

SCREE

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

FEBRUARY MEETING

Vol 21 #2

Wednesday, February 15, 8 P.M., CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Multi-purpose Room, 15th & C Street. A Slide Show will be presented by Carl Dixon on a climbing trip he made to Peru this last December and early January including a climb of Aconcagua (22,835') in western Argentina, the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere. Valarie LaRue, MCA Vice-President will give a mini-slide show on the annual ice-climbing school held this last fall on the Matanuska Glacier.

IN MEMORIAM

ELLEN DUFRESNE
CHARLES KIBLER
PAUL POLLACK
ALAN WORLAND

Sadly, we announce the loss of four active and enthusiastic members in an avalanche on January 22, 1978. While skiing a ridge along Taylor Creek Canyon in the Turnagain Pass area, Ellen, Charles, Paul and Alan were swept to their death in a mammoth wall of snow. Charles Head, a fifth member of the group, was carried into the valley and up the other side where he miraculously popped out of the snow. With a great deal of effort, he was able to free himself and then spent almost an hour looking for signs of the other four.

Avalanches continued to break loose and he was in danger of hypothermia since all his gear, including pack and skis, were torn from his body. He spent the next seven hours wading through snow up to his armpits to get back to the Seward Highway. At Portage, he notified Alaska State Troopers. An Alaska Rescue Group team skied into the area that night using headlamps and dogs, but continuing avalanches and deteriorating weather forced them to give up about a mile from the original avalanche area. Sixty-mile-per-hour winds the next day prevented helicopters from surveying the area. Finally, on Wednesday, January 25th, after a rescue helicopter from Elmendorf Air Force Base flew over the scene and saw no signs of life, Alaska State Troopers called off the search until such time as it became safe for recovery teams. Charles has been a member of the Club since 1968 and many will remember not only his skills, but his excellent map reading and route finding. He was always looking

MEMORIAM cont.

for new and interesting hikes and ski tours and at the last meeting had agreed to meet with Helen Nienheruser to help with revisions in "55 Ways to the Wilderness". Ellen will be remembered by her fellow hikers as an energetic, athletic person who could handle Suicide Peak in November, Bold Peak in the clouds and Mt. Vigor in the fog. She will be equally missed by her gym and math students at Chugiak H. Al Worland so impressed club members that he was elected President but had to resign when he was unexpectedly transferred to Ft. Greely in Fairbanks. That did not deter his participation - he joined us at Tonsina for a hike and on other outings north of Anchorage. He was also Ski Patrol Leader for the Black Rapids Ski Area south of Delta Junction. Paul, a law clerk in Hugh Fleischer's firm, had arrived in Alaska and attended his first meeting of the Club in January. He was anxious to investigate and learn more about the Alaskan outdoors.

To all of the families and relatives we extend our sincerest sympathies and hope they will be comforted.

MINT GLACIER SKI TOUR

Saturday-Sunday April 1st & 2nd

This is a great chance to see the Mint Cabin and surrounding environs! It is about an eight mile trip into the cabin. The Friday before, a group will break a trail all the way; so it will be quite a nice ski tour. The Nordic Ski Patrol and ARG have been asked to join in the tour also. No climbing gear is needed; just bring your tent and sleeping bag and a little something to eat. This will be a great chance to meet your fellow MCAers on a Club trip.

THIS COULD HAPPEN TO YOU! Jack Duggan and John Dillman were on the 3rd Finger of The Hand (The Five Fingers) during the December warm spell. John was leading the second pitch and just about to pull over the top of a short verticle section when upward progress was halted. The haul rope had frozen solidly down below. Jack was unable to reach it from the belay stance and John couldn't untie it from his harness due to the tie-in position and the profusion of ice-screws and slings around him. John then had to down climb some 20 feet to find a stance where he could pull the line free. Imagine this happening on a long committed lead when you are completely gripped and out of steam. You might consider checking the haul line next time before beginning a climb, or else make sure the belayer tends the haul line also.

CLUB MEMBERS IN NEPAL

Susan Havens, Karen Norman, Gunnar Naslund and John Dillman spent over a month trekking through the Rowalling Valley and over a 19,000 foot pass into the Everest area in October and November 1977. In early November the group split up with Karen remaining in Pheriche working as a volunteer nurse at Dr. Peter Hacketts Trekkers Aid Station; Susan wandered off around Dingboche where she spent a month climbing and playing the rescue victim in a BBC movie, with Chouinard and Hamish McGinnie; Gunnar and John left for Katmandu via Lukla, where John waited nine days for a flight and Gunnar walked out the 150 miles. John met Steve Hart and Barbara Miracle in Katmandu and helped them organize a rescue team in the general area of Everest. More next month!

John Dillman

MINUTES OF JANUARY GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

Wednesday, January 18, 1978, Pioneer School House, Anchorage

The meeting was called to order by President DENKEL/ALTE at 8:05.

Board member DAVE KLINGER presented a mini-slide show of a 10-day hiking trip into the Brooks Range after a fly-in to Anaktuvuk Pass.

Business Meeting: Minutes of December meeting approved. Treasurer's Report: Checking: \$724.80; Savings: \$448.53; Cash-on-hand: \$37.20. Sandy Rabinowitch explained plans for climbing areas along the Seward Highway in connection with pending State Highway realignment south of Potter. Chugach State Park staff is revising its comprehensive plan. Maps have been studied of the realignment from Potter to Girdwood. The first 5-mile section will be put out for bids this spring for construction over the next two years. Areas where rock climbing potential exists have been checked out, including space for off-highway parking. An inventory of all rock and ice climbing areas in Chugach State Park is requested in order to plan ahead. It was suggested that indexes to Scree be checked for climbing areas as well as reference to % WAYS. Bo Bassett described with maps the proposed hydro-electric developments on the Susitna River. Two hearings are scheduled in the current week on this subject by the DIRM. Planning this year includes improving an access road into the area by the Corps of Engineering, a work camp for 20 people, core drilling in some Native Claim areas, and an airstrip. The Corps has prepared an environmental assessment but not a preliminary environmental impact statement. A Sign-up sheet was provided for members to obtain more information.

New Business: DONA AGOSTI reported a hiking schedule for the year would be prepared soon. She can also provide information on the 10-day hike in July into the Wrangells.

DAVE KLINGER again requested that members fill out the questionnaire attached to the December 1977 Scree. Charles Evans announced that the State Department of Fish and Game is requesting comments and proposals to amend the Division of Game regulations.

After the Intermission for refreshments and dues payments, Dr. Henry Santeford gave a talk on snow hydrology with slides and viewgraphs of various snows of Alaska.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:10 PM.

E. Allen Robinson, Secretary

NEW EDITION OF "THE ASCENT OF DENALI" NOW AVAILABLE

MCA has purchased a limited supply of Hudson Stuck's mountaineering classic just published by the MOUNTAINEERS in Seattle. It will be on sale to MCA members only at a 10% discount (\$6.25) at our February meeting. A major feature of the new edition is the previously unpublished diary of Walter Harper, made available by his niece, Yvonne Nozoe of Anchorage. All of the original illustrations of the book are included plus a series of aerial photos contributed by Bradford Washburn, Honorary member of the MCA. These photos show the original route, and camps, and he has annotated the text where elevations are not in agreement with today's maps.

BOOK REVIEW - FROM THE VIN HOOGAN LIBRARY

"THE NIGHT CLIMBERS OF CAMBRIDGE" by "Whipplesmith"

This intriguing book on the fine art of "building" was first published in 1937, and gives a unique glimpse of one aspect of university life in England between World Wars. The author chose to remain anonymous because clambering on gothic spires and climbing up lightning rods on crumbling facades was forbidden - and the "sent down" from the university for three years or

CAMBRIDGE cont.

So Most of the activities described in the book took place under the cloak of night, which made the climbing more adventuresome and necessitated the use of a flash-bulb-man a member of the team, to properly record their routes and ascents. Some of the unprotected maneuvers which they routinely performed are amazing and appear truly hazardous in the photos, though "Whipplesmith" minimizes the dangers. Eighty foot chimneys in bare feet, manteling up and around overhanging gargoyles and parapets, rose-window and drainpipe routes - all are given extensive treatment in both text and photos. Protection, if it existed at all, came from a rope on the roof, and of course someone had to get to the roof, usually by building, in order to belay from above. Willig's recent New York World Trade Center ascent, using a device which wedged in the window-washer's track, pales in comparison. And pieces of the Trade Center didn't become mobile handholds, either!

While a knowledge of the specific buildings comprising the colleges of Cambridge, and some exposure to the university social and educational structure, would be helpful, the "Night Climbers" nonetheless makes delightful light reading.

Thomas Meacham

VIN HOEMAN LIBRARY GIFT

The Club has received a very generous gift of books in memory of our friends Linda Hesting, Don Pahlke and Jeff Moeller from the Staff of the BOOK CACHE, where Linda Worked. This welcome addition of fine recent mountaineering literature to our Club's growing library was coordinated by Chris Arend, and includes the following titles:

THE SEVENTH GRADE by Reinhold Messner
 BIG WALL CLIMBING by Doug Scott
 MOUNT BLANC MASSIF by Rebuffat
 GREAT ASCENTS by Newby
 CLIMBING by Bridge
 HIMALAYA by Shirakawa
 EXPEDITIONS by Blashford-Snell
 IN HIGH PLACES by Dougal Haston
 AFTER EVEREST by Tenzing Norgay (gift of Sue Wrenn)
 MOUNTAIN MEDICINE by Ward
 MOUNTAINEERING - FREEDOM OF THE HILLS (3rd Ed. Mountaineers)
 WILD RIVERS OF ALASKA by Weber
 MEN AND THE MATTERHORN by Rebuffat
 EVEREST THE HARD WAY by Bonnington

Several additional books have been back-ordered by the Book Cache and will be donated when they become available. Together with the books donated by Linda's family, an appropriate and significant memorial has been left for other climbers to enjoy.

More books would be welcome from other club members for this purpose. If you have a favorite book you would like to share in memory of Linda, Don and Jeff, please contact Tom Meacham, 277-2129. Or if you would like a suggestion for a title which the Library doesn't have please call Tom.

Tom Meacham

TAYLOR CREEK MEMORIAL FUND

A memorial fund has been established by the MCA in honor of ELLEN DUFRESNE, CHARLES KIBLER, PAUL POLLACK and ALAN WORLAND, who were killed by an avalanche last January. The gifts will be used to buy Pieps avalanche detectors for the Club as well as helping the Alaska Rescue Group establish a special-alert avalanche rescue team. Please make all donations payable to: Taylor Creek

THIS HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD FIRST CLASS FARCE

by Jim Hale

John Dillman and I made it out of Bushy Bobs Greasy Spoon truck stop alive, that was a good sign. If we lived through that, climbing Bridalveil Falls would be easy!

The climbing weather looked good, and reports had sounded perfect until we tuned to the Glenallen radio station and heard "23 inches of new snow in Valdez with another 15 inches expected by morning". Great, we hadn't planned on vertical shoveling. Then the policeman stopped us for a burned out low beam and casually mentioned while writing out the safety hazard correction slip that the falls in Keystone Canyon were running! Oh, good, we hadn't brought our swim fins either. We envisioned two humanlike salmon swimming their way up a vertical river.

Darkness, wind and snow ushered us over Thompson Pass. That in itself was no real problem but when added to the fact that neither of us knew where the falls were, things began to look bleak. Fortunately the monstrous finger of ice called Bridal veil is only 100 feet from the road. It was hard to miss.

We pulled off the road to sleep under Horsetail Falls, a beautiful 200' icefall next to Bridalveil. It was a major epic rearranging the van full of gear to find room to sleep. It never fails, when you have room to carry gear, you always fill it to the top. Somehow, we had left Anchorage with 2 or 3 of everything, including sleeping bags, boots, stoves and everything imaginable. We definitely hadn't forgotten anything.

Tuesday, the 27th, saw us slowly rising, gazing at all the amazing ice walls and doing a warm-up climb on Horsetail Falls (some warm-up, it nearly did us in!). We tried the most difficult line on the falls, hoping to duplicate some of the harder moves we might find on the larger falls. Gasping and groaning we pulled ourselves up the first pitch. For something that hadn't looked all that bad it turned out difficult. We wondered just how much harder the others would be? There seemed no comparison between the waterfalls other than the fact that Bridalveil was over three times longer and obviously steeper. We figured it was in the bag? Not hardly. No one knew for sure the height of the falls, we heard 450', 550' and some said more. As we sat below the iceicle trying to map out a route it seemed much more than the estimates. A monster curtain at half height seemed overhanging and definitely imposing! It seemed useless to guess at how high it was but we tried anyway. Thinking I would end up leading it I thought it looked 75* or better. Also thinking I would lead, John said 50* or less.

Confident as mice in a snakepit we retired to Valdez for a few beers and a last steak dinner with old friends we ran into. The best part of the evening was trying to sneak our wet ropes and other gear into a laundromat dryer. We adjusted our hammer slings and sharpened crampons as housewives bustled in and out, trying steadfastly to ignore the strange young man who looked like they were preparing for an assassination rather than an ice climb. Later we drove the 19 miles back to the canyon and tried to sleep. We were nervous, sleep was hard to find and impossible after the police stormed the van. At least, in the dozing state we were in it seemed an attack as the flashlight blinded us and the voice shouted "Police". As it turned out, he was just making sure we were O.K., but I thought "Freeze" and a quick shot were sure to follow. Trying again to sleep we listened to the rising wind and our minds played games with us, "What if this, What if that?" "Can we do it? Do we really want to?". Almost hoping the wind would climb to an unclimable velocity we were jolted by the 6:45 alarm.

Light is a valuable commodity in the bottom of a deep canyon on the 28th of December and we tried to force our sleepy bodies to hurry. Cold and tired, we weren't as quick as we should have been and wasted some of our precious six hours of light. Some hot chocolate and Christmas fudge and we were on our way, shuffling down the road, wondering if we could do the climb without a bivouac.

we were at the bottom of the climb quickly, doing a

FAHCE cont.

final sorting of gear and deciding what we'd leave behind. Counting on our ability to descend in the dark we left behind our jackets, bivi bags and headlamps. By going extremely light we hoped to finish it in a day, it would be all or nothing.

John led the initial pitch, a sloppy variety of wet, plated and chandelier type ice. Occasional Vulgarities floated down as John commented on the quality. 80 feet up, he found his first running belay. The ice didn't lend itself to protection. Soon he was belayed 150' up and I followed, hoping at every step that the ice would get better. 50 feet out from John's shakey belay I put in an ice screw by hand. The ice was unreal, an alpine hammer would hit nothing solid, only pockets of air and water. A 20 foot pitch of dead vertical air with water running over it was above. I led it slowly, as delicately as was possible, never knowing when crampons or hammers would strip out. Pulling out over the bulge I thought I was safe, but a slab of thin ice over snow proved terrifying. Hollow sounds as I climbed were frightening, but the high point of the pitch came when my foot broke through the slab and was covered to the ankle in running water. All this and a shower too! The water sprinkling from above had me soaked, this was absurd! I slithered up to a moderate belay point, the only real ice on the pitch, thankful it was John's lead. As he climbed I wondered if the next pitch would go, or if we should just repel off now, before we got in over our heads too far. John's hammer pulled out on the top of the bulge and he issued forth with a loud squeak (scream) one of the many to follow from both of us. He hoped to lead through to the curtain at half height. We were ready to quit if the conditions didn't improve. 50 feet out John said it wouldn't go, no protection, near vertical rotten ice and a problem. Downclimb 50 feet and plan on a fall of up to 100 feet, or try for better ice above and hope for some protection. "Here I go, watch me" John said as he kept going. Twenty minutes later a hysterically happy scream that stopped tourists on the road 350 feet below informed me he had found good ice at the base of the curtain. "hey hotshot! Wait till you try that!" came the giggle from above, John was obviously pleased with being alive. All I can say is I sure was happy for a top rope. We did a short traverse to the left of the falls to get to the better ice of the pillar. Lunch was a piece of fudge and some water. We sat with our backs to the pillar. It was too imposing to look at it for long. We were afraid of being psyched out. There hours of climbing got us to half height and we thought we would make it for sure, the ice on the freestanding iceicle looked good. Two hours later and 75 feet higher I didn't think it was too great. Cramps in my arms, several near falls, which left me hanging from a single wrist loop with my back to the wall, crampons waving useless at the tourists 450 feet below, and at least an hour of hanging from my hammers had just about made the decision to rap off a necessity. Upon reaching a belay ledge I saw we were only a short way from the top. To save time John jumared the pillar as I fixed the next pitch, an easy series of short bulges and ramps. John led the last pitch in the gathering dark on cramped arms as I shivered on the ledge, soaked through and tired. It was a hard pitch, brittle and strenuous, I wondered how John had led it as I cramped my way to the top of the falls.

We could see the cars 750 feet below with their lights on. Some who had stopped earlier and watched, stopped again to see if we were still there, but they couldn't see us as we had no headlamps. The top was a relief more than a joyful occasion, but we descend and be happy. Cramped up smiles and congratulations in the dark.

The descent was interesting. 5 rappels and 100 feet of downclimbing, the last 3 rappels in pitch black. We couldn't tell if the ice screws were hitting good ice or not. We figured if they wiggled too much they must not be good. One rappel jammed John cleared it by tying off to an ice screw and jumping into the darkness. Happily it worked. The only jumars we had were adjusted to John's short person legs and he didn't feel up to climbing the rope. An 18 hour bivouac with no gear would have been a little ridiculous.

At last we hit the river, gathered our cached equipment and resembling wound down wind-up toys, shuffled at a hurried crawl the 1/2 mile to the van, dreaming of steaks and wine at the Pipeline Club.

(continued)

FARCE cont.

A nervous 750', the climb had been outstanding. It has been climbed before we're sure, but the beauty of ice is that it removes all traces of those before. Each ascent is a first. Bridalveil Falls is still an unknown. We don't know what normal ice conditions are. It is a most serious climb, demanding the top performance of all team members. Understand that a climb such as this can surprise you, and if your experience and training are good enough it will be a memorable climb for anyone.

FIRST ASCENT OF THE ALASKAN MADMEN - GRIM TO DRIM

The alarm sounds it's vocal cords at 5:30 and the two Alaskan madmen crack their eyes to the artificial light bulbs. Once their stuffsack type stomachs are filled with food, they're out the door & into the love nest (that's a track). The roads were up to their specs: slick, slicker, slickest as the two neared their destination - Eagle River Valley. Air is pure and crisp. DC takes the lead with a red-leath sled. RD is slow getting his act together. Sometime down the trail RD joins the pair to make the number odd, which has to be. The trail is hard to maintain with the death sled pulling the two off the trail continually. A lead change is in need so RD takes them through the bush and onto the riverice, pulling like the winds of a lenticular cloud. With the two teammates working together camp is set up and the MSR is pouring out hot drinks in minutes flat. The pair of climbers have their eyeballs working overtime, looking for the BVI to ascend on this side of the mountain (BVI blue vertical ice). RD calls to DC's attention that off to the left of camp a BVI is shining. Heading south the two make good time thru the Alaska State Flower - the Alder. With belay screwed in DC takes the lead up a foot then two and tops out at 5 feet. RD asks what's wrong and DC says the ice is too brittle; Mjollnars won't hold and crampons pop out. Defeated he is lowered down. RD puts the bird, skye pig and front points to work. Muscles burned out, RD maxes out at seven feet. He down climbs and we call it a day. Why should the BVI not be completed? Cold? The backpack in? Or are the two climbers SLW (super light weights)? That night the valley filled with cold air, especially the tent; the most popular type of conversation was the chattering of teeth. The main word for the next day was slow - getting out of the SnowLions, cooking and climbing. Once on another new ice fall, DC leads the first pitch about 50' above the belayer and the ice dinner-plated into the size of a pizza tray, got airborne on the way down and contacts RD's helmet cracking it. DC believes his belayer is knocked out until he claims that his neck is broken - RD is a bearded clam and laughs it off. With the lead over and DC screwed in, two and one half hours had gone by. Any one for a turtle race? With 225' completed and fixed, the day is over and time to get into the iced-over Snow Lions. Northern lights occupied the eyes of the two madmen.

WOW, 5:50 AM and DC is out of the bag and the MSR blowtorch is on. Jumaring up the fixed line goes by in fair time. RD leads the first new pitch of the day. He mistakes DC for a pack mule and insists that he climb instead of jumare. DC lets RD know his mind and as what Hut he was born in. RD goes for a lead. The first section is steep with some right radical, risky rough stuff. Oh yes, that part broke RD's left crampon, he then uses his heel and finishes the pitch. On DC's lead, he ties the 9 and 11 mm ropes together and goes for a 300 foot jaunt. The leader then puts in two screws so that his good buddy can jumare up. But DC did not compute the pendulum factor the $\pi(y)^2$ equation and his good buddy turns to a wart hog and pokes him. With no more ice to ascend the ice climb is over. Its time to move says DC having stood in an avalanche path for a few minutes. Total climbing time: 10 hours, length 320 feet. The descent through the alders was more dangerous than the climb itself and so named it: Grim to Drim. Grim stands for DC's 2½ hour lead up the first pitch which was not only slow but performed as if it were a playground covered with banana peels. Drim means the topmost part of a glass or the top of the ice fall. 1/31/78

Let it be known that RD is prone to forget things. First thing he did was to forget his pack and axe at the base of the climb. Then he drops one of his mittens and has to walk back a mile. Thirdly, he misplaced his ice axe and had to walk two miles down the trail to get it. HA, HA RD! Cheers - DC.