



JANUARY 1977
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

JANUARY MEETING

Wednesday, January 19, 1977, 8 PM, Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle, Anchorage, Alaska. The program will be a mini slide show by BILL STIVERS on last year's Arctic Valley to Girdwood traverse, and a slide show by JIM HALL of the successful 1976 hang glider leap off the top of the continent.

Please Note: The February 1977 MCA meeting will be at a different location (to be announced) due to Fur Rendezvous use of Pioneer Schoolhouse.

NOTICE

If you have not paid your 1977 MCA dues, your subscription to SCREE will stop with this issue. Please renew now!

CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Saturday January 29 VISTA PEAK, Eagle River Valley. Leader, TOM MEACHAM, 277-2129. A moderate one day ski tour for the skiers, plus a climb at the end of the trail for the climbers. Ice axe and crampons required for climbers. Climbers leave Fred Meyer at 7 AM; skiers can come later; ski-tour organizer needed for this. Four-wheel drive very helpful in getting to the end of Meadow Creek Road.

Saturday February 5 O'MALLEY PEAK, South Fork Campbell Creek. Organizer, TOM MEACHAM, 277-2129. Leave from Glen Alps parking lot; meet at Fred Meyer at 7:30 AM. An easy ski-tour with a climb of a skyline peak thrown in. Ice axe and climbing (not ski-touring) boots required.

All climbs are subject to change in date or cancellation due to adverse weather or snow conditions (like no snow, if the winter to date is any indication). Sufficient winter gear, including down or fiberfill coats and warm boots, are presumed. Snow shoes are welcome, but they will have to start earlier and get back to town later-- a penalty of web-foot travel!

SKI-TOUR SCHEDULE

Saturday January 22 NORTH SIDE SHIP CREEK ski tour. Leave Fred Meyer 7 AM. The creek is open, so we can't cross it. Leader, BILL STIVERS, 277-2869.

Saturday January 29 MOOSE CREEK - FISHHOOK ROAD area ski tour, if snow conditions warrant. Call DONA AGOSTI, 279-2901.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Wednesday, December 15, 1976, Pioneer School House, Third and Eagle, Anchorage, Alaska.

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM by President TOM HEACHAN. Preceding the business meeting BILL QUIRK and DAVID NEWCOMBE presented a slide show of the MCA climb of Byron Peak this summer. The guest book was brought to the meeting and was duly signed by several guests who were present.

There were no additions to the minutes of the November meeting. The Treasurer's report showed cash on hand, \$50.93; checking account, \$159.44; savings, \$428.37; expenses, \$270.14; undeposited checks, \$15.00; for a total of \$653.74. There was no Conservation Committee report.

After the break for refreshments, GILL TODD presented an interesting slide show on the Katmai area. The meeting was adjourned.

DAVID NEWCOMBE
Secretary

MID-WINTER FLATTOP SLEEP-IN

December 18-19, 1976

by TOM HEACHAN

Balmy temperatures and moderate breezes hosted a record-setting MCA mid-winter sleep-in, our annual solstice celebration and a Club tradition since the Club's early days. Twenty-eight MCAs and Clisso the dog partied on the peak until the wee hours, and then retired to eleven tents, an igloo, and a snow cave. It was without doubt the largest mid-winter sleep-in ever. Besides the usual mountain house and brew, the celebrants cavorted on the summit with red flares, skyrockets, primer-cord avalanche research devices, and a five-hour bonfire, making Flattop visible (and audible) for miles around. Finally the inevitable happened--the State Troopers gave us a brief fly-by with their noisy toy and its two-million candlepower headlamp. For a few minutes you could read a book by artificial moonlight, but the revelers instead turned cartwheels and gestured in the limelight. Finding nothing really out-of-order, the chopper returned to Merrill Field, narrowly missing half a dozen snow machines illegally riding the Powerline Pass trail, who laid low while the bear was in the air, so to speak. Among the merrymakers were BILL STIVERS, MIKE HUNT, DAVID NEWCOMBE, TOM HEACHAN, DAVID EVANS, PETER LANG, BARRY KIRCHER, MIKE RICHARDSON (his fifth consecutive mid-winter sleep-in!), NICK HEINEZ, NED LEWIS, BILL BRICKLY, JOHN PIRAMONT, PAT McMANUS and two companions, LYDIA WURKUS, BILL BRANDT, MIKE BROOKS and GARNET ROSEN (who hauled up several packloads of firewood which they had furnished), LINDA FUNK, BRUCE HILLIARD, DEBY KRISTICH, PAUL and TERRY CARNICELLI, VALENIE LEROUX, JIM and RONNIE HALE, and GREG HIATT.

MCA CABINS

The MCA owns or maintains several primitive cabins for the use of club members and the general public. Pichler's Perch is located on Eklutna Glacier, the Hoeman Hut on Whiteout Glacier, Han's Hut on Eagle Glacier (all in the Chugach mountains), and the Rainery Hut on Mint Glacier, in the Talkeetnas. In addition, MCA members have use of the cabin at Snowbird Mine in the Talkeetnas. There is also a Forest Service Cabin at Crow Pass near Girdwood.

MCA CABINS continued.

The MCA huts were named in memory of departed MCA members JOE PICHLER, VIN and GRACE HOEMAN, HANS VAN DER LAAN, and MARK RAINERY. They are A-frame cabins which will accommodate up to twenty people (a squeeze) in summer, and less in winter. Because of their remote locations the MCA huts receive minimal maintenance, and any dilapidation or storm damage should be reported to the Club for early repairs, if possible. The Huts and Cabins chairmanship of the Club is open, and anyone who would like to be responsible for organizing summer maintenance crews for these cabins should contact TOM MEACHAM. It has been several years since this Committee has been active, and maintenance has definitely fallen behind schedule.

With the exception of the Snowbird Mine and Crow Pass cabins, the huts are not located on USGS maps, so finding them may be difficult for the first-time visitor. Better go with a party which has been there before. The Rainery Hut, for example, was deliberately hidden to make it less tempting to snowmobilers. The cabins on Eklutna, Whiteout, and Eagle Glaciers and Crow Pass are conveniently spaced for a multi-day traverse of this glacier system, summer or winter (but with the expectation of several cabin-bound days weathering winter storms on occasion).

The task of putting wooden name plaques on the MCA huts was adopted at the MCA meeting of February 1974, but remains to be done.

CHRISTMAS PINNACLE

by BILL QUIRK

The day before Christmas JOHN and JANET TOENES, MARK WOJTALIK, GREG and BRENDA HEATH, SHARON CRAWFORD and myself drove to the Little Susitna Roadhouse, up the hill to the junction of Fern Mine Road and parked our vehicles. We skied up Fern Mine Road over snowmachine tracks to Fern Mine. At this point we left all traces of civilization behind as we laid down fresh tracks in the snow climbing northward to the Fern Mine MCA Cabin.

Christmas Day Sharon and myself set out at 9 AM to climb the unnamed pinnacle to the west of the cabin. We skied to the base of the summit ridge at 4500 feet north of the pinnacle. At this point we parked the skis and climbed the ridge. We could see Montana Peak 10 miles to the northeast. Then a light snow commenced--everything was still except a raven that glided by. We asked, "What is Mr. Raven doing here?"

We continued along the ridge southward one-half mile over several peaks and gaps in deteriorating weather until we reached the summit ridge. The going was slow as we had to tread through deep snow drifts. Half way up the northwest ridge leading to the summit we became momentarily stuck but after looking for alternate routes found one that was negotiable without the rope. As we approached the summit of the pinnacle (5530 feet) we could see fresh tracks in the snow on the very top. Now we knew what Mr. Raven was up to. He liked mountain peaks, too!

At 4 PM we returned to the cabin and JOHN fired up the stoves and began preparing Christmas dinner. We had sliced turkey and ham and great cornbread dressing that JANET had prepared and cranberry sauce, corn, and all kinds of cookies, cake, and pie. Christmas night was clear in the Talkeetnas and all the stars and planets shone brightly.

The snow conditions in the Talkeetnas were prime--about four feet with six inches of powder. We all agreed that this was one of the most enjoyable Christmases. And SHARON was still insisting we should name the peak Christmas Pinnacle.

AN OPEN LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE McKINLEY CLIMBERS
or
HOW TO MANAGE BIG MAC WITH MINIMAL INDIGESTION

There was a new record set on Denali last year. There was a mass overabundance of ignorance! Nowhere else on earth was there such a paradox: Doug Scott, Dougal Haston, Charlie Porter and Reinhold Messner vs. the magnificently underprepared. The resultant season was a constant amazement to all. The almost daily rescues, instances of severe frostbite and altitude sickness plus the many deaths brought a question to many minds. . . . Why????

Stories of heroes and hard men inspired attempts by many climbers who were unwilling to accept the arctic-high altitude nature of the mountain. Contrary to popular belief, McKinley is not a cakewalk! It is very high and very cold! Messner stated the altitude affected him as at 24,000' in the Himalaya, while the 1968 AAJ sets the equivalent altitude at 23,000 feet. Then there's Doug Scott, who said he'd never been so bloody cold in all his life! These factors alone would not account for Denali's high toll were it not for an out of proportion desire to succeed, coupled with a lack of proper preparation on the climbers' parts. Nowhere else on earth is a remote high altitude experience so accessible. A "rematch with Big Mac" is within easy reach of most mountaineers; therefore, to sacrifice fingers, toes, or possibly a life to climb Denali is inconceivable.

A respect for the mountain is the key to safe travel. A rigorous training schedule, a knowledge of acclimatization techniques, mountain medicine and self-rescue will prepare the climber for the many pitfalls that lie in his way. Everyone wants to be like Reinhold Messner, an internationally famous high altitude star. What holds people back is a lack of intelligence, not ability. Messner's sixteen hour sprint from 14,000 feet on the S.W. face was preceded by two weeks acclimatization time below 14,000 feet.

The mountaineer must realize that a successful climb of Rainier or a Mexican volcano does not award him a "Master of High Altitude" badge. Undoubtedly helpful, it can bring a climber to a point where he may recognize altitude problems as they happen, possibly avoiding a bad situation.

Most climbers realize that there is some inherent danger in any mountaineering endeavor. Sickness and accident can cripple the most well-prepared parties, so to be prepared for self-rescue is of great importance. Helicopter evacuation above 10,000 feet is risky at best. The possibility of a major disaster occurring during a rescue is a growing concern.

It would do climbers well to follow the pioneer ethic of self-reliance; and to heed the words of Bradford Washburn stated in a recent Mountaineering Club of Alaska meeting. "Most of the problems on Denali are caused by people going too damn fast. It is a fact, that through training, knowledge, and common sense, Denali need not be an end of a lifetime experience.

Jim Hale
Terry Becker
Gary Bocarde

FINAL HEARINGS AND DECISION ON RENAMING Mt. McKINLEY, DENALI, TO COME IN MARCH

If you have not yet expressed yourself about changing the name of Mt. McKinley to Denali, please do so now. Letters from persons in other states may be more telling now than more requests from Alaska. So ask your friends and relatives Outside to write too. The address is:

RENAMING MT. MCKINLEY continued.

Mr. Donald J. Orth
Executive Secretary
Domestic Geographic Names
National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092

Sincerely, ROD WILSON

BITS AND PIECES

CHARLES KIBLER is thinking about doing a two and one-half week cross-country hike in the GRAND CANYON in February. Anyone interested in joining him can see maps and exciting pictures of previous trips at 277-8464.

FOR SALE: One Polarguard vest (Twin Peaks), size medium, unused. Call DAVID NEWCOMBE at 279-4993. Will accept nearest offer to retail price of \$29.50.
