



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

Vol 23 #2

FEBRUARY 1980

FEBRUARY MEETING

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The meeting will be held Wednesday, February 20th at 8:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of Romig Junior High School (adjacent to West High School). The Pioneer Schoolhouse will not be available this month due to Fur Rendezvous activities. After the business meeting, Tim Neale will present a slide show featuring recent MCA outings.

MCA POTLUCK DINNER

Friday, February 29th is the date set for the potluck dinner. We are currently making arrangements for a locale. If plans go as expected, we should have a super place on a local lake, maybe complete with ice skating. Attend the February meeting for final details, or call John Ramey at 243-1538 evenings or call Meg Leonard at 279-9522 days.

MINUTES OF JANUARY GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA Wednesday, January 16, 1980, Pioneer Schoolhouse, Anchorage, Alaska

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. by President, Tim Neale. Tim read the minutes of last month's meeting. Paula Quering gave the treasurer's report. Current balances are, Checking account \$506.05; on hand \$59.00.

The only committees that filed reports are as follows:

PROGRAMS: There will be a slide show at the February 1980 meeting of various club activities and outings which took place from July through December 1979.

LIBRARY: The club has received the notes of Vin Hoeman which he had planned to use in writing a guide book had he not met an untimely death. We also have received Vin's correspondence with almost all climbers who had done any significant climbing in Alaska - extensively cross-referenced!

Library Committee will be meeting at Tom's house - 1410 "H" Street on January 24th at 7:30 p.m.

Anyone have a 2-drawer file cabinet to donate to the Library? Call Tom at 277-2129

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CLIMBING: A sign-up sheet will be put up to see if there is any interest in a basic ice-climbing class.

On Saturday, February 9th, Tom Meacham will lead a trip to Vista Peak, aptly named since it promises a view of the Alaska and Chugach Ranges from the top only. Plan to leave the UAA/ACC Sports Complex at 7:00 a.m. and bring along skis for touring as well as climbing gear.

We need a new hiking chairman. Dona Agosti is extremely busy this year and will only have time to lead the Kobuk hike this summer.

Early in July a two-week river trip is planned down the Porcupine River. Call Marty Bassett at 694-3917 as he knows much more of the details.

Mid-March Gary Halsey said he would be in Yellowstone for cross-country skiing. If anyone wants to ski with him and will be in the area, see Gary.

Anyone with ideas on an alternative place to have SCREE printed should contact Tim Neale or Meg Leonard.

Pete Panarese, Chief Ranger, Chugach State Park, reminded us about the various regulations we ALL must follow when they apply.

On group trips of more than 20 people, please get a permit, fires must be confined to the park-provided structure and use red flares only in case of emergency.

Members present at the meeting of 1-16-80 voted to send SCREE to Dr. Andy Embick for the year 1980.

After the business meeting, two slide shows were presented: 1) The first was by Rob Perera who is working for his Eagle Scout Badge, and 2) was presented by Jim Eason, a review of their 23-day trek across the St. Elias mountain range.

REMEMBER, our February 20th meeting is at Romig Junior High School, next door to West High School. Starts at usual time.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Paula Quering, Acting Secretary

SKI TOURING/WINTER CAMPING ENTHUSIASTS

The Nordic Ski Club is arranging a helicopter fly-in/tour-out trip in the Talkeetna Mountains or Peters Hills areas for March 14 through 17. Participants should be at least intermediate skiers with some winter camping experience. Call Dave Blackwood at 344-6664 for further information.

HIKING/CLIMBING

We are looking for people to help out with the spring and summer hiking/climbing activities. Dona Agosti has taken on this responsibility for the last few years. Dona has other responsibilities this summer which make it impossible for her to coordinate weekend hikes this year. She is going to concentrate on leading the 8-day Kobuk hike for the 1980 summer season. We recognize the work involved when one person is left with the job of setting up and following through for all trips scheduled. With this in mind, we would like to try and get a number of people to lead one or two activities. Anyone interested in leading a hike, climb, bicycle trip, etc., should contact Tim Neale at 274-4952 or bring your ideas to the February meeting. We would like to have a schedule printed for the April SCREE. Tim Neale...

ALASKA AVALANCHE WARNING SYSTEM (AAWS)

By this time the public should be well aware of the severe avalanche conditions that have existed throughout Southcentral Alaska for the past several weeks.

The transportation corridor between Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula has been particularly hard hit. Avalanche-caused road closures have plagued the Seward Highway and the Alaska Railroad had numerous closures plus derailment of 13 cars of a freight train.

The avalanche danger poses a constant hidden threat to the Alaskan Traveling Public. Since there are no alternate routes to use, the public is constantly exposed to these avalanche-prone areas during the winter months.

As bad as the avalanche threat is to the traveling public, the avalanche danger to outdoor recreationists is even greater. Alaska's outdoor minded population, faced with prolonged winter conditions, and the proximity of snow-covered mountains, is increasingly using the mountains for recreational activities. The majority of these recreationists have limited or no knowledge of how a seemingly innocent snow-covered mountain could turn a pleasant outing into a catastrophic avalanche within seconds.

Because of these conditions, Alaska in the years 1970-78 had more snow avalanche fatalities than any other of the eleven western states of the United States. Out of 109 avalanche deaths in the U.S. during this period, 29 occurred in Alaska. Colorado was second with 24 fatalities and Washington third with 21. In Alaska the number of persons caught in snow avalanches and surviving in this same period is unknown, but a reasonable estimate would be over 100 victims.

With the publication of those statistics, the avalanche problem in Alaska has finally become severe enough to attract the attention of federal and state agencies and the state legislature.

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ALASKA AVALANCHE WARNING SYSTEM (AAWS).....Continued

In 1979 an interagency Alaska Avalanche Warning System (AAWS) was proposed that would provide the following service on a statewide basis:

- a) Forecasting snow avalanches and conditions throughout the state with main emphasis in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.
- b) Coordinate a public awareness program on snow avalanches between state and federal agencies.
- c) Coordinate an annual Alaska avalanche school.
- d) Identify and catalog a comprehensive atlas of avalanche paths and slide occurrences.
- e) Assist state and local governments in developing snow avalanche regulations and identification of avalanche zones.
- f) Providing a historical depository for avalanche snow data collected in Alaska.

Participation by the state of Alaska in the AAWS is mandatory if the system is to be successful.

There are three bills currently in the State Affairs Committee of the Alaska Legislature that would authorize and fund this participation.

HOUSE BILL NO: 536 "An Act Authorizing the State, through the Dept. of Public Safety, to Participate in the AAWS"

HOUSE BILL NO: 536 "An Act Appropriating to the Dept. of Public Safety For Participation in the AAWS During Fiscal Year 1980" (Funds for 1981)

HOUSE BILL NO: 536 "An Act Appropriating To The Dept. of Public Safety for Participation in the AAWS during Fiscal Year 1980" (Funds for 1980)

Public and organizational support in behalf of these three bills is needed.

Written comments should be submitted to: Rep. Mike Miller, Chairman
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Written comments supporting these bills sent to your own district legislators would also be helpful.

Signed: Leo Hannan, Ski Mountaineering Advisor, Alaska Division,
National Ski Patrol System

If more information concerning the proposed AAWS is desired, contact:
Leo Hannan, 243-1781 or Doug Fesler, Public Safety Ranger, Chugach State Park
279-3413

MCA VIN HOEMAN LIBRARY REPORT

During the past 2 months the Club has received several new books, courtesy of the Mountaineers in Seattle, whose publications division has been very active. Some of these books have been reviewed in SCREE already, while other reviews will appear in the future. The most recent books received from the Mountaineers are:

Cloud Walkers (Sherman) - reprint of classic account of the first ascent of Western Canada's giants.

Cross Country Gear (Brady) - the latest in x-c gear, with orientation toward back-country travel.

Cross Country Skiing (Gillette) - the latest in x-c technique, by a Denali circumnavigator-climber.

Exploring the Yukon River (Satterfield) - for those who want gravity to do their work for them.

The Challenge of Rainier (Molenaar) - a guide and history of the peak and its routes.

The Library has also received three large boxes of Vin Hoeman's notes and files from Rod Wilson, who has had them in his home after Dave Roberts decided not to try to write an Alaskan Guidebook based on Vin's pioneering research and correspondence. Vin's notes are well-organized and very interesting from a historical perspective, but are really not useable until the Club can obtain a 2 or 3 drawer file cabinet to contain them in the kind of order in which Vin obviously kept them. Any donations or suggestions will be appreciated.

The MCA Vin Hoeman Library is located at Tom Meacham's home, 1410 "H" Street, Anchorage. Telephone 277-2129 if possible prior to visiting, to make certain someone is home, which they usually are. The Library is open to all MCA members.

....Tom Meacham

CROSS COUNTRY SKI YELLOWSTONE!!

Join us March 8-20 to ski-tour in Yellowstone National Park. Planned are day tours to the waterfalls and thermal attractions around Old Faithful, and a 23 mile trip on the mountain trail which follows the Nez Perce Creek. Also promised is great hot potting. Winter camping skills are a must. Call Meg Leonard at 279-9522 days for particulars.
