



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

OCTOBER 1975

VOLUME XVIII, No. 9

### OCTOBER MEETING

Wednesday, October 15, 8 PM, Pioneer School House, Third and Eagle, Anchorage. MCA Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. Slide Show: 1975 Penali Traverse.

### BOARD MEETING

Time and place to be announced by new president.

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### ELECTIONS

The following candidates have been nominated by the nominating committee. Additional nominations will be taken from the floor at the October meeting.

**President:**

Dave Hawly  
Bill Stivers

**Treasurer:**

Kit Kenney

**Board Member (2-year term):**

Bill Quick

**Vice-President:**

Paul Denkewalter

**Secretary:**

Nina Faust

**Board Member (2-year term):**

Fritz Rieger

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### IMPORTANT -- PLEASE NOTE

### CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Instead of publishing a monthly climbing schedule, we are instituting weekly climbing committee planning meetings. (See President's Pen) All MCA members are welcome!!

Plans for the following weekend will be discussed at these short Wednesday night informal get-togethers. The October 22 meeting will be held at Brian Okonek's home, 100 Kerry Circle, 7:00 PM. Call Fritz Rieger for details, 277-8979.

### HIKING SCHEDULE

Dona Agosti, 279-2901, is putting the finishing touches on the fall and winter schedules.

November 1 and 2  
Saturday, Sunday

GLEN ALPS TO SHIP LAKE and return. Camp at Ship Lake. Leave  
Valu-Mart, 7:00 AM. Leader, Bill Stivers, 277-2869.

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MINUTES OF MCA GENERAL MEETING

September 17, 1975, 8:15 PM, Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle, Anchorage.

The meeting was called to order by President Fritz Rieger.

A motion was made and seconded to waive the reading of the last two months' minutes.

The treasurer's report shows the following: Expenses: \$610.88; Savings: \$402.47; Income: \$675.01; Cash-on-hand: \$52.6; Checking: \$840.2; for a Total Cash for September of \$1,295.29.

Hiking committee chairperson, Dona Agosti, reported that 19 people enjoyed the Kachemak Bay trip, an excellent turnout. The McCarthy trip goal, Nickolai Pass, was not achieved because the bridges were washed out. Dona emphasized that she is ready to begin putting out the 1976 Hiking Schedule. She needs leaders and information on where MCAers want to go hiking. Contact Dona with your suggestions.

The Climbing Committee still needs a chairperson.

Fritz reported that the next meeting is the MCA Annual General Meeting at which the general elections will be held. The present officers will form the Nomination Committee. Interested members are invited to help with the nominations. Positions open are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two board positions. Contact any of the present officers if you have a nomination.

The evening slide show was an excellent presentation of the daring second ascent of Mt. Deborah, narrated by Brian Okonek.

Nina Faust, Secretary

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PRESIDENT'S PEN

Here are some explanations about what has been going on at the MCA these past few weeks. The two most important developments are the election nominations and the launching of the weekly climbing committee meetings.

The nominations committee is very pleased with the slate of candidates it will offer the membership at the October elections. We feel that these members are extremely well qualified and we wish to thank them in advance for their willingness to serve. Nominations will also be taken from the floor on election night, and you are encouraged to nominate additional candidates.

The other development has to do with the newly formed climbing committee. We are really excited about this new idea. At the organization party on September 24 the whole club climbing situation was discussed. It was noted that most climbers like to get together with their buddies a day or two before the weekend to plan their trips. Club trips scheduled weeks in advance must try to appeal to a very broad audience and aren't nearly as appealing as a trip which "feels right" for the people involved. Many MCAers have also been asking for more informal social gatherings-- chances to meet and get to know other members. Bjorne Holme and Earl Redman, who also belong to the Alaska Alpine Club in Fairbanks, suggested that the weekly noon-time meetings of the AAC provide not only an opportunity for planning forthcoming trips, but also for socializing.

Our group unanimously supported this idea and recommended holding weekly Wednesday evening meetings (except on regular MCA meeting night), and we're currently looking

## PRESIDENT'S PEN continued.

for a permanent meeting place. These meetings are for all MCA members, especially those interested in getting out the following weekend, and until we find a home, we'll announce the location of the week's meeting by posting a sign at the AMI store bulletin board. Or call me at 277-8979, or Brian Okonek at ~~339~~ 5891.

We held the first of these meetings at Brian Okonek's home, and it was a complete success. Lemonade, apple juice, and beer were drunk, potato chips were dipped. Bjorne Holme and Peter Sennhauser brought along slides of Icefall Peak and the Cathedral Spires, and plans were developed for the weekend. Our thanks to Brian and his parents for their cordiality.

Wrapping things up for this year, I wish to thank everyone who helped to make this year's programs succeed. We managed to begin a number of projects and have left a lot of work for the succeeding administration. All the officers and board members were just terrific. Dona Agosti (utility infielder) deserves special thanks. I was especially pleased with the MCA Hiking and Climbing Schools and special thanks go to all the instructors and particularly to Terry McWilliams who coordinated the whole shebang. I'm also immensely pleased that we made some progress in repairing some of the huts and in cleaning up both the huts and the glaciers surrounding them. I think we had a pretty strong climbing program during the spring and early summer. Ned Lewis really outdid himself as climbing chairman. The hiking program was super this year, and another tip of the hat to Dona Agosti.

This whole year has been a barrel of fun for me. It's great to work together with such fine folks doing what is fun anyway. Thanks to everyone, and an extra thanks to Durhane for too many things to mention.

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BITS AND PIECES

Peter Sennhauser has left for an extended trip outside. He'll visit Yosemite Valley and his home in Switzerland, and hopefully will return to Alaska in the spring.

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ORGAN MOUNTAIN

August 27-30, 1975

by Bill Stivers

My first attempt to climb Organ Mountain via the North Fork Ship Creek route was in early September 1974. I had departed from Arctic Valley on September 6, and reached my camp site in a valley just south of the Mountain late the following day. On September 8 my initial climb up the southeast slope to the ridge was too far to the northeast, therefore, it was impossible to traverse the intervening spires to the summit. I then descended about 1000 feet, traversed the slope to the southwest and subsequently climbed to the ridge 6400 foot level. The higher spires to the southwest formed an arc which extended into the promontory protruding into the glacier bordering the north face. I continued the climb on the ridge across scree and rotten rock toward the higher spires. The ascent was abruptly terminated due to high winds, clouds enveloping the spires and rocks made slippery by a wet snowfall. I descended to camp and planned to climb again the following day provided the weather was satisfactory. The wind continued throughout the night. (I slept under a collapsed tent.) When the weather failed to abate, I started my return trip to Arctic Valley on September 9.

## ORGAN MOUNTAIN continued.

My next trip to the Mountain was from Monday, July 28, 1975 (when I departed from Arctic Valley), to Sunday, August 4 (when I returned to Glen Alps). On Wednesday I explored ridges over the valley below the Mountain awaiting better weather. There was intermittent rainfall throughout the day and the Mountain frequently was obscured by clouds. The weather was no better on Thursday, but I decided to climb using compass and altimeter as aids. Clouds were entered at 5,000 feet. I continued to the ridge and traversed up the ridge a short distance. It was then discovered that traversing the east/southeast side just below ridge was more secure. The climb was discontinued among the higher spires due to the poor visibility and fear of disorientation within the maze of spires and gullies. Another climb was attempted on Friday with similar results. I departed for Glen Alps on Saturday, traversing the pass in the valley just west of Bird Creek Pass.

I departed Glen Alps on Saturday, August 2, for my latest tour to the Mountain, arriving at the base on Sunday afternoon. Monday I began the climb under a solid overcast. The cloud base was at 700 feet, and I relied on compass and altimeter to reach the various reference points on the slope. Blue sky became visible as the 6400 foot ridge exit was approached.

Upon reaching the ridge a solid layer of clouds lay below. The air was clear above and chilled by a light wind. I crossed just to the west side of the ridge, directly over the glacier on the Eagle River side, climbed just a short distance to the southwest, and then recrossed the ridge so as to continue the southwest traverse on the more secure east side. A well defined gully was reached just a few hundred yards to the southwest, and a climb to the west (270 degrees magnetic) up the gully led toward the summit. The gully was exited approximately 100 feet below the summit. The remainder of the climb was completed on a fairly secure shoulder on the south wall. On this ascent I did not climb to the top of the peak, which was some 15 feet above the shoulder. I did shin up the south side until the top was at eye level. There were no higher peaks visible from that position.

Before I reached the peak the clouds had begun to ascend above the 6400 foot level. On the descent the clouds had entered the higher gully, which necessitated a low visibility traverse to enter the lower gully at the 6400 foot ridge entrance. During the traverse I descended too low and entered the lower gully through a side entrance at about 6200 feet. I haven't determined just how I entered at that point.

The following day, Tuesday, I explored the valley to the west of camp. The cirques containing the two streams were traversed. That morning there were 18 sheep in the valley above camp. Twenty-two sheep were seen in valley to west, and I spent considerable time observing them through binoculars. All those identified were lambs and ewes.

There was much visible sky Wednesday morning, so I decided to make one more ascent before leaving. I wanted to confirm that the peak that I had climbed on Monday was actually the highest, and also to get a perspective of the Mountain features made possible by clear weather. I reached the peak in early afternoon. This time I reached the top of the summit rock by using foot holds on the east side. I sat on top and observed that the other spires were below. I observed the glacier to the west of the promontory for the first time. Thin clouds which were whisking by obscured the distant landscape. However, I did get some excellent views just below the summit during clear periods. Eagle Glacier (and most of the lake below), Raven Glacier, and Crow Pass were visible to the east. Turnagain Arm was exposed through the Bird Creek valley to the southwest.

There was a very small cairn on top, but no register.

## ORGAN MOUNTAIN continued.

Snow and a glaze of ice thinly covered the north exposures during this ascent. It had rained in the valley and snowed on the Mountain the previous night.

The following is a description of the route. Most altitudes were read from my altimeter which was calibrated at 400 feet in the meadow just west of the lake. Although it read 7000 feet at the summit, it might have been as much as 200 feet in error at some points in between.

1. From the meadow proceed up the drainage on the slope to left (NW) of waterfall.
2. Continue up drainage to 4400' level. The stream is below the surface from just above the waterfall.
3. At about 4400' level notice small gully running up slope to left (about 00 degree magnetic). This gully, which usually contains considerable snow, will be reference for initial segment of climb. Continue just past the gully to the obvious easy slope, turn left (about 00 degrees magnetic) and parallel the gully up. The slope immediately adjacent to gully contains loose rock, whereas a little further northeast there is some vegetation. Note that the valley makes a definite bend to the left (north) just beyond where you turn up the slope.
4. Continue climb parallel to gully until reaching rock outcrop at 5400 feet. The gully terminates at outcrop.
5. Enter rock outcrop just right (NE) of gully and scramble through.
6. Exit outcrop at 5700' and note wall of rock crossing the slope directly ahead.
7. Proceed directly toward the rock. When near the base, jog briefly to the left (south) to enter a fairly wide gully going up the slope. Traverse by the initial narrow tributary into gully and enter the wider segment. You are now entering the gully which leads to the ridge at the 6400' level.
8. Note wedge-shaped monolith in the gully at 6200' level. There is a small tributary gully running up to the left. It branches from the main gully at lower end of monolith. This was the gully I descended the previous Monday when disoriented by poor visibility.
9. Continue up gully to ridge. Note spire in center of gully at ridge and exit on left (SW) side of spire. The east side of the glacier will be visible below. When facing southwest note the arc of higher spires which circle to the right.
10. Climb a short distance over the loose rotten rock to the open access on the ridge to the east side.
11. Traverse the east side below the ridge toward the southwest. Maintain about the same elevation, 6400', until reaching a well defined gully running up to the west (270 degrees magnetic). This gully, which is reached after traversing an estimated 100 yards, leads to the summit. The entry elevation is about 6400'.
12. Continue up the gully. Exit through a fairly narrow channel at an estimated 100' below summit.
13. Follow the scree covered ledge above the south face to the highest spire. The spires will be to the right (north) during this segment.
14. Upon reaching the highest spire scramble up the east side on the delicate footing of loose and rotten rock. This spire is only about ten or fifteen feet above the ledge.

As a note of caution, it is recommended that markers be placed at key locations during the ascent. This is particularly desirable between the 6400' exit on the ridge and the summit. The maze of spires and rock outcrops combined with clouds are difficult to navigate through.

I will now relate some incidental experiences and observations during these tours through the Chugach State Park. On July 28, I encountered a brown bear along the upper trail on the north side of Ship Creek. I was descending through a patch of alder to a meadow below when I noticed the big brown head raised above the grass looking at me. It was about 100 yards distant. I rattled rocks in a can and shouted

## ORGAN MOUNTAIN continued

but the bear's only response was one of curiosity. He sat and looked while occasionally sweeping his huge paw in front of his face fanning insects. He circled and sniffed and stood on his hind legs sniffing and looking. I became apprehensive and decided to try my Penguin flare for the first time. Happily, it worked. The bear immediately jolted to the side and ran behind some brush downhill. I descended to the trail and proceeded up toward a wooded area. When I turned around, I noticed that the bear had returned. He was about 100 yards behind and still expressing curiosity. He didn't close distance on me; however, I climbed one of the nearest trees upon reaching the wooded area, where I remained until I made reasonable determination that the bear had no aggressive intentions. I descended from the tree after about five minutes without further encounter. This was my first encounter with a brown bear during my many tours up Ship Creek over the past ten years. Bear scat indicates their abundance; however, they obviously make every effort to avoid humans.

Sheep were likely to be encountered most anywhere. I even saw five sheep on the slope below O'Malley Peak across from the Wedge while I was departing on the last trip. They usually avoid the major valleys, e.g., Ship Creek and North Fork Ship Creek, but abound within the tributary valleys. A wolf approached within 50 yards as I was eating supper on the evening of August 2, in the valley just east of Indian Creek Pass. My camp was where the stream ran from the northern crescent-shaped lake. When the wolf saw me, he turned and trotted downstream, stopping occasionally to look back. There were eight sheep grazing on the above slope at the same time. There were five ducks swimming in the same lake when I camped there on August 2. Last September four large bull moose were seen at a distance of about fifty yards in a clearing about three miles up the North Fork Ship Creek from the confluence. Marmot are frequently seen in the open alpine country. Willow and rock ptarmigan were plentiful.

Some observations were not so pleasant. I camped beside the  $\approx 245^\circ$  lake (two ridges and three miles east of Indian Creek Pass) on August 29. The beautiful environment surrounding this lake had been marred by garbage left by sheep hunters. Game bags, shredded tent, poles, plastic tarp, food wrappings and cans were discarded in open view. There should be some method for removing such debris from the Park. Perhaps park administrators could arrange for military helicopters to assist in such an operation.

It is significant that such a high quality wilderness experience is available without traveling a great distance from Anchorage. National parks, such as McKinley, are crowded and permits are required for travel in the more remote areas. It is possible to enjoy solitude for a week or more within the Chugach State Park without any administrative red tape. More people should use it.

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## KACHEMAK BAY--GREWYNK GLACIER

August 2-24, 1975

by Dona Agosti

Nineteen MCAers participated in the Grewynk Glacier Stampede. We met on the Homer Spit, then boarded one of Clem Tillion's boats at 9 AM Saturday. The ride over included a stop at Bird Rock to photograph and identify the murre, kittiwakes, and other birds. After transferring to a smaller boat at Halibut Cove, Clem landed us on the beach near our trailhead. After a steep beginning, the trail wound several miles over the ridge and down to the glacier flats. We made camp on the sandy beaches of the lake in front of the glacier. Bill Quirk and Jim Reid traversed the nearly verticle scree slope to the right of the lake and glacier and rather than return by the same route, hiked over the glacier and around the left side of the lake.

## KACHEMAK BAY--GREWYK GLACIER continued.

However, high water in the river and darkness prevented their return that night. They were met by a welcoming party the next morning after they negotiated the river in a raft built from driftwood and climbing ropes. The return trip to Halibut Cove for pickup included "investigation" of several trails, one of which forked to a private cabin in the cove. We were fast running out of beach to sit on because of high tide when Clem aimed for the rock we were sitting on and stopped on a dime. The hike is highly recommended for families because the sandy beaches of the lake are safe for youngsters. The boat ride alone is worth the \$15.00 round trip fare.

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## HIGH VALLEY

Leaders: Tony Bockstahler and Elven Brudie  
September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1975  
by Dona Agosti

The Anchorage group met Tony at his home on Eagle River Road and drove to about Mile 11 (North Slope Subdivision). Here everyone piled into Tony's four-wheel drive for a hairy trip up switchbacks to the former Easterly homestead cabin. (Tony had obtained permission from the homesteaders.) Here the trail took off up a short draw, over several gullies and thence above timberline. We outhiked the rising fog in bright sunshine, which called for frequent stops to sunbathe and eat blueberries and crowberries. I had been hearing about this valley for ten years but had been deterred because of lack of access. It is an alpine valley with several peaks accessible for the climber and lots of explorable territory for the hiker. It would be great if the State Park Division would buy a piece of land for access to this lovely spot high above Eagle River. We watched seven sheep scamper on the slopes and a hawk who swept in low to make lunch out of my orange jacket. Steve Miller climbed the ridge between Peter's Creek and High Valley, and others investigated the far end of the valley. According to Thirty Hikes the peaks we looked at were Peak, 6795', Peakaboo, 6950', Mt. Perine, 5690', and Mt. Korohusk, 7030'.

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CLOSING NOTES

An account of the McCarthy-Nikolai Ridge MCA trip will appear in the November SCREE.

Additional correspondence is urgently needed from those who approve the proposal to change the name of Mt. McKinley to Denali. Please write your feelings to: Donald J. Orth, Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Reston, Va. 22092.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This issue of SCREE has been typed, as most future issues will be, on an "antique" manual typewriter with an inoperable "three" key. The numerous illegible or invisible numbers in this issue can generally be read as "three's." Also, it is impossible to retain all the manuscript articles submitted for publication in SCREE. If you wish to retain your original copy, please submit only a carbon or Xerox copy of your story. If neither is available, please enclose with your story a note requesting return of the manuscript along with your mailing address. Thanks.

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