

SCREE ✓

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

JANUARY 1976

VOLUME XIX, No. 1

JANUARY MEETING

Wednesday, January 21, 1976, 8 PM, Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle, Anchorage. The program will be a slide show on the Kichitna Spires and on some climbs in the McKinley area.

BOARD MEETING

Monday, February 2, 1976, 8 PM, 4107 North Star Street.

HIKING AND SKIING SCHEDULE

January 17-18
Saturday, Sunday

GLENN ALPS. Instruction session in overnight camping for Winter Camping School participants. Meet at 10 AM at Fred Meyer parking lot. Leader, Bill Stivers.

January 25
Sunday

SOUTH FORK EAGLE RIVER. Nordic Ski Club trip. Meet at the weigh station on the Glenn Highway at 9 AM. Leader, Tania Spurland, 349-2310.

January 31-
February 1
Saturday, Sunday

ARCTIC VALLEY TO INDIAN SKI TOUR. Meet at 7 AM at Fred Meyer parking lot. Leader, Bill Stivers, 277-2869.

February 14-16
Saturday-Monday

RESURRECTION TRAIL SKI TOUR. Participants will ski in two groups, one starting at each end of the trail, to facilitate transportation. Cabins have been reserved at Caribou Creek and Swan Lake for the first night and at Caribou Creek and Devil's Pass for the second night. Call leader Bill Stivers, 277-2869, for transportation details.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA. Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle, December 17, 1975.

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Stivers a bit past eight o'clock. There was no old business to discuss. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Under new business, Bill Stivers advised that the Arctic to Indian ski tour would be delayed until the weekend of January 1 due to inadequate snowfall. Bill said that the Club still did not have a Climbing Committee chairman. Any volunteers? Also, there is no Conservation Committee chairman. Another volunteer?

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING continued.

The President brought to the general assembly's attention an article in last month's SCREE about the banning of shooting, hunting, and trapping in the Chugach State Park. This was a matter that the Executive Committee had been having some serious discussion about. Fritz Rieger moved that the MCA officially state a policy against shooting, hunting, and trapping in the Chugach State Park. George Stransky seconded the motion. Tom Meacham then stated that a ban may be issued by the Park and Wildlife Department if enough interest is shown in this matter. The motion passed without dissent. A letter to the proper authorities will be written.

Terry Becker said there is going to be an ice climbing school in January. Signup will be January 7 at AMH. On January 8 at 8 PM there will be a class session regarding technical problems, proper equipment to use, and care. The practical part of the class will be on January 11. There will be a limit of four students per instructor. Anybody interested in a Winter Camping School was asked to stop up and see Bill after the meeting.

Leo Hannan said the Alaska Rescue Group was looking for new members. A meeting was scheduled for December 22 at 7:30 PM in the Community Center, Room 101, to discuss the group--its aims and its duties. Subjects to be discussed include rescue, mountain safety, avalanches, "Pieps" homeing units for search and recovery.

After a short break for refreshments an excellent film entitled "The Fitzroy" was shown. The movie was about the technical climb of a rock spire in an isolated area of South America.

Respectfully submitted,
David Melville, Acting Secretary

PRESIDENT'S PEN

NOMINATIONS FOR SECRETARY. Shawn Oxford, who was elected Secretary at the annual meeting, has resigned due to a schedule conflict between the monthly meetings and his new job. Nominations for this vacancy are being accepted by Fritz Rieger, 277-8979 (home), or 279-8686, ext. 310 (work). Nominations will also be accepted from the floor before the election at the January meeting. Volunteers (self-nominations) are particularly solicited. This position primarily involves taking minutes of the monthly meetings, therefore demands regular attendance. If you can help the Club in this manner, please call Fritz.

WINTER CAMPING SCHOOL. An equipment demonstration and lecture were given on January 6. Twelve participants registered for the overnight practical training scheduled for Saturday, January 17. The group will meet at Fred Meyer at 10 AM Saturday. Thanks to Hugh Cargill for assisting in the classroom instruction.

ICE CLIMBING CLASS. Twenty applicants registered for the ice climbing class. Regretfully, only fifteen students were accepted because only two instructors (Jim Hale and Terry Becker) were available. The classroom instruction was completed on January 8. Practical training was scheduled for Sunday, January 11.

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1975 ACTIVITIES REPORT TO THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB

Alaskan mountaineers were again active in the Alaskan, Brooks, Talkeetna and Chugach ranges. A highlight was the second ascent of Mt. Deborah via a new route by Brian Okonek, Pat Condran, Mark Hotman, Dave Petigrew, Pat Stuart, and Toby Wheeler. On April 2, the party departed the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway at mile 229 on the 45-day expedition which led to the north summit via the Yanert Fort, the Yanert Glacier, and the south ridge. The first ascent had been twenty-one years before.

Another impressive event was the winter ascent of Mt. Foraker in February and March from the West Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier. Steve and Gary Tandy, Don and Dave Paulky, Brian Miskie, Gaylord McCord, and Larry Tedrick initially attempted the difficult south ridge, however, due to an inadequate supply of rope (8000 feet were out and twice as much needed), this route was discontinued on the nineteenth day. Gary and Steve Tandy remained on the mountain after the others were flown out to climb the slightly easier southeast ridge. On March 15, after 29 days, they reached the summit. The weather was clear, temperature -30 degrees and gusty wind 10-20 mph, giving a chill factor of -80 degrees.

Kevin Apgar, Steve and Sandy Passmore, Ann Widmer, Gerry Schriever, Clyde Helms and Bill Brant reported five minor ascents, all probable firsts, in the Arrigetch Peaks area of the Central Brooks Range during early August.

In June, three youths, Charlie Hammond, 18, Ward Warren, 20, and Mark Fouts, 16, completed a two-week traverse of the Matanuska and Markus Baker Glaciers. Termination point was an airstrip in Grasshopper Valley, near Knik Glacier.

Ski touring and hiking have generated significant interest. Ski tours from Arctic Valley Ski Bowl Road to Indian, via Ship Creek and Indian Creek Pass, have become annual events. The annual four-day spring tour from Arctic Valley to Girdwood, via Ship Creek, North Fork Ship Creek, Camp Creek, Raven Creek and Crow Pass was aborted this year when the party was struck by an avalanche in the North Fork Lake area. Dona Agosti, the hiking chairman, organized a group of thirty-six MCAers for a very rewarding five-day backpack tour within the Katmai National Monument during July. A nontechnical climb of Organ Mountain was accomplished in August from the North Fork Ship Creek Valley and the southeast slope.

The MCA continues to support environmental issues affecting club activities. The Club supports pending legislation to establish a Talkeetna Mountains State Park, and is recommending that hunting, trapping and shooting be banned within the Chugach State Park, a de facto wilderness area located just outside the boundary of the Anchorage municipality. The proposal now before the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to change the name of Mt. McKinley to its historic name, Denali, is strongly supported by the MCA.

A basic mountaineering course was conducted over five weekends during the spring and summer. Thirty students enrolled and ten instructors participated. The students were instructed in basic rock and ice climbing and the fundamentals of glacier and alpine travel.

We were saddened by the untimely death of Don Sheldon, the veteran Talkeetna glacier pilot, in early 1975.

The MCA requests information on climbs in the ranges near Anchorage by "Outside" groups, so that the history of these ranges may remain complete. A short note to the club (Box 2037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510) detailing party members, peak climbed and its location (elevation and township and range on the 1:64,000 quads), date climbed and suggested names would be appreciated. William A. Stivers, President

ALASKA RESCUE GROUP NEWS

(Note: Beginning with the present issue of SCREE the monthly news of the Alaska Rescue Group will be included in SCREE.)

The regular monthly meeting will be held the first Thursday of each month (next meeting, February 5, 1976) in the basement of the Community Center, Room 101, at 6th and G Streets (across from the Hill Building). General Meeting: 7:00; Board Meeting: 6:30. All members are welcome at the Board meeting. The general meeting business session will begin promptly at 7:30 and if the business is not concluded by 9:00 the business portion of the meeting will be terminated anyway. From 9:00 on the program/training session will be held. The ARG monthly field session will be held the weekend immediately following the regular monthly meeting. If the field session is one day, the day on which the session is held will alternate. For example, the session on December 28 was on a Saturday. The next one day field session held will be on a Sunday. This is to accomodate some of the ARG members who work one or the other days of the weekend. By alternating Saturdays and Sundays all ARG members have a chance to attend some of the field sessions.

1976 MEMBERSHIP DUES. At the December 22, 1975 meeting, the ARG membership voted to dispense with the membership dues for 1976. It was a consensus of opinion that the members would rather donate their time to projects such as the FAA Survival Training session and the German Club Oktoberfest and not pay dues. So, there are no ARG membership dues for ANY ARG members, new or old, in 1976. If you haven't joined because of the \$5.00 dues, you no longer have that excuse.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. The program for the February 5, 1976, meeting will be presented by Dr. Brant, Flight Surgeons Office, Elmendorf AFB, on First Aid and Mountaineering Medicine. The program will be approximately 1 1/2 hours in length. The ARG Training Committee will present a short session on HELITAC operations. This will cover how to enter, exit helicopters, emergency procedures, etc. This is a "must" for all ARG members who will be flying in helicopters to rescue missions.

FIRST AID COURSE. An Advanced First Aid Course for all ARG members who do not have a current American Red Cross Advanced First Aid card will be held in January. ALL ARG members who wish to take the course should contact Leo Hannan as soon as possible. The date of the course will be determined as soon as the number of students is known.

AVALANCHE COURSE. An Avalanche Course equivalent to the National Ski Patrol Circle A Course will be held for ARG and Nordic Ski Patrol members in February. The time and date of the course will be decided at the February 5 ARG meeting.

ALPINE ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

(The following excerpts are quoted from American Alpine Club correspondence.)

The American Alpine Club is deeply concerned about the past, present and future of all mountain-related activities. Unlike most other forms of recreation, the very essence of rock climbing and mountaineering depends on the natural scene, a non-renewable resource. The current popularity of climbing is causing tremendous human impact upon the mountain environment.

The future of climbing is dependent upon a minimum-impact approach. It has become apparent that man can do anything given enough equipment, time and luck. This approach is not mountaineering. Just as foreign to the climber is a rigid codification of ethical behavior. The solution to mountain problems must begin at an

ALPINE ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES continued.

individual level.

We therefore urge the individual to consider the cumulative effects of his mountain activities and to tailor his own code of ethics in such a way that traditional mountaineering values are preserved for future generations. This means respecting the varying traditions of climbing in different geographical areas. It also means avoiding the use of off-road vehicles, mechanized climbing aids and, at times, such traditional items as fires, horses, pitons and aircraft.

We believe that self-restraint and discretion must be employed by each individual in order to preserve the dignity of both our mountains and our sport.

Among good alpine environmental practices, depending on local conditions, are the following:

1. Observing local regulations and the guidelines of Federal agencies or private owners.
2. Helping to prevent trail erosion. Cutting across switchbacks creates serious erosion problems. Making duplicate paths should be avoided. Trails which cut across a slope where the angle is low will cause less erosion than those which cut across it where it is steep.
3. Protecting the trees. Continuous use for belay and rappel anchors can damage and even kill trees. Tree-climbing should not be a substitute for routes on rock.
4. Protecting the alpine meadows. In general, the lower forested areas or the rocky alpine areas are more tolerant of use than the delicate sub-alpine meadows and are therefore preferable for campsites.
5. Packing a stove. In many alpine and sub-alpine areas down wood is in short supply. The lower, dead branches of alpine trees are part of the natural scene and should be allowed to remain. Blackened campfire rings left in place are a sign of human impact on the wilderness environment; on the other hand, dispersing fire rings will damage the environment if many users are doing it.
6. Avoiding polluting. Soap pollutes streams and lakes. Excrement should be buried a short distance into the top soil layer where natural processes will decompose it. All trash and garbage should be packed out. If it is buried animals will dig up the soil to get at it.
7. Packing out litter left behind by the sort of thoughtless user who will always be with us, no matter how high the general level of consciousness becomes.
8. Using restraint in the employment of climbing aids such as pitons and bolts which can permanently deface the rock and degrade the route for subsequent climbers.

ICEFALL PEAK

October 18-19, 1975

by Paul Janke

Saturday morning, October 18, 1975, Ken Manning, Bruce Brown, Sue Wrenn and Paul Janke departed on skis from an overnight camping spot near The Hoodoos, a couple miles northeasterly of the Isabel Pass pipeline camp. The objective? Icefall Peak

ICEFALL PEAK continued.

(8000'+), 8 miles and 4500 vertical feet distant. Saturday dawned with a cloudless sky and temperatures in the 20's. The route went across a classic bridge and up the Gulkana Glacier. After a slow start due to a broken ski pole, clothing adjustments, and convincing our bodies this was what we really wanted to do, progress was made and camp was set a mile from the base of the Moore Icefall at the 5 PM sunset. All were enjoying dinner and the bright full moon so much that no one complained about the 0 degree weather. Sunday the clear skies continued with scattered clouds on the horizon. Skiing continued to the 7500' ridge SE of the summit as five feet of powder precluded walking, even through the icefalls. The summit was reached at 1 PM. Congratulations are in order for Bruce, as it is believed he made the first one-pole ascent of the mountain. The sunny sky awarded the group a clear view in most every direction. The Moffit-Shand area northwesterly was quite impressive. So were the many icefalls in all directions surrounding the peak, and the bottomless crack in the cornice just a few feet from the summit. The aeolian shaped ice patterns on the gendarme a quarter mile from the summit had us all in awe. After a brief look at the map, lunch and photos, the descent began. The ski run back to base camp a couple of miles was much needed for our by now very tired muscles. The trip out was made under high clouds. The cars were arrived at about 8 PM after a somewhat frustrating last couple of hours skiing in a darkened environment. Wolverine and fox tracks on the moraine and a raven circling the peak proved we were not the only ones enjoying the area that weekend. The climb was very rewarding in itself, however one of the most enjoyable aspects of the weekend was the entertainment supplied by the customers in the cafe at Glenallen during a rest stop on the trip home.

SOUTH RAVEN AND GOAT SUMMIT

November 1, 1975

by Greg Durocher

We knew, starting out in the cold, semi-light of Saturday morning that it was going to be an excellent climb. The temperature was around zero at 5 AM as we headed out of Anchorage and the sky was clear: a good omen.

Pat Stewart, my cousin Brian Okonek, and myself left the car under the towering silhouette of Goat Mountain at 6:00 and immediately proceeded upwards at a healthy incline of 35-40 degrees. It didn't take long to gain the ridge on the South side of Miles glacier and there we were treated to a spectacular array of peaks, valleys, and glaciers. From here the incline lessened except for several short kick-step slopes with hairy drops to the Miles glacier 1000 feet below.

When we topped that ridge we found ourselves at the lip of a bowl-shaped portion of the upper Eagle Glacier. The Raven peaks were on the left and Goat was on the right. Mistaking South Raven for Goat, we proceeded that way and made that 6,500 foot summit at 11 AM. We had lunch and felt justly elated, for the scenery was brilliantly displayed in the noon sun and all our future climbs beckoned in that addictive atmosphere. We were also pleased with our 5-hour time.

Back down at the lip the map was taken out and we discovered that Goat Mountain was East of us, and that we climbed South Raven. A short while later we were on Goat's summit, 6,380 feet above the distant Turnagain arm, talking and soaking up the scenery. No one wanted to break the spell by leaving. However, the cold penetrated and we had to descend.

We all had a great day, and added just a little more to our wealth of experiences and are a little better for it.

HURDY GURDY

December 7, 1975

by Greg Durocher

Brian Okonek and I woke up at 4:00 AM at his house, which is the usual time for winter climbing with him. We left at five with the temperature a frigid 20 degrees below zero.

We parked near the end of the main road up the South Fork of Eagle River at 5400'. Our approach route went up the valley South of Harp Peak, which is a tributary of the South Fork. In the pre-dawn glow, the surrounding ridges and walls appeared eerie and forboding; at least they made the hike-in interesting. By 8 AM we were well into kicking steps into the slopes. The most exhausting part of our ascent was the continuous descent--that dreaded slipping back in the deteriorated slab. It's the same feeling experienced by scree scramblers. The slopes had a couple inches of slab with up to several feet of unstable crystals underneath. The overall conditions and mainly the lack of snow indicated generally stable slopes.

Cutting through a small cornice, we gained the N.W. summit ridge of Hurdy Gurdy just East of point 5400', and had little trouble from there to the top at 5905'. I had on VB boots and no crampons so we had to chop steps just below the summit on a south facing slope. At noon we stood on top with a -35 degree wind-chill. Brian had taken some hot chocolate along in a thermos, which really proved its worth. The mountains to the north and east were rugged and immediately challenging. The mood was almost that of being intimidated by the surrounding peaks rather than the expansive "high" feeling of being the highest in the area.

We descended on a southerly slope, glissading on hard-packed sections, and hiked out over Eagle Lake. The hike was anti-climatic and got very old very fast. We finally arrived at the car at 4:00 PM exhausted but happy. Now it was homeward to a turkey dinner. Such is the good life.

FLAT-TOP SLEEP-OUT

December 20-21, 1975

Peter Lang, Mike Hunt, Terry Rees, Hugh Cargill, David Newcombe, Wally Ray, Lonnie Collins, and Bill Stivers reached the crest at 12:30 PM, Saturday. Due to a high wind the group circled the peak and then retreated to set up camp in the alpine fir to north of ridge.

At about 9:40 AM Sunday they observed some individuals departing Flat Top along the west ridge. Jim Hale, Mike Richardson, Bill Berkley, Barry Kircher, Paul Cornacelli, Bruce Hilliard and Jim Renkert had reached the summit at 9:00 PM, Saturday night. They reported a peaceful night with only a slight breeze.

ARCTIC VALLEY TO BIRD CREEK

January 2-4, 1976

Bill Stivers

I accepted Hugh Cargill's invitation to accompany him on the three-day ski tour to Bird Creek. We departed the Ski Bowl Road at 8:00 AM Monday morning and followed a mostly broken ski trail up Ship Creek. Upon reaching the confluence about 1:15 PM, we departed the broken trail (apparently it led to Indian) and proceeded up the North Fork. Shortly, we heard the almost inaudible howl of a wolf. The

ARCTIC VALLEY TO BIRD CREEK continued.

howl grew louder and continued for about fifteen minutes after which the usual pervading silence returned to the valley. We camped below the tree line and where we could dip water from the creek through a hole in the ice. The temperature was -2 degrees.

Saturday morning, we departed our camp at 8:15 AM. The temperature was -8 degrees, which was quite warm for clear weather in January. With the exception of one small hole, where we filled our water bottles, ice covered the North Fork above the tree line. The windswept snow provided easy skiing. A lone bull moose (he still had his rack) was sighted about one mile downstream from Bird Creek Pass. At 11:30 we enjoyed our lunch in the sunshine which warmed the pass.

From the pass a different routing from that traversed last winter by Jim Barr's group was selected. Although we encountered some difficult segments, our route was significantly easier. The creek was skied through the pass. When the first coniferous trees were sighted on the west side of the south end of the pass we climbed up the slope to where the trees were less dense (about 1000 feet above Bird Creek). The slope was then traversed to the gully which drains the valley just west of the pass. We removed our skis to thrash through some alder just before crossing the stream in the gully, and carried them up the heavily wooded west bank. The traverse was then continued along the sparsely wooded slope about 1000 feet above Bird Creek. As camp was being prepared on the slope at 3:00 PM, fog was observed below moving up Bird Creek from Turnagain Arm. The temperature was a warm +1 degrees and did not go below +4 degrees Saturday night.

Sunday morning we continued traversing the slope, selecting a route that would lead to Bird Creek at about the confluence of the stream from Bird Glacier valley. From that point the objective was to get on the creek as soon as possible. We skied downstream on the creek for several miles, observing a long run of what was believed to be land otter tracks. Apparently the creek flowed around a small island just before passing a well-defined gully to the northwest. About 1/2 mile downstream from the gully a vertical bank appeared directly ahead (the creek turns 90 degrees at the bank). About 200 yards upstream from the bank and on the left (southeast) side of the creek is where the well-defined trail leading to the Seward Highway begins.

We reached the Seward Highway at 1:00 PM.

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This is your last issue of SCREE IF you have not already paid your 1976 membership dues. To continue receiving SCREE, send your dues to the MCA or to Ms. Dona Agosti, 2,24 Loussac Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. Membership rates are as follows:

Family: \$10.00.

Individual: \$7.50.

Junior and out-of-town (50 miles): \$5.00.

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Note: Issues January - May have the wrong volume number printed on them, should all be Volume XVIII.

The August issue is misnumbered issue 7, it should be issue 8.

The October issue is misnumbered issue 9, it should be issue 10.

Compiled by Brian Okonek

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