below the pass. An easier traverse will be found below ours at c. 7800'. We missed it in the dark. Set up camp in the 7900' saddle between Pk. 9090' (Swiss, 1 Aug. 68, NE Ridge) and P. 8300.

6 April Morning reveals my most spectacular campsite ever! We walk up Pk 8300' and the view gets even better! We name this "Mooseskin Mountain" as it's opposite Moose's Tooth at the head of Buckskin Glacier. Turn to NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, Jan, 1973, pg. 75. And that's a cropped wide angle shot! You're looking at Denali's N and S Pks. and Dan Beard. Along with a jumble of subsidiary peaks and ridges. Cropped are Huntington, Rooster's Comb, Dickey, the mile-wide abyss between us and the incredible 5000' N and E faces of Moose's Tooth, "Broken Tooth" and the peaks of the almost-virgin Buckskin-Eldridge country. It's truly fantastic! We leave a pill tin register anchored to the highest rocks with (what else?) a piece of Silvretta cable. Round off our day with a great 3100' ski run down the NW Fork of the Buckskin. We ski fresh avalanche cones fast to get past a wicked icefall. It is here that Rick, downhill skiing for his third time, performs spectacularly! Above, on our "Mooseskin Mtn.", we notice an ice arch, probably 100' thick, spanning a steep chimney a good 100' wide and ca. 75' deep. Camp tonight at 4825' on the Buckskin. Our peak looks respectable from here though it goes almost unnoticed as it's so near Moose's Tooth. 3 miles/2:05.

7 April 45 Minutes out of camp we're divebombed by Pirate and Sheldon - with ice cream! With it under our belts, we waddle on down the straight, gentle Buckskin til, in the terminal moraines, Jerry Bernas and Ludwig Ferche use us as targets for their oranges, firing from an impressively low altitude. Just off-glacier still two miles from the nearest spruce, we see five moose (in heavily browsed willow), ptarmigan, porky chewings and squirrel tracks. Around a campfire in the first spruce, el. 1250', we chow down and chat of Sam McGee. Sleep out under the stars. 13 miles/9 1/2 hrs.

8 April In tee shirts and rolled up wind pants we ski along open, beautiful 30' wide Hidden River. Clear water, granite cobbles, sunny flats broken by groves of 1' diam. cottonwoods and occasional spruce. Pete notices where a grizzly dug out of his den on the hillside. At 1000', we leave the river and climb eastward toward Fountain River. From our campfire on a spruce-birch hillside at c. 1050',

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RESURRECTION SKI TRIP

Feb. 10-11, 1973

Trent Swanson

After leaving Anchorage at 5:00 AM, Art Ward left his van at Hope and then we joined John Watt in his truck for the drive to Coopers Landing. Art, John, Larry Swanson, Mike Heinz, Steve Leirer, Rhett Wise, Jim Anderson and myself began a two-day, 40-mile trek through the Resurrection Pass Trail System in brisk air shortly before sunrise. The gently rising trail was covered with an abundance of wildlife signs, mostly where moose had foraged and all but obliterated the trail. After an hour of skiing, the sun began to filter through the trees and shortly we were immersed in total sunlight under a cloudless sky. Several moose crossed our path, and we crossed paths with several chattering squirrels. A fleeing rabbit, a great horned owl and a small porcupine were also along the trail to greet us.

When we came to a series of steep hills and switchbacks, all but our fearless leader, Art Ward, chose to carry our skis and tackle the trail on foot. After the hills we had two or three miles of tundra to ski across until reaching Devils Pass cabin where we quickly ate before bedding down for the night. The next morning we rose early and started out by 6:30 for a 24-mile jaunt to Art's van. By the time we reached Devils Pass, we were ready for a downhill stretch and when it came, shouts of joy filled the air. At East Creek we had a casualty when Mike crashed and burned. Fortunately some friendly snowmobilers at the East Creek cabin were heading into Hope and took Mike and his swollen ankle along. After warming ourselves in the cabin we again hit the trail. Jim took the lead and was soon far ahead of us.

At Caribou Creek bridge we took a 20-minute breather to enjoy the sun before continuing. An hour or two after sunset the first of us arrived at Art's van and rode into Hope's General Store for BLT's, cheeseburgers and milkshakes. Art returned to the Resurrection turnoff to pick up stragglers, including John who burst into the General Store in search of a beer. When John's thirst was quenched, the entire group crowded into the van for the return to Coopers Landing and then home.

B I T S & P I E C E S

Our new Equipment Chairman is Fritz Rieger. Fritz lives at 1526 F Street. His work phone is 279-8461 (days) and his home phone is 274-5768 (evenings).

Helen and Gayle Nienhueser are interested in talking with anyone who has climbed the Matterhorn or has otherwise climbed or hiked in the Swiss Alps. They're planning a trip this summer! Please call 277-9330.

RUTH-BUCKSKIN SKI TOUR (cont. from page 4)

we can see Ermine Lake country, home for Pete and George. 7.5 mi/5 hrs.

9 April Beaver ponds, then tall straight cottonwood forest lead to broad desolate snow flats of Fountain River. Cut across a 1/2 mile long lake to the Chulitna, crossing both rivers easily. Then the worst climbing of the trip: a pitch of horrible high angle alder (ever tried a lie-back with skis on?) At last, the bench on which the ugly road, Raunchy Lake and our wives sit. Welcome home! from a rough? trip. Neither George nor Ted are fathers yet, so we're back in time. A thoroughly recommendable ski tour. 5 mi/4 1/2 hrs.