



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

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SEPTEMBER MEETING...Thursday, September 20, 1973...8:00 PM...Central Junior High Multipurpose Room...MINISLIDE SHOW: MCA Flatton Midsummer Sleep-In and slides of South Fork, Eagle River by Tom Meacham...Business meeting...Refreshments...MAIN PROGRAM: MCA 1973 Mt. Drum Expedition, a slide show of members' slides, coordinated by Terry Muhlenbach.

BOARD MEETING...Monday, October 1, 1973...7:30 PM...Tom Meacham's...
1410 H Street.

EQUIPMENT CORNER

MCA member Mike Richardson has an ingenious solution to the problem of using small campstoves such as the Svea 123 and the Optimus 8R in the winter or at altitude. As many know from experience, these stoves, being unpressurized, depend upon heat from an outside source to vaporize the fuel before the stove can be lighted. This is a real problem under winter conditions. Some people prime the stem with lighted fuel, some breathe on the stem and tank (and burn their eyebrows off!) and some merely pray.

Mike has solved this problem by pressurizing the tank of his Optimus 8R in a simple but effective way. He soldered a tire valve stem (available at any tire store) to the tank, after drilling a hole in the tank to fit. He weakened the spring in the stem valve by stretching it slightly. Then he purchased a complete pump assembly made for the large Optimus 111B (expedition model). This pump is normally installed inside the tank of the 111B.

Mike soldered a tire valve extension onto the end of the pump. He carries the pump detached from the stove, but when he wants to light up, he simply screws the pump onto the tank and pumps two or three strokes, enough to get the fuel flaming for lighting. After the stove is lit, the pump may be given 10 to 15 strokes to get a roaring flame, then unscrewed. The tire valve will hold the tank pressure until it is dissipated through burning.

The result is a two-man stove with the convenience and nearly the power of a large 111B. I have modified a Primus 71L (Optimus 80) in the same manner, and have reduced the time required to boil two pints of water from 13 minutes to 9 1/2 minutes. It should work equally well on a Svea 123 or other small "upright" stove. The pump is about 7" long and weighs several ounces, but for winter use it appears to have definite advantages over an unpressurized system. Contact Mike for further details if you are interested in trying this solution yourself.

Hopefully, an "Equipment Corner" can become a regular feature of SCREE. Do you have comments on an item of equipment you tried and liked (or hated)? Do you have an interesting modification of a common item to make it more suitable for use in Alaska? Send your comments to SCREE for publication for the enlightenment of fellow Club members. Future items here will hopefully include a report on fiber-fill bags for rain-proof summer use and an item on custom-made bunny boot crampons.

- Tom Meacham -

MT. SILVERTHRONE 13,220

June, 1973

Keith Anderson

I belatedly report a climb my friend Ken Kleine and I made at the end of this last June.

The climb was Mt. Silverthrone, at 13,220', the third highest peak in McKinley Park. We made the 30-mile hike into our 7,000' base camp over McGonagall Pass and up the Traléika Glacier in two days. The third day we rested in camp and took off that night up the final 6,000' of steep snow and ice that separated us from the summit. By 8:00 AM the next morning, we were on the summit looking down into the Ruth amphitheater and across to Denali in beautiful weather except for the clouds that had closed in over our return route. But we managed to get back down, exhausted but safely by noon. We later learned that it had been climbed only twice before. On the way out we were rewarded by finding a pair of skis with Silvetta bindings, two perlon ropes and assorted goodies.

CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 17, 1973, MEETING

There was no official new or old business. Treasurer Gil Todd was acting president. He asked for volunteers for the positions of Chairman of the Huts and Cabins Committee and to be the Club's representative at the Parks and Recreation Council which meets on Tuesday noon twice a month.

Kathy Causton, Acting Sec.

Next morning we headed up and over the summit of Black Top. On the east side of Black Top we found a cave, followed the ridge north 'til reaching the ridge between Round Top and Vista. Set camp there and climbed Round Top.

Monday morning we headed across the ridge and traversed around the buttress of Vista to the summit. After signing the register, we descended to the ridge between Vista and Significant and traversed along wet talus slopes to Significant. The dog had no problems crossing the slope but we had a heck of a time slipping on the wet moss-covered rocks. The next group should carry a pencil and something to replace the beer can register.

Wanting to get out of the rain and the wind, we pitched camp below Significant across on the next ridge which Magnificent is located on. Getting a late start Tuesday afternoon, we climbed Magnificent and started down to Meadow Creek. Heading down to the creek, I heard Dirk shouting at me, only until the dog ran past me growling and barking I understood that there was a bear in front of me (100 ft.). We both (the bear and I) headed in opposite directions. We camped down by Meadow Creek and had fresh water for the first time in three days. No more bear problems for the rest of the trip. Wednesday we broke camp and headed back to Eagle River.

CHILKOOT TRAIL--1973

July 15-19, 1973

Nancy Simmerman

With the trip up the Alaska Highway the usual long grind, I decided on the spur of the moment to stretch my legs on the Chilkoot Trail. Backpacking-type food in the Yukon Indian village of Teslin is nonexistent, the store being stocked with tons of canned food. So armed with ten days supply of granola, salami, cheese, nuts, dried fruits and powdered milk, I headed for Carcross. Although the hike over the pass normally takes 3-5 days, I was determined to wait for good photographic weather.

The day was warm and sunny, but the sign on the window of the train station at Carcross said, "No tickets available for July 15th." Drat! The train was due in a half hour, so I got my pack just in case.

"Absolutely no chance to get to Skagway until tomorrow," the charming woman at the ticket office said.

The day was so sunny, a photographer's paradise with fluffy white clouds. "Bennett? I could hike the trail backwards."

"No." I stood there looking lost and forlorn--on purpose, and didn't say anything more. Far up the track the train whistle sounded. "I might get you on if you don't mind standing."

"Good heavens, no!" I replied. She made a call, I paid my money down as the train came to a halt, and climbed aboard.

Three fine log cabins are available on the 33-mile trail, one on the Canadian side, two on the American, but I found it far more pleasant to pitch my tent each night for undisturbed sleep. In the

American cabins, the bunks are narrow stretchers supported by a framework, and allowing no knee room for a person who likes to sleep on his side. One must plan to carry a tent anyway--during the summer months the cabins are generally full-up and it's first come, etc.

For instance, at Sheep Camp (an 8-bunk cabin), there were 32 fellow and me one night. The situation was not as idyllic as it sounds, since the assembly contained only 5 adult males. The rest were boys age 11-14, in two groups, one a YM group from Vermont, the other a Boy Scout group from Edmonton, Alberta. And it poured rain.

But that's getting ahead of my story. I did go over the pass the second day out. Waking at 5:00 AM at Lake Lindeman, 8 miles from the railroad, to a clear windless day, I instantly revised my plan of an intermediate camp near the pass, to one of photographing the 13 miles in one long day. Such days are few and far between in that country. Not pausing to fix even granola, I munched nuts and pilot biscuits as I walked from Lake Lindeman through an open, glacier-scarred, heather-covered paradise. Relics of the days of '98 littered the landscape. (When does an abandoned tin can cease to be litter and become history?) The last four miles to the pass were over residual snowfields, and all the way the climb was gradual.

Standing at the pass, however, I gasped at the view. Behind me were miles of open alpine tundra; ahead a deep V-shaped valley, black with dense forests; and at my feet, the steepest snow and rock slope I've ever had to descend alone. And alone I was--no one was planning to leave Lake Lindeman behind me, and the only two hikers of the day going to Lindeman had passed me a mile back. No more traffic would be through until tomorrow noon. Swaying under a 40-plus-pound pack of salami and camera gear, my descent was leisurely, cautious and without incident. A flat rock at the bottom of the famous pass became a sun-bathing perch, and I found my thoughts with those hardy adventurers of 75 years ago. Around me were cast iron stoves, bottomless buckets, high button shoes and pulleys. Three miles further and twelve hours after leaving Lindeman, I was in Sheep Camp.

I had felt no more than the usual backpacking discomfort while descending the pass, but the following day was a different story. The descent from the pass to Sheep Camp is almost continual downhill boulder hopping. The continued shock of 40 additional pounds activated an old knee injury and greatly strained the other knee. Given a choice the hiker would be well-advised to consider taking the trail in the traditional direction--starting at the Skagway-Dyea end for this very reason. It's just as well I'd planned to lay over a day to photograph around Sheep Camp.

The Chilkoot Pass area is under consideration for a joint Canadian-American national park, and both governments have personnel stationed to assist the public and to protect the relics. Two U. S. Park Service Rangers at Sheep Camp alternated guiding hikers over the pass, which can be particularly hazardous for the inexperienced in foul or foggy weather. Their company and knowledge of the area was greatly appreciated by all of us. Two thousand hikers crossed the pass last year, and the same figure is projected for '73.

The next day, I wandered in the rain down to the Canyon City cabin, and found that a group of compatible souls had gotten to the cabin before the next band of little boys arrived (these from Klondike Safaris). We had a fine evening of banjo music--two banjo players and their instruments, crossing the pass in opposite directions, chanced to overnight together--and fresh baked bread made by one of the banjo players.

The latter was a fine diversion from my routine of cold salami and cheese for lunch, roasted salami and cheese for supper.

The following day, arriving at the trail head at Dyea, I found the second compelling reason for starting at Skagway. Dyea is 8 long miles by road from Skagway and traffic may be almost nil, making for poor hitchhiking. Klindike Safaris (Skagway) will take you to the trail for \$2 a head (minimum 4 people), but there is no way of contacting them for pickup at Dyea.

Should you be considering hiking the scenic Chilkoot, here are a few more suggestions:

--There's some fine country accessible from both the trail and the White Pass Railroad, well worth extensive sidetripping for hiking or climbing.

--A 36-page trail guide with maps is published by the State of Alaska, Dept. of Natural Resources, Juneau, and is available in a trail-side box north of Canyon City or, I'm told, in Whitehorse. No guides are available at the Lake Lindeman trail head.

--Check customs regulations when you buy your train ticket.

--If you're hiking from Skagway to Bennett, buy your total train ticket at the start of the train trip. No tickets are available at Bennett.

--The price of the ticket includes an all-you-can-eat roast beef dinner at Bennett. It's not fancy, but it's filling, and a real treat after five days of salami and cheese.

B I T S & P I E C E S

MCA member Bill Barnes, Sr. is the latest mountaineer to throw his hat into the political ring. Bill is running for Mayor of Anchorage, if the court rules in his favor on the invalidity of the present City residence requirement.

Dona Agosti plans to hike the Chilkoot Trail next summer and is interested in coordinating an MCA trip over the historic route. Anyone interested in joining her should call her at 279-2901.

FOR SALE: One pair of Lowa Civettas, size 10M. Hardly worn 'cuase they're too small for two pair of sox. \$35.00 They can be seen by calling 344-7906.

FOR SALE: One pair of Lowa Alpspitz in fair condition. Size 6. Make offer. Call 277-7952 before Sept. 15 and after Sept. 15 call 277-2737. Call after 5:00 PM. Mike Sawada.