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MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

APRIL 1974

VOL. 17, No. 4

APRIL MEETING...3rd & Eagle Streets...Pioneer Schoolhouse...Wednesday, April 17, 1974...8:00 PM...Minislide show: Trent Swanson, Scott Mueller, and Jeff Bennett will show slides of Powerline Pass Peak, Portage Glacier ski tour, and West Twin Pk....Business Meeting... Refreshments...Maxiprogram...Gayle Nienhueser will show slides of hut-hopping in Austrian Yugoslavia.

BYOB BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, May 1, 1974, 7:30 PM at Tom Meacham's - 1410 H St.

CLIMBING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, April 20 - GOAT ROCK - Only competent climbers; bring ropes, carabiners, etc. Meet 8:00 AM at Valu Mart; Ldr. Scott Mueller; ph 272-0867.

SUNDAY, May 11 - EAST TWIN - Ldr. John Pinamont; ph 279-7862.

SKI TOUR - HIKING SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, April 21 - BIRDSEYE RIDGE - Ldrs. Terry & Joyce Muehlenbach.

SATURDAY, April 27 - Winner Creek Hike - Ldr. John Pinamont.

SUNDAY, May 5 - THE WEDGE - One-day ski tour; Ldr. Ed Coleman.

SUNDAY, May 12 - GULL ROCK - One-day hike; climbers might do Hope Pt.; (formerly scheduled for Sun., April 14); Ldr. Ron Lautaret.

SATURDAY, May 18 - SKILAK OVERLOOK & KENAI RIVER TRAIL HIKE - Ldrs. John & Joanne Merrick.

ATTENTION HIKERS: St. Mary's Creative Institute has asked MCA help with a recreation program this summer. Its purpose is to build the self-image of young people entering 7th grade in large secondary complexes next fall. There will be 10 teams of seven 6th graders plus 2 adult leaders and 1 junior leader. This is a program which should be of interest to MCA wives or college students who would volunteer one day of leadership on any hike of their choice. The program will begin the first week of June. Mothers of small children are welcome to bring their youngsters along. We're not asking for technical climb leaders - just someone to assume responsibility for 7-12-year olds for a day on the trail. Call Diane Brelsford, 344-7245 or Dona Agosti, 279-2901.

CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE MCA GENERAL MEETING OF MARCH 20, 1974

*Meeting was called to order by President Bill Barnes Jr. Slides of the 1972 winter attempt on Mt. Spurr were shown by Bill Barnes Jr. and Tom Meacham.

*Minutes of the last meeting as condensed in Scree were approved. No treasurer's report was available because Steve Jones is on North Slope.

*Tom Meacham, speaking for the Conservation Committee, discussed the proposed 80 million acre withdrawal of federal lands. Deadlines for statements is June and July. Anyone interested may see Tom Meacham.

*Ray Causton was appointed to head Huts and Cabins Committee.

*Dona Agosti reported that most hikes are taking place as scheduled and leaders are doing a great job in keeping their dates. The Iditarod Trail ski tour saw 30 persons (Nordic Ski Club and MCA) take the bus to Knik for a day of fine skiing. Fourteen MCA'ers led by Gil Todd toured some six to seven miles up Eagle River and returned. The Gull Rock hike was postponed from Easter Sunday to May 12. Chilkoot Trail information sheets were available at the meeting or by contacting Dona. The Plamigan Pk. register has been retyped and anyone planning an ascent is asked to take the register.

*Barry Kircher invited all mountaineers to attend an ARC crevasse rescue session on a glacier April 14th. Don Wycoff will be an instructor. Mike Heinz reported that Matanuska Glacier was inaccessible because on March 9 because of deep snow and slush, so the training will probably take place on Byron Glacier.

*Robin Bowen stated that a local group is looking for one to two people to fill out an expedition to Mt. McKinley via the Carson's Ridge route. They plan to take 45-60 days and cost is estimated at \$600+ per man.

*Bill Barnes Jr. reported that Al Tomich is planning to climb Mt. Sanford this summer via the back side of the glacier. See Bill if interested.

*Dr. Rod Wilson presented a most informative and interesting lecture on altitude sickness.

*MEETING ADJOURNED. Respectfully submitted, Dona Agosti, Secretary.

BITS & PIECES

Anyone interested in Mt. Sanford climb via north route around July 1 call Al Tomich. He needs 4-6 experienced climbers. Call 277-7933 before 3:00 PM or write him at 403 W 22nd, Anchorage 99503.

Thanks to Bill Barnes, Steve Jones, and Bill Brickley from Mike Richardson for help in Feb. 16&17 MCA climbing school. Anyone with questions on aspects of climbing may call Mike at 274-5044.

Congratulations to Ed Coleman, John Mucha, & Vaughn Hoefler for doing such a fine job instructing the West High class in climbing techniques.

The mail run of April 6th was cancelled due to poor snow conditions.

Over 100 people registered for and attended the Nordic Ski Club classes on ski camping. The classes included info. on clothing, equipment, techniques of traveling, setting up camp, cooking, repairs, & safety.

MORE BITS & PIECES

The MCA has 5 new metal ice-axes and 4 pairs of adjustable crampons.

FOR SALE: Super RD's; size 10; too small; \$78.00 new - for \$65.00; call Bill Barnes at 272-2205.

FOR SALE: Cilvetta boots; size 11-1/2; never used; \$73.00 new - for \$60.00; call Paul Carnicelli at 279-8788 or see him at April meeting.

COMING ATTRACTION: Next month John Pinamont will write on the first winter ascent of Mt. Blackburn in the Wrangell's.

FIRST ASCENT OF PEAK 6115' ON THE SARGENT ICEFIELD

Fred Woelkers, 25, and Fred Moore, 31, of Seward climbed the highest peak on the Sargent Icefield in what was believed to be a first ascent. The pair flew onto the icefield on March 10, 1974, with Joe Stanton of Seward landing, to the 3200' level on Ellsworth Glacier. They set up a base camp near the foot of the mountain, about three miles from the landing spot. From there they ascended the peak from the Northeast up an extended and narrow snow chute to a knife ridge leading to a false summit. A small saddle disguising huge cornices was crossed from the false to the true summit, which was reached by 4 PM. They descended to their base camp and spent the night there. The following day they skied across the glacier and came off the icefield east of Nellie Juan Lake. They descended to the lake and spent the night at the cabin on the southern shore. The third day was spent skiing 18 miles down the south fork of Snow River to mile twelve of the Seward Highway. Fred Woelkers described the climb as exhilarating and "hairy" in spots. They had good weather the entire trip. -reported by Ev Wenrick

SARGENT ICEFIELD NOTE

EV WENRICK

Ev on his Sargent Icefield Expedition: "We were flown in on March 4 to a small lake near Nellie Juan Glacier. We broke a ski gearbox on landing which caused other damage to the plane. We stayed with the plane for five days waiting for the weather to clear so planes from Anchorage could fly in with emergency gear and mechanic. Due to the delay and dissipation of fuel and food, the Icefield crossing was cancelled. However, a reconnaissance to the Icefield itself was made, thus preparing the way for a later attempt.

KENAI RIVER SKI TOUR

March 24, 1974

DONA AGOSTI

The above ski tour is recommended for those with campers or trailers who are beset with spring fever about this time of year. We entered at Trail No. 2 (about Mile 2.7 Skilak Rd.) and skied to the river (turn right at fork about a mile in). When we reached the river and saw that there was still about 2-3 feet of ice along the shoreline, we decided to ski up the river to the trail which would take us out to

(cont.)

Skilak Road at Mile 0.7. Although there were crevasses and open water in the middle of the river, the ice near the shore was firm and solid. However, at one point it was necessary to work around a rock cliff very carefully because fast water had undercut the ice to within 25 feet of shore. This is an unusual chance for people who do not canoe or plan to raft down the Kenai River to see the canyon-rapids part of the Kenai. It was an exceptional treat in the hot, spring sunshine. The regular Kenai River trail turns away from the river at this section and noting the sheer cliffs on either side, it was easy to understand why. Even the game trail ended at this point. The exit is about 1/4 mile below Jim's Landing where the Kenai curves away from the Sterling Highway and follows Skilak Road. Naturally, caution and common sense should be used to determine the safety of the ice, but I enthusiastically recommend this trip for February-March skiers.

MT. SPURR (11,070') - First Winter Attempt * Jan. 26, 1974 BILL BARNES

Looking directly west from Anchorage on a clear day one is immediately smitten by a large, heavily glaciated peak in the Southern Tordrillos at the entrance to Merrill Pass. This is the same volcano which blew up in fine style in 1952 scattering ash and dust as far as Anchorage. Mt. Spurr was first climbed by Helga Bading, R.T. Bailey, Eric Barnes, Greg Erickson, C. Metzger, and B. Puchtler on Sept. 6th, 1960 by the southeast ridge, which was to be our route. It has since been climbed twice more and attempted at least three times, including my own party. *After a considerable amount of time and trouble rounding up gasoline for the aircraft and a great deal of hectic, last minute preparation, John Pinamont and I departed Lake Hood with our two pilots, Rich Guthrie and Bill Fell. After about an hour of flying we reached our landing area, which was snow covered swamp that Rich and I had chosen on an earlier recon flight. Much to our chagrin, the swamp had become extremely wind-blown and hummocky in the interim and both pilots were very reluctant to try a landing. After much careful observation Rich chose a spot he thought might be okay and landed his Super-cub, and Bill followed directly. Fortunately, the planes were heavily loaded and neither nosed down, although we counted ourselves very lucky to have damaged nothing. The swamp was so rough that we all spent the next couple hours leveling a take-off area. We had planned to climb half a day Saturday, but it wasn't until 2:30 or 3:00 that Rich and Bill returned with Tom Meacham and Steve Jones. The planes finally departed towards dusk and we made camp, ate, and crashed.

*The next morning we left camp about nine-thirty (an hour after sunrise) each with 85-90 pounds of gear and started up our ridge. No sooner had we started, when the wind started to pick up. We didn't realize it at the time, but this wind was very definitely related to the wind that had done the job on the swamp. After a minimal amount of alder beating we attained the open ridge, where we started to encounter winds which made climbing difficult. By noon I had reached a point about a thousand feet above the swamp, but I was finding it very hard to even stand up, let alone walk, so I half crawled and half staggered back to John and Steve and conducted a pow-wow while waiting for Tom to come up. Before Tom had reached us we had agreed to beat-it
(cont.)

and try to find a camp site on a lee slope. We all managed to get off the ridge but our retreat was hardly in good order and in retrospect I consider ourselves lucky. We spent the next day at what we later called our "wind camp". Temperatures remained in the range of -20 to 5 degrees, so we stayed pretty comfortable until our last two days, by which time our sleeping bags had accumulated about 6 or 7 pounds of water apiece.

*Tuesday, the 29th, was a super day and we made good progress, reaching an elevation of 3500 to 4000 feet. This day we were all in high spirits, but when Wednesday dawned with whiteout conditions we started to lose heart. It became pretty clear that we would not be able to put our high camp at 8000 feet, for we had only been allowed a week to climb. Since we had moonlight in the early evenings and we had plenty of batteries for our headlamps, we decided that we would place one higher camp and try a long summit rush on Friday risking a descent after dark. During this time we judged the avalanche conditions to be moderate and climbed with avalanche cords.

*Thursday was a pretty reasonable day and we encountered only one pitch that needed fixing. We placed our final camp at about 6500 feet at the point becomes a knife-edge. The rock is less than optimal at this point.

*Friday morning we arose to snowy whiteout conditions; we didn't say much as we started down. We took the whole day getting back to the swamp, getting pretty well off route (lost) on the lower part of the ridge where we had no wandering.

*We spent a cold night in the swamp and got up early Saturday to work on a landing area for the planes. About 11:00 we heard the sweet sound of engines, just as we were beginning to think that the weather was too poor for flying. Rich got his cub on our landing strip without too much trouble (it was all of 300-400 ft. long), but Bill landed short in the flat light and nosed his PA-14 over, bending his prop quite a bit. If he'd been loaded (so to speak) he might have made out better. Rich and Bill took an axe to the prop and with a trifle bit of pounding were able to straighten it enough so Bill could fly the rest of the day. We ferried all our gear and people to the airstrip at Beluga so we could get everything out as quickly as possible before the weather closed in. Back in Anchorage our consolation prize was dinner at the Red Ram, the best meal of the trip.

WEST TWIN PK. (5901') 7 March 16, 1974 SCOTT MUELLER

Jeff Bennett and I left for Eklutna early Saturday morning, planning for a two day winter attempt of West Twin and possibly Goat Rock. Trent Swanson drove us up to our starting point just below Eklutna Lake. We had intended on needing skis but found little snow on the way up. Reaching our camp site on top of the ridge by 12:00, we decided to attempt the summit in the seven hours of remaining light. We reached the summit ridge within two hours after some scrambling and a few nice rock pitches. We then traversed the knife edge 75 yards to the peak and cairn which indicated we had the first winter ascent. After summit lounging for the better part of an hour we descended a snow couloir to camp. At 4:30 we decided to hit the rack and catch some (cont.)

Z'zzzz. Awakening to adverse, socked-in conditions we decided to can Goat Rock and split the scene when things got mean and commenced to expeditiously boogie to the road.

ARCTIC VALLEY TO GIRDWOOD - March 30 to April 3, 1974 BILL STIVERS

Nine skiers - Paul Carnicelli, Mike Heinz, Mike Hunt, Tom Knoke, Shawn Oxford, Bill Stivers, Trent Swanson, Brian Smith, and John Watt - departed Ski Bowl Road Saturday morning to ski up Ship Creek. Shawn was forced to return Saturday morning because of a broken binding. Trent camped with the group Saturday night, then skied out the Indian Creek drainage Sunday.

*The snow changed from a hard crust in the morning to wet corn as the temperature rose during the day. Occasionally, the crust would break and a ski sink up to two feet. Most snow bridges over Ship Creek were intact, but skiing was slower than during the winter. Purple clister wax seemed to work best for the first two days.

*Camp Saturday night was in the timber about 2 miles up the North Fork Ship Creek. Water was available from the creek.

*The temperature was 28 degrees Sunday morning, and a frozen crust provided good skiing. The weather was partially cloudy. The route was in close proximity to the North Fork throughout the day. There were occasional openings over the creek from which we could draw water.

*In the early morning we took an incorrect turn up a creek to the north adding about three miles to the day's tour.

*Light snow squalls moved in as we established camp at the North Fork Lake. There was an overnight accumulation of about three inches of new snow, which necessitated scraping clister from our skis.

*Monday morning we crossed the North Fork Lake and followed the drainage to Camp Creek Pass. The temperature was 18 degrees.

About 9:00 AM we descended down the pass on the wide, gentle slope into the Camp Creek drainage. The sun illuminated all but the east ridge. There was three inches of powder on top of a consolidated base. Skiing was outstanding.

*Upon reaching the waterfall about two miles down, we basked in the warm sun for a time before running the slope below the fall. Further downstream a gentle climbing traverse was started up the east ridge to the cirque which feeds the last stream running into Camp Creek before its confluence with Raven Creek.

*It was only 11:30 AM when we reached the cirque; however, after observing the avalanche conditions on the Camp Creek west slope, we decided to wait until the next day to traverse the west slope of the Raven Creek drainage. We enjoyed the warm sun, skiing and climbing a ridge over the cirque for the remainder of the day.

*Tuesday morning was clear and the temperature 18 degrees. We traversed high around the ridge into the Raven Creek drainage. Since there was lit snow high around the ridge, we traversed about 3 miles on foot. The remainder was skied on hard packed snow - reaching the valley floor about one mile north of the waterfall.

*We enjoyed a long lunch while drying our sleeping bags on a sunny knoll near the fall. The tundra here was clear of snow.

After lunch we skied up Raven Creek, up the gully in front of Raven

(cont.)

Glacier, and into Crow Pass. The first of the group reached the cabin at 1:00 PM - the last at 2:30 PM.

*The weather at Crow Pass was clear, calm, and warm, so we spent most of the afternoon sunning in front of the cabin. We noted ski tracks which appeared to have been made in the past week. Perhaps they were made by some members of the ARG, who delivered the emergency equipment stored in the cabin.

*We were up at 4:30 Wednesday, proceeding down the south valley by 6:00 AM. The snow on the slope was hard and cluttered sporadically by avalanches. Descent to the old mine was accomplished by sidestepping and cramponing down over an old avalanche. There was also considerable exposed rock on the slope.

*From the old mine, five skied down the creek until forced to climb out by open water not far above the summer parking lot. The two who skied the summer trail reported the slope steep and rather treacherous. The creek route was easy and safe, and is recommended as the best alternative. The tour was completed by skiing down the summer road to within 1/4 mile of our transportation at the Double Muskie.

EAGLE RIVER SKI TOUR

March 17, 1974

GILBERT TODD

After meeting at the Pancake Palace on C Street, 12 members of MCA departed and regrouped at the Eagle River campground. Considerable discussion and offering of opinion as to the snow conditions likely to be encountered and the proper wax to be used led to the decision that "last year's wax" was fine, and the tour began at about 9:00 AM.

*We skied up the main branch of Eagle River, following all of its turns on firm, but very slippery snow. We found only one section of open water which was easily skirted. The weather was warm and overcast but occasional glimpses of the mountains at the head of Eagle River could be seen. No animals were spotted but numerous tracks were observed. A lunch break was called at noon and after lunch we started back. For some reason (Mike Richardson's short-cuts perhaps?), the way back seemed much longer than coming in. We arrived at the cars about 3:00 PM and estimate we covered a total of 12 miles.

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EDITOR..... Trent Swanson

DUES - Send to MCA

MAILING STAFF..... The Agosti Family

Box 2037

Send material for Kay Scree to

Anchorage 99510

■ Trent Swanson

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Anchorage 99504

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