



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

June 1984

Volume 27, Issue 6

JUNE MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, June 20 at 7:30 p.m. on the top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Streets, Anchorage, Alaska. After the business meeting a slide show will be presented, the details of which were unavailable at press time.

MINUTES FOR MCA MAY MEETING

The meeting was held on May 16, 1984 at Central Junior High. The meeting was called to order at 7:42 p.m. by president Mark Skok. Minutes of the April 1984 meeting approved as published in SCREE. New members and guests were introduced and welcomed.

Treasurer Bernie Helms reported:

\$ 282.58- Petty Cash
451.58- Bank Account
3716.40- Money Market Rate Plus Account
107.50- Undeposited Checks
\$4558.04- Total

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Library:

MCA members are encouraged to return any borrowed publications, books, magazines, or maps to AMH.

B. Hiking Committee: John Nevin 276-6665

Sign up sheets are available for trips. Call leaders to sign up, or look for sheets at the next meeting. Members are encouraged to call

the leader if they are unable to attend a hike.

C. Trails: Tim Neale 274-4952

The clean up of the East Fork Trail at Eklutna Lake was May 19th and 20th as scheduled.

D. SCREE

Any members who would like to make some simple sketches that could be used to brighten up the pages of SCREE should contact Mark Findlay.

E. Hut Committee: Tim Neale 274-4952

Minutes of April 23rd Ad Hoc Committee meeting were published in the May SCREE. Any additional input should be directed to any of those people listed.

II. OLD BUSINESS

None.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Jim Lasche is organizing a trip to the Arrigetch Peaks in the Gates of the Arctic N.P. from 12-18 July. There are six places, four of which are still available. Those interested should contact Jim: 428-3029 after 9pm.
- B. July 21st volunteers are needed to work check points for a race from Girdwood to Indian. Anyone interested in running or working should contact Tim Neale.
- C. MCA Summer Meetings for June/July/August will be held at the good ole Pioneer Schoolhouse at 3rd and Eagle.
- D. Thank you Mike Howerton for your slide presentation. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bernie Helms, Acting Secretary

GENERAL RULES FOR MCA SANCTIONED HIKES

(April 1983 Scree, amended)

1. Proper equipment is required as follows:

Day Hikes

Compass & whistle
Raingear that works
Warm clothing (not cotton)
Hiking boots
Sunscreen & dark glasses
Mosquito dope
Water
Energy food
Fire starter
First aid kit with moleskin
Pocket knife

Additional for Overnight or Special Situations

Down or synthetic equivalent
sleeping bag
Tent (or prearranged sharing)
Sleeping pad
Stove (if need to cook or melt
snow)-fires usually prohibited
Adequate food for extra day
Dry clothes, socks, headgear, gloves
Stream crossing footwear
Climbing or winter gear if specified
by leader

2. No dogs are permitted on MCA hikes (among the reasons are bear problems).
3. The leader's suggestions are to be followed. Do not go off alone, return or rush ahead without his (her) permission, and don't ford a stream before the leader assesses the situation. Remember, this is a club hike and the leader must know where all hikers are.
4. All hikes commence at UAA Sports Complex, the west entrance, unless otherwise instructed, at a time determined by the leader.
5. You must be signed up on a trip roster (club meetings) or through contact with the leader to accompany a club sanctioned hike-or take your chances on being asked not to go.
6. When carpools are arranged, please plan to pay the driver your share without his (her) asking you. Generally, \$5 for shorter trips, \$10 to \$20 for longer ones.
7. If at the last minute you find you can't go, please let the leader know both for transportation planning and so someone else can go. If you are a leader, help find a replacement.
8. Total number of hikers on club sanctioned hikes:
Minimum: 4 (for safety reasons)
Maximum: leader option, depends upon the trail and
campsite conditions, but generally limited to 12 in
trail-less areas or State and National Parks (for
environmental reasons and maintain a wilderness experience)
9. Firearms are not encouraged, and please let the leader know if you want to carry one-it will be leader's option.

Formulated March, 1984 by Hiking Committee: Wakeland, Nevin, Hansen, Gerke, and Bassett. Approved by Board.

Spring and Summer Hiking Schedule

Note: We are trying more frequent trips with fewer hikers including more Sunday and one day trips and would appreciate your comments and ideas. Some of the leaders may change as they have not all been contacted and some trips may be changed for snow, weather or other problems. Please stay in touch with trip leader and inform him (her) or the hiking chairman if your plans change. Hiking chairman for May and June is John Nevin, 276-6665. Other hiking committee members are Doug Gerke 248-6855, Don Hansen 279-0829, Bill Wakeland 563-6246 and Marty Bassett 694-3917. Check sign-up sheet for place and time of departure.

- June 16-17 CASTLE MOUNTAIN FROM CHICKALOON
15 miles roundtrip; 1500' elevation gain to camp, 2500' total, very strenuous; leave UAA parking lot at 7AM
Leader: Mark Skok 274-3934
- June 23-24 FLATTOP SLEEPOUT
a club tradition; leave Glen Alps parking lot anytime, do not assemble at UAA
Leader: Mark Skok, MCA President
- June 30-01 CRESCENT LAKE
8 miles roundtrip via Carter Lake from Seward Highway; elevation gain 954'; 55 Ways trip No. 9
Leader: Pat Murray 338-0557
- June 30- INDIAN RIDGE-CURRY RIDGE
- July 4 28 miles; elevation gain 4500' max.; between Little Coal Creek and Byers Lake in Denali State Park; mostly above timberline; trails at each end
Leader: Bill Wakeland 563-6246
- July 4-8 CROW PASS TO ARCTIC VALLEY ROAD
about 40 miles; 3500' elevation gain (to 5000'); climb to Crow Pass (3900') from road (1500') on first day, cross higher pass on second day (the short route) or go around via Camp Creek, and descend Ship Creek; Ice Ax advisable
Leader: Bill Stivers 562-4885

July 14-15 GLEN ALPS TO INDIAN
via Ship Lake; 16 miles; 1300' elevation gain; no trail part
way; optional climb of the Ramp, without pack of course (3000'
gain)
Leader: Bill Wakeland 563-6246

July 21-22 RUSSIAN LAKE TO COOPER LAKE
Leader: Jim Pommert 562-0145

July 28-29 REED LAKES
Leader: Joy Hornberger 688-3835

July 28- JOHN RIVER

August 10 This is a combination backpacking/river float trip along the
John River in Gates of the Arctic National Park. We would fly
from Bettles to Amiloyak Lake, and hike to the confluence of the
Hunt Fork and the John River. At Hunt Fork Lake a charter
flight would bring boats and additional gear for the rest of the
trip. The remaining 100 miles to Bettles covers a particularly
scenic area of the Brooks Range and should present numerous
opportunities for day hikes. Everyone should have a collapsible
kayak, or similar boat, and some paddling skills. Round trip
transportation from Fairbanks will be about \$300 per person.
Leader: Marty Bassett 694-3917

August 11-12 Open

August 18-19 WILLOWAW LAKES
from Glen Alps
Leader: Bill Barnes 338-1588

August 25-26 Open

September 1-3 LOST LAKE
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132

September 1-3 CROW PASS - EAGLE RIVER
via Raven Creek
Leader: still needed

Day hike leaders needed for July and August. See or call John Nevin 276-6665. .

Trash Too Great A Problem To Ignore

During a series of recent trips throughout Southcentral, I heard a jolting series of comments. They related to the trashing of Alaska. The words were triggered by:

Beer cans and cigarette butts littering the beautiful valley of Eklutna's east fork

Driftwood stumps whose graceful, bleached branches had been sawed off to feed fires on the beaches of Kachemak Bay State Park

Tangles of fishing line and plastic lure containers along the Kenai River

A State Park ranger working with us on a trail-clearing project in the Eklutna drainage said he is afraid the East Fork Valley will one day become over-popular -- a euphemism for "abused".

On a Kachemak Bay beach one kayaker suggested to another in the loose-knit group that he not saw off the branches of the stumps, which form an integral part of the scenery. The response: "Someone else already has cut the branches, so I might as well cut some more." He proceeded to further trash the stump.

A Kenai River fishing guide said she gets the impression people believe the litter just doesn't matter.

It does. Each one of us should be able to go into any wilderness area, be it accessible by road, trail, beach or bushwack, and believe we are the first to use it. Leaving a saw scar on a beached stump alters the spidery beauty of an object that is as much a part of the environment as your arm is a part of your body.

Inappropriate cutting, and trash left behind, violates the right of a wilderness experience for the next person.

It's disturbing enough that the garbage is left along backcountry roads. It's appalling to see cigarette butts and beer cans left beyond where vehicles can go. I want to believe that backpackers and kayakers know better; that because they're willing to put effort into going where they go, they tend to put effort into the preservation of their haunts.

Well, we've got to start expanding a bit more effort. As more people use a limited number of trails and beaches, the impact shows to a greater degree. Even in Alaska, we have to reverse that trend. Just as a few people cause the problem, an active few can undo it. Carry a plastic bag large enough to handle more than the trash you generate. Then, pick up a can or two. It will help the environment just a little bit. And, if nothing else, you can feel just a bit righteous for doing it.

Mark Skok

Membership Directory

We're going to run the membership directory again in the next SCREE. If you weren't included in the previous listing, fill out the form from your February SCREE, or pick one up at the June meeting.

Waking Up In A Spruce Grove In March...After Mt. Sanford

(an unstructured ramble jotted down on the ski out...)

by Dave Johnston

Spruce grove
Snow refrigerated air
Calm, pure, nose tingling
Silent
But for the distant snipelike winnowing
of the boreal owl
and gentle lowing of a wolf

Cock one eye open
Westward
Pregnant moon slipping
Stars fading

Roll and peek east
Dry bare firestarter branches
and wooden cylinders
etched black on aluminum dawn

Delicious squirms and stretches
of a fit body
In its Polargaurd cocoon.

Happy thoughts of the day to come.

A rest day
to get to know this peaceful grove
and a rest day
transitional
between the road (car, friends, letters, home duties, taxes, job...)
ten ski miles away
And where I've just been:

The summit of Sanford
Arctic
Alien
16,237'
Solo in winter

It was to have been Denali
winter
solo
Idea born a year ago of
Joyful fitness
Running through forest in spring
feeling independent

Probably an overreaction
Pendulum swung back
from three muddled years
of super-dependence
on
friends
Jesus

In the aftermath of divorce.

Wanting to test and prove again
my ability to be independent
Seeking to rebuild eroded self-confidence
eroded to the point of doubting my abilities
even in the hills.

Denali!
How good it would be to get reacquainted with my old friend!
But this time it would be solo
uncluttered by competition and
feelings of comparative inadequacy.
I returned from New Zealand and was amazed to find the little Japanese
explorer Naomi Uemura already going for a winter solo.

He gambled...
and sadly lost
Disappeared
Probably after having made the first solo winter ascent.

Naomi loved Denali too.
In 1960, he and a friend had been the first to camp on the summit.
In 1963, Vin and I'd pitched our tent higher; atop the drifted-in
Japanese tent--still standing after three years.

Naomi made the first solo--in 1970.

And now he returned...
considering Denali
a training trip for a solo dog mush
-----across Antarctica!

His disappearance transformed the mountain
into a chaos of planes
 choppers
 International press
 Search parties

Some of my friends, saddened by Naomi's death,
worried excessively about me.
I tried to explain my style would be totally different:
 40 days' food and fuel
 a 20' long invention called Bridgit
 to keep me out of crevasses
 (and tow the two sleds)

Backed by two 300' fixed ropes for really Holey Spots
But they were upset
I hate bending people out of shape
with worry

The timing was just OFF

Besides. it would hardly be a solo experience
 with the search parties, planes, press...

Change of venue
Refocus
250 miles across the state.....Mt. Sanford
It should be quieter over there

On Sanford I could incorporate my original dream of skiing in and out
from civilization, unsupported by air. (On Denali, there wouldn't have
been time...winter would've been over.)

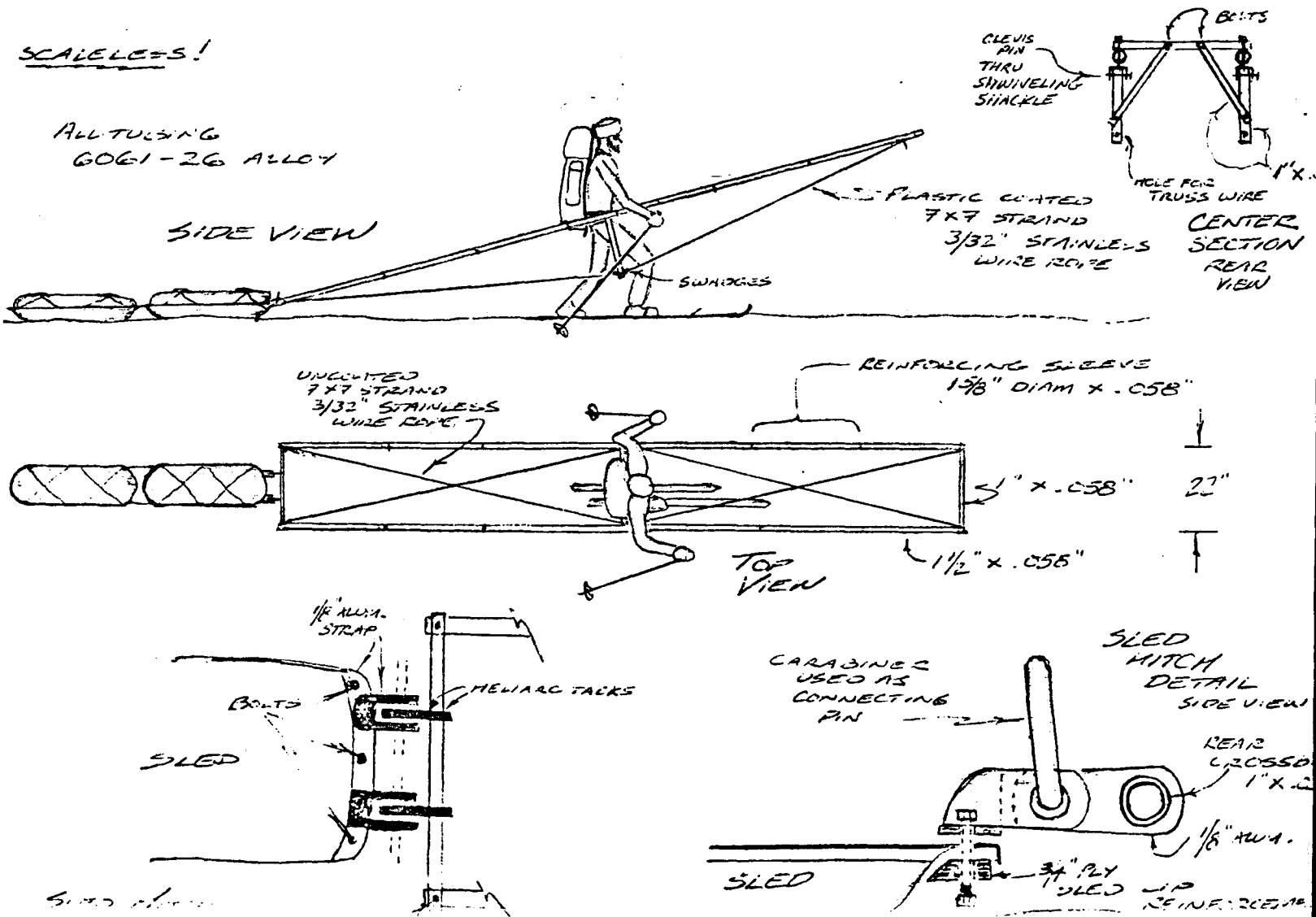
But 224 lbs. is a lot to haul.
The snowmachine trail lasted only four miles.
Relay two days, one sled at a time.
Breakable crust into calf-deep sugar.
Record high 42 degrees F.
Drinking a gallon a day to keep up the sweat.
Six days for 27 miles to the mountain.

Hard work, but beautiful...Even when the focus is downward, there are
tracks of mice, squirrels, fox, coyotes, wolf, caribou, moose,
sheep...A stark caribou kill...Willow ptarmigan cackling
laughter...Look up and see camp robbers. Travellin' slow and steady.
Like me!

Or old friend raven, rasping up and down valley on noisy wings.

I've been using half of Bridgit
 as a towbar for the two sleds
 and every day (all the way to the summit!) as I travel
 for a drying rack for my sleeping bag at the tongue of Sheep
Glacier, I extend her to her full twenty feet.

This is how we look:



Up we go, Bridgit and I, threading crevasses carefully. I use snow stakes, rope and a Jumar for the big or dicey ones and feel safer than on a normal roped climb. We cross some monsters (well drifted in, to be sure!), perhaps 100' wide!

The table tilts as up the old volcano we go. Camp I was at 2000', C2 2200', C3 2400', C4 still in spruce at 3100', C5 on wind bared tundra (with luscious frozen cranberries) at 4125', C6 on Sheep Glacier at last at 5900', C7 8350', C9 13500' very near where Genet and I had been pinned five nights in Feb '71 while trying to reach a crashed Army National Gaurd plane--we'd come and gone by chopper.), and finally C10 at 15700'.

It felt good to return to this starkly beautiful world of
 deep blues
 brilliant whites
 thin air
where security lay in houses of snow (I carried no tent).

Crystal sparkles
 dancing delicately downward
 seeming to flow in time to
 the pulse of
 the Brandenburg Concerto
as I ski rhythmically
 upward
 through the calm air of 12000'

Night was perhaps more lovely,
 lit variably by
 half moon
 aurora with colorful tops spinning earthward from
 twin arcs
 and a string of pearls on black velvet
 14000' below
 44 miles away...
 the lights of Glenallen.

I had hopes of a summit igloo at 16237', but the forecast was changing
at the 11th hour. So it was a cold toed 1:10 zip to the top in a 20
mph wind and a quick attempt to appreciate the huge new view of the
Wrangells and St. Elias...(Was that Logan I could see?) My nose froze
to the camera as I snapped the panorama. Time to boogy back down to
the cozy igloo at 13500'.

It blew so hard that night I couldn't sleep, wind woofing, igloo air
pressure changing, ground blizzard hissing against my home. Then
chunks of snow began popping into the walls and I worried that the
chinking would erode through. So at midnight I said a prayer, took a
sleeping pill and flaked out...In the morning it was only blowing
twenty. The igloo had survived.

The mountaineering was mild. So was the weather. Coldest was -20
degrees F. at 15700'. The challenge lay in doing all the work alone:
 breaking all the trail down low
 hauling all the gear, including two stoves, two shovels, saw...
 building igloos without an assistant to saw blocks
 or support the dome
 do all the cooking

Basically, it's a lot more work.
 But it's confidence-building to find you can pull it off.

Descending mountains is always special to me. This one was especially
beautiful...a gradual submission back into the pool of life...
 The intensity of the first color!

GREEN tundra mosses
GOLD grasses of yesteryear
RED volcanic pumice

Almost an overload!

And smell! Even in the cold, rich odors of earth, lichen and finally
spruce seemed pungent.

I savored each time that special
glad glow
fullness in breast and throat
welled up...

It happened after
crossing the last slots
experiencing the rich odors and colors
rounding a barren bend to see the spruce forest
not far below...

There is so much to be said for skiing
as opposed to flying
out!

Was it worth it? Yes!

What did I learn? So many things:

That duct tape makes a great substitute for Moleskin

That a simple childlike faith returned sometimes when conditions became
oppressive. Eg. That Jesus can warm feet. Head trip? Our Saviour? My
feet warmed up.

That a tent broom makes a passable beard brush.

That the wilderness of our new Wrangell-St. Elias National Park is
superb...

That, at least in the hills, I like myself...that I could re-establish
some confidence--at least in winter mountaineering and that I don't at
all get bush crazy in isolation...(no crazier than usual!)...Quite the
opposite. I come alive!

There was time to crawl around the tundra photographing berries melting
from beneath the snow and then
Gobbling them!

To yodel in the valleys
sing on the mountain
and Bop on the tundra

quite unselfconsciously!

Departure: 1500 hrs 3 March 1984 500' Chistochina River bridge
Return: 1534 hrs 19 March 1984 same location
Ski miles: ascent: 48 miles (including relays)
 descent: 31 miles
Crampons: ascent: 5 miles
 descent: 8 miles
Total distance: 92 miles (probably conservative)
Rest days: 2: 12 March at 13500'
 18 March at 2200'
Travel days: 14 averaging 6.4 hrs/day on trail
Ascent: 14,734'
Descent: same
Ave. miles/day: 6.5
Storm days: ZERO!

