



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA BOX 2037 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

February 1981

Volume 24, Issue #2

### February Meeting

#### NOTE: EARLY MEETING THIS MONTH

Since the Pioneer Schoolhouse will be unavailable on our regular meeting date this month, the meeting has been moved forward to the second Wednesday of the month. The meeting will be held Wednesday, February 11 at 8:00 pm at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle, Anchorage, Ak. After the business meeting John Ireton, who was a member of the 1967 MCA climb on Mt. McKinley, will show slides of the trip. The trip is mentioned in the book Hall of the Mountain King by Howard Snyder. The MCA group was involved in an attempted rescue of some climbers whose story is told in Howard Snyder's book

#### JANUARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President John Lohr at 8:10 pm, January, 21. John proposed that the reading of the minutes be waived, it was moved and seconded. It was again brought to our attention by Al Robinson that Chip Dennerlein, our November speaker, was misspelled.

Since a copy of the minutes of the January board meeting was unavailable due to the illness of our secretary, Madeline, John outlined the happenings as follows.

The library may stay at Tom Meacham's house due to possible sale of his house to another MCA member. John asked if anyone had any lumber or shelves that they would like to donate to the club to please let him know. Dave Pahlke has offered to build the shelves.

Helicopter skiing was another topic of discussion. John stated he attended a meeting on which the Far North Ski Guides have petitioned the Park Service to use Ship Creek area on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for Helicopter skiing. The MCA was asked to comment. After a long discussion it was proposed by Al Robinson that MCA oppose the use of Sheep Creek Valley for helicopter skiing for three reasons.

1. To preserve the wildlife of the area.
2. To preserve the area as a wilderness area.
3. To prevent the noise pollution to skiers.

The proposition was voted and passed unanimously. John mentioned because of the article in the January SCREE on

Eklutna Land Issue he had brought the names and addresses of the state legislators so that individuals might write them their opinions.

It was mentioned that Doug Fessler had written a letter with some of the statistics of Alaska Avalanches and included a list of dates of the park services Avalanche schools.

Our Treasurer, Reggie Buchanan, gave the treasurer's report as follows:

Money Market	\$2,131.64
Checking Acct.	\$ 753.20
Petty Cash	\$ 63.15

Several guests were introduced.

Jim Eason, our Vice President and person in charge of programs told us about the February program. John Ireton will have slides from the 1967 MCA Mt. McKinley climb in which they helped with the rescue of the fateful Wilcox Expedition.

John Lohff stated because of Rondo events the February meeting would be held on the second Wednesday instead of the usual third Wednesday.

John Dillman of the equipment committee stated the new ice axes had been ordered.

The new business included three sign-up sheets for peoples interested in an ice climbing school, a winter mountaineering course, and an orienteering, map and compass reading class.

The business meeting was adjourned for a short break after which a viewing of some excellent slides by Tom Smayda of his recent ski tour on the Buckskin Glacier and an attempt on the East buttress of McKinley.

#### AVALANCHE SAFETY: NOTE FROM DOUG FESSLER

"One third of the backcountry avalanche fatalities (?) in Alaska during the past ten (10) years were MCA members. This training is specifically designed to change that trend." Sure would appreciate the MCA advertising these workshops at their next meeting and/or newsletter. Thank you for hour help. (The foregoing was a reply to memo received from Doug Fessler, Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Industrial Warehouse Dr., Suite 210, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 - Telephone 274-4676, ext. 280)

The Alaska Avalanche School Spring 1981 Avalanche Workshops Schedule is as follows:

Thompson Pass	February 14-16	(Sat - Mon)
Eaglecrest	February 23-25	(Mon - Wed)
*Hatcher Pass	March 10-12	(Tues-Thurs)
*Kenai Lake	March 20-22	(Fri - Sun)
*Black Rapids	April 10-12	(Fri - Sun)

The curriculum for these workshops is specifically designed for mountaineers, nordic skiers, and climbers (particularly guides and wilderness instructors) who like to venture away from the beaten path. The focus of study is backcountry avalanche hazard evaluation.

Tuition is \$30.00 per person per workshop based on pre-registration only. Food and lodging costs are additional, but are available at or near each of the above noted locations. Those

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workshop locations marked with an asterisk (\*) above are able to provide bunk space at no additional cost. Also, meals will be provided for a minimal cost at both the Black Rapids training center and the Kenai Lake Work Center. Cooking facilities are available at Hatcher Pass. Meals cannot be provided at the other workshops but are available locally and are the responsibility of each participant.

Applications and tuition must be received seven (7) days before a given workshop scheduled date.

For further information and registration contact:

Alaska Avalanche Workshops  
Attention: Doug Fesler  
Alaska Division of Parks  
619 Warehouse Drive, Suite 210  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
Telephone: 274-4676, ext. 280

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#### History corner

The Summer of '59 was a very active one for local climbers. To inaugurate the Summer season, the MCA held its May meeting outdoors along the Turnagain Arm. The winds were out so the scheduled picnic supper had to be held closer to town than originally planned. This type of meeting was well-received, and the Club has continued to have them periodically over the years.

Serious local climbing began in early May with the first successful ascent of magnificent Carpathian Peak in the Portage Glacier area by Mat Nitsch, Keith Hart, and Ted Barrett. This was their 2nd attempt having failed one year before. They named the mountain in remembrance of the Carpathian Range of Middle Europe. Many attempts intervened before the mountain was again climbed successfully in 1964. More recently this mountain brings back painful memories because of the tragic deaths on its slopes in 1977 of Don Pahlke, Linda Hesting, and Jeff Moeller.

About 10 days after the 1st climb on Carpathian a group of Club members drove to the Pickler cabin on mile 78 of the Richardson Highway. Here the group split up with Norm Pickler, Greg Erickson, Charles Warren, and Han Metz continuing on to camp below the huge Talkeetna massif known as Castle mountain. The following day they made the 1st known ascent of this peak and reportedly left one of the Club's original ammo can registers on top. Norm facetiously wrote that, "... the rock there is not safe for pitons."

The name Castle mountain dates back to the last century. W. Mendenhall described it in "A Recon from Resurrection Bay to Tanana", a work written in the early 1900's from his exploration of 1898. The Alaska Dictionary of Placenames lists the summit at 5500 feet. In actuality this is a subsidiary peak to the higher summits beyond which are well over 6000 feet. Vin Hoeman had noted and recorded this discrepancy in his personal files on the mountain.

W. Mendenhall's description of the mountain was published in the Alaska Geographic magazine. The name Castle mountain was given by Greg Higgins.



# Some Notes from Seward

**Geographic names:** In early December a list of ten mountain names was sent to the State and Federal Geographic Boards for consideration. These names were selected from old Club records on names that were previously rejected, but that continued in local usage. The list included Skybuster, Ptarmigan, Lynx, Near Point, Significat, Vista, Roundtop, and Blacktail Rocks. Also submitted were corrections to Peekaboo Peak and the Suicides.

The Geographic Boards' response to the Club's submissions has waxed and waned over the years; sometimes they are received enthusiastically, but other times indifferently. This is because of the regular change-over of the various Board members. Hopefully the present Boards are active and enthusiastic. If so there are still many names recognized locally that need to be submitted for official approval, and over the coming year the Club's Committee on Geographic Names will be working on these. After this project is completed, the door will be thrown open for new considerations my Club members.

**SCREE Bindings:** The final collection of the newsletters from 1973 to 77 were sent to the binders in mid-December. When these return, the Club will have two bound sets of all the SCREES from 1958 to 77. The next set will not be sent until 1982 or so.

**Vin Hoeman's material:** I have purchased a new 4 drawer file cabinet to house this material, and have made rudimentary efforts at organizing it. Making this material accessible will require quite a bit of time as it all needs to be carefully reviewed and indexed, and I hope to work on this in the Spring. Meanwhile I am reconstituting the legendary file card collection that Vin maintained on Alaskan summits. The originals have disappeared, but we have complete xerox copies of them.

**Club Scrapbooks:** By the time this is printed, hopefully the Club will be close to having a completed Scrapbook #4, as well as refurbished copies of the 1st three. The 1st three were done in scotch tape which deteriorated over the years and had to be replaced with rubber cement.

Greg Higgins  
Box 1556  
Seward, 99664

**BOOK REVIEW**  
**SNOWSHOEING**, by Gene Prater. Second edition. 176 pp. paperbound; photos, sketches. The Mountaineers, Seattle, November, 1980. \$6.95

In the revised edition of his book **SNOWSHOEING**, Gene Prater enlarges and improves on what was already an authoritative manual on a winter travel mode very applicable to Alaska. Equipment and technique are discussed in detail, and Prater covers physical conditioning, walking on snowshoes, gauging snow conditions, route finding, safety in winter, handling illness and injury, snow camping, and discovering safe and enjoyable places to snowshoe (mostly in the lower 48 of course!).

Snowshoeing is clearly an alternative to cross-country skiing which can offer economy, easy access into wilderness, and con-