



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

September 1984

Volume 27, Issue 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, September 19th 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.

MINUTES FOR MCA AUGUST MEETING

The meeting was held on August 15, 1984 at the Pioneer Schoolhouse. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by former President Rick Severn. Minutes of the July 1984 meeting were approved as published in SCREE.

Treasurer Bernie Helms reported:

\$ 252.56-	Petty Cash
406.28-	Bank Account
3774.83-	Money Market Rate Plus Account
65.00-	Undeposited checks
<u>\$4498.67-</u>	Total

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Annual Picnic

Sunday, August 26th at Eklutna Lake. MCA to provide hot dogs, buns, soft drinks, condiments, and paper plates. Members are encouraged to bring salads, desserts, munchies, etc.

B. Gunnar Naslund Challenge Course

Dedication will be held Saturday, August 25th at 2:00 at the course on the west side of Service High.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ice Climbing Class

This annual class will be held Saturday and Sunday, September 29 and 30. A mandatory classroom session will be held September 27. A \$15 fee (exact change appreciated) will be collected September 27th, along with an equipment check. Further information and equipment list is included in this issue of the Scree.

B. Basic Glacier Travel Class

Classroom session September 13th and glacier practice September 16th. Call Tim Neale for more information.

Thanks to Barb Byrne for refreshments and Linda White for her help with publishing the Scree in August.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Cavanaugh, Secretary

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TECHNICAL ICE SCHOOL

Place: Matanuska Glacier
Date: September 29 & 30
Fees: \$5.00 class, \$10.00 access to glacier
Classroom session: September 27th 7:30pm Pioneer School House
This class is MANDATORY. If you cannot attend
please do not sign up.
Class Limit: 44 students - members only

This school will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice, such as waterfalls and gullies. We will not be teaching any glacier travel techniques.

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED. Sign-ups will be at the August meeting for present members and at the September meeting for present and new members. We will not be signing up students (or new members) at the classroom session. All students should be members by the September club meeting. If members cannot attend the meeting in September they may register by calling Terry Becker at AMH, 272-1811. Remember, last chance to sign up is the September club meeting. If more than 44 students sign up, a system of alternates will be used. If you sign up and cannot come, please let Terry Becker know.

This annual extravaganza will begin September 27th, with an indoor session. This class will include lectures, equipment displays, and a short slide show. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons, and ice axes for inspection. Rental equipment will be handed out. (Please try to borrow or buy equipment as the club has limited supplies.) Groups will be assigned. Fees will be collected. (Please try to have exact change - \$15.00.) ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND!

The outdoor session will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 29th, at Matanuska Glacier (mile 102 Glenn Hwy) at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 6:30 am or go up Friday night. This is an overnight car camping trip, so weight won't be a problem. Bring tent and stoves, or charcoal or logs, lawn chairs, etc. Don't forget beer, wine, and good food. The lodge will be open for those who don't want to cook.

Prior experience would be helpful but is not necessary. It is suggested that those of you who are not in good climbing shape do some pre-class conditioning (upper body strength should be emphasized). Another hint - get a hammer and some 16 penny nails and drive nails into 2x4s or other scrap lumber.

Remember, this class is not for glacier walking, and as per club policy, please leave your dogs at home.

If you have any questions please call me at AMH, 272-1811.

Terry Becker 274 0105

ICE CLIMBING CLASS

EQUIPMENT LIST

(Everyone must have all equipment.)

Ice axe - 70 cm or shorter,
curved pick with a web sling

Crampons - 12 points, hinged or rigid

Locking carabiner

Rigid soled mountain boots

no hunting boots or
wafflestompers

Ice hammer - optional

Day pack - for all this junk

Lunch - for two days, thermos
is a good idea

Wind parka and pants - Goretex
or other semi-water proofs

Wool or pile pants - no cotton

Pile jacket - wool, polarguard ok

Wool hat - pile ok

Wool or pile gloves and mitts

bring extras, it's wet out there

Overmitts - water-repellent

Gaiters

Sunglasses, glacier cream, bandana,
visor hat, camera, guitar, violin, sax,
trumpet, drums, walkman, camping gear,
food, etc.



Superb— 2000 feet of smooth ice

John Dillman

Mark Skok Returns From Southeast

Greetings!

I returned from Southeast in late August following a work stint in Juneau. But--it wasn't all work. I had time available, so I bought 15 day's food, packed my kayak (a fiberglass Eddyline Orca) and headed for Glacier Bay.

The bay, like all of Southeast that I saw, is wonderful, though one must get used to tour boats and other craft rumbling past periodically. Camping areas are limited, beautiful, and at least while I was there, the weather was decent.

If anyone is planning a trip to Glacier Bay, I can provide some useful information. I've also picked up climber's registration forms for Kluane National Park.

Being somewhat homesick for the Chugach high country, I headed up Eklutna Glacier two days after I got back. No sooner did three of us reach the glacier than Typhoon Holly struck. Felt just like Southeast--only colder.

But the trip to Pichler's Perch put me back in the groove; it brought home the need for the club to establish a fair, workable system of hut maintenance. Perhaps a registration system will have to be implemented to ensure that MCA members have priority, though not exclusive, use of the huts. If you have any comments or questions regarding club activities, please give me a call at 274-3934.

Mark Skok

TRIP REPORTS

Curry & Indian Ridge

or

Little Coal Creek to Troublesome Trailhead

06/30 to 07/04 1984

Logistics of the trip required three cars for four of us! We left Anchorage and drove to Troublesome Creek trailhead, Mile 137 Parks Highway, where we left a car, and then dropped another at Byer's Lake, Mile 147, and the third at Little Coal Cr., Mile 163, where we took off on a good trail, gaining about 2300', to 3600', over about 3 miles, camping at a small lake where an MCA group camped in July of 1982. By then all of the Denali group were showing and there were spectacular views of Denali the rest of the day and until noon of the next day. After setting up camp in a neat little site, by the lake, Don, Kris, and I climbed Indian Peak (4558'), while Ed nursed a cold. Good views into the Susitna and Indian River side. The state has provided a good register and a big spiral notebook, but we were only the third or fourth group there since 1982. Noted Dave Johnston's name in that first group.

July 1st dawned warm and calm, with sunny views of Foraker and Denali. We were running around in barefeet taking pictures. The trail climbed up to a moraine we followed along the west side of the ridge and meandered around, marked by cairns, for miles, past more picturesque little lakes and great views, but eventually the cairns, and then the survey ribbons ran out--about the time the weather became very threatening. We selected a passable site and got tents up

just as the worst thunder and lightening storm I've seen in 38 years in Alaska erupted! Boy, it was a dandy, followed by heavy rain, then fog. A brief compass and map course after dinner revealed we were on course and a mile from the drop to Bitch Creek valley.

The weather was cloudy and cool the next two days and we were soon heading down into the no-man's land of alder thickets on the north side of Bitch Cr. (well-named)--having missed the reportedly cut swath through this stuff. On the south side, however, we lucked onto a survey ribbon that led us to a cut path through the alders, up past "Skinny" Lake and several moose and around the north side and west end of the lake. This route and many others are not as shown on the map of Denali State Park. Some miserable alders where the trail was not cut in places, and where Ed was heard to say unkind things about his pack frame--but we did manage to find minute pieces of tape here and there and stay on the route through the brush and gullies. Some pretty scenes in this area of ledge rock, trees and bare tundra.

We camped that night near where an MCA group camped in fall of '82. We decided 3 days was not enough for Byers Lake to Little Coal Cr. This was a hard 8 or 9 day, with a lot of bushwacking and up and down, but we were back above timberline, on a small lake.

The fourth day we made 10 miles or more, and it seemed like more, and continued south on the Troublesome Trail, in and out of and up and down among several small, picturesque lakes and knobs, with snowfields and spring flowers, eventually dropping down into brush. Trail now well marked again with cairns, and also with occasional bear dumpings.

Down on the Troublesome we found a beautiful little river, especially Ultima Pool and falls--beyond which salmon can't go--and we camped on a little ridge in the trees west of Ultima. The supposed 5.2 miles to the trailhead seemed like more. No fish yet, no bear sign. Got out about noon. Total mileage, plus Indian Peak loop, was 32 miles per brochure--but we feel these are map miles--and that we covered closer to 40 miles. Ed Bovey, Don Hansen, Kris Erickson and I enjoyed each other's company the challenge and the views.

Bill Wakeland

Talkeetna Mountains

Tsisi Lake to Game Lake

July 3-10

This 11th annual wilderness trek, the last I will lead for the MCA, was an exciting finale, and ranks with the best of the others. It put to use all the map-reading, stream-crossing and bear-scaring skills we have learned over eleven years; it also featured unusual scenery, a profusion of wildflowers and at least 20 varieties of birds. Elevation ranged from the 3600 feet at Tsisi Lake, to 4200 feet on one day of hiking, to 2400 feet at our destination, Game Lake.

Jim Okonek, K-2 Aviation, flew 15 MCAers into the most southerly of a chain of three lakes. We named it Tsisi because it flows into that river. It is located on the Talkeetna Mountain C-3 map, Sec. 27, Twp. 30N, R6E. We camped two

nights in this location. Those who climbed to the tops of the ridges on either side of the long lake could see Mt. Watana which overlooks Watana Lake of Susitna Dam association. Eagle-eye Sue Rostin spotted a grizzly on the opposite side of the lake, which we watched for hours hoping he was a poor swimmer. The weather was chilly (about 40 degrees) but we were able to get out of the wind by camping in wide gullies. We spotted the first of many caribou on the ridge, saw many sparrows, thrush, plovers, and scoters. The occasional showers did not mar a beach party in honor of our country's independence. The dessert cooks outdid themselves.

Next morning we hiked northwest, then west in a broad valley--the usual drainage and rocky sidehill terrain. There is an unusual moraine ridge down the middle of this valley which we might have followed for many miles but did not. We did however, move on to it several miles later in order to avoid swamps and a lake (Sec. 19). We anxiously watched another honey griz on the slope north of us. Up and over a pass, and around Peak 4472, we came to the junction of three streams in a beautiful broad valley. Some camped high overlooking the lake, others low and near the stream from the south. This day's hike of 6 map miles, 8 real miles, took 7 hours. We had our usual noon time cloudburst and late evening rain.

The rain made next morning's crossing of the stream an adrenalin-producing event. Three routes were tried by the group--one high and over a 3600 foot ridge, others along the curious mid-valley moraine and still others low, but hugging the base of the 3600 foot ridge. If I were to evaluate, I would recommend the latter because it is the shortest, it is fairly level and it leads to the moraine along the west side of a long lake in Sec. 30.

The lunch hour ended up being a wild affair. Those lunching on the top of the mountain first sighted the grizzly slowly eating his way to the lake; Dona, who had elected to check out game trails along the east side of the lake, was completely oblivious until all hell broke loose down lake; Helen Nienheuser, Mary Pat and Eiven Brudie, who were on the moraine to the west of the lake, were also innocently unaware. Gene Klymko who had decided to go for a swim, was the least unaware of all. The group on top of the mountain began working their way down mountain and down lake. Suddenly a cacaphony of sound erupted. Whistles, screams, flare shots--the works. It seemed the bear had come charging over the ridge just above Gene, who speedily decided to join the group across the lake. That was one time we had no trouble keeping Gene with the group. The bear, getting one sniff of Gene, went into reverse and took off, not even bothering to inspect Gene's pack lying in his route. We still do not know what caused the bear to go into charge gear coming towards the ridge. Thankfully, he did not care for the scent of humans.

Our next test for the day was another stream crossing and a climb to the now-famous moraine ridge. We followed it to the base of a pass, then over the pass on one of those lovely caribou trails. We learned to love those caribou! We found our mountain tarn, but the streams feeding it were dry and water was carried from a half mile away. Another heavy rainfall late at night.

The fifth day dawned bright and sunny but clouds moved in by nine. We hiked southwest staying high above a creek (Sec. 36, 2, 11). At lunch time, we spotted a guide's cabin on the moraine far below (Sec. 4), and we spotted people on the slopes of 5170 to the northwest. After descending, again via the moraine ridge,

we learned they were a group of 10 Germans who had hiked from Stephan Lake with a guide. One of the men in the cabin was 71 yrs. old and he said the trip had been quite difficult--the water had gone over his hip boots in a few of the swamps. It was somewhat disconcerting to hear this, since we were headed in that direction. We found a sheltered lunch spot and pondered five different routes. Finally, I walked around a knoll and far below spotted what seemed to be a caribou crossing of the river. Ahha, said I, if the caribou crossed there, they must also have a trail going down valley. And they did. The river was a doozy. We used fifty feet of rope to make a handhold. I howled when the two Germans came down to photograph this "impossible" crossing. While talking to them previously, I had paraphrased that old line "Ich bin ein Berliner" to "Ich bin ein Alaskan" to explain that we were accustomed to tough wilderness conditions. I wonder how they'll explain those slides back in Germany.

The trail continued for several miles and deteriorated. We elected to camp about two plus miles downstream from the cabin site, but purified the water because it detoured through numerous beaver camps. It was a gorgeous, sunny day, our first without rain, and Denali was fully visible. Fishermen tried their luck--no luck.

On day 6, we worked our way downstream for a mile, then climbed southwest to 2700 feet expecting lots of brush as shown on the map. Not bad at all. On impulse, we decided to sidehill around Peak 3740 hoping to avoid the steep climb out of the ravine. This netted us a lovely lunch-time lake (Sec. 2), but one heckofa climb thereafter. We still had to get back up to about 3400. The party split into two groups, one sidehilling the northside of a long lake and crossing over to the south side on a beaver dam between the two lakes, then caribouing up to the summit. The rest of us climbed the ridge north of the lake, found excellent walking on its crest, but had to bite the bullet coming down a steep gully, then up the spine of a ridge to join our friends on the south. Each route had its drawbacks--so we called it a draw. After walking a few hundred feet south we discovered a stream not shown on the map--although we thought it was. Later that evening, hikers discovered our error and also found the lake in Section 9 which we had aimed for. However, no one complained about our site; it was on a flat ridge overlooking Stephan Lake, the Alaska Range, Curry Ridge and much more. More caribou, bears, birds and flowers were spotted.

Our seventh and last day was difficult and tiring and we blame it on a map with only 100 foot contours shown. NEVER have I climbed in and out of so many 99-foot gullies. At one point, we decided to experiment with two routes. One group of five headed southwest directly for our two destination lakes (Sec. 28, 33), using a lower altitude route. The rest of us tried climbing to the 4000 foot level, veering east around Peak 4365, to what the map showed as a beautiful, flat bench. Foiled again! Late in the afternoon, we were resting at 4200 feet pondering the whereabouts of our elusive lake. We decided to descend, then ascend the ridge we thought overlooked Game Lake. As we peaked the top of the ridge, there was the lake and cabin far below--about 1000 feet straight down. We became a pack of horses heading for the barn. Instead of going down the ridge, we slid down the 1000-foot drop on the seat of our pants. The final indignity was a willow patch, and what we thought were strangers at the cabin site. Little did we know that our fellow group had arrived a half hour before and had been glassing up land and down lake, but never dreaming we'd come right over the top of a 1000 foot cliff. Hence no welcome. After pushing through three gullies of willow, we stood on our heads to get water, then just before

arriving at the cabin, had a downpour. The lowlanders hastened to prepare hot soup and drinks for the weary highlanders. Never has a cabin seemed so inviting. For the record, there are three cabins located at Game Lake--one ancient log, dirt floor cabin; one insulated, newer cabin containing four bunks and a really new one that is kept locked. Notes in the cabin said they could be used in an emergency and I immediately declared an emergency. Tent space was limited, but nevertheless seven tents were set up. Other lucky folks used the bunks.

When Jim flew in the next morning, we asked him to bring back wood to replace the supply we had used; he brought back two gunny sacks full on the next trip! I left a note for owner Jerry Tysver and his partner, Tom McElroy (game guides) thanking them and offering to pay for our night's lodging. We left the cabin neat and clean.

With a 185 on floats, Jim's actual flying time, at \$190 per hour, came to \$2052 for ten flights, but he charged \$1950. This was a lot of service for \$130 per person. Thanks, Jim, for the great job--and for telling us in the first place about this beautiful country in the north Talkeetnas. It was indeed a grand finale for this leader.

The intrepid hikers on this trip included: Pam Bearden, Eiven and Mary Pat Brudie, Blanche Crandall, Gene Delmore, Joe and Tim Dugan, Karen Forsyth, Gene Klymko, Jim and Mike Lashe, Helen Nienhueser, Sue Rostin and Linda White.

Dona Agosti

Crow Pass to Glen Alps

A call to Bill Stivers verified the typical 1984 hiking trip--only Pat Murray said he wanted to go, so Bill was going and included me. Thank goodness, as it was one of the best trips I've been on. My only contribution was due to selfish reasons, that was to cut the trip to four days. This turned into a blessing as the fifth day Anchorage and vicinity was deluged with rain after four perfect sunny days.

Pat's wife graciously drove us to the trailhead at Crow Cr. and said she would pick us up at Glenn Alps on Sat. night if we were there. After going over Crow Pass we ate lunch by Raven Glacier and Raven Cr. valley. Several other hikers passed by ranging from twin brothers with packs to three with shorts and no gear. Toward the creek, then up into the cirque. I went straight up to the sheep trail while the others side-hiked. Thinking I had died, they waited until they saw me running along the sheep trail. Sometimes I wonder if it is worth the effort going so high, since my leg muscles were starting to cramp we camped in the cirque right near a bunch of sheep and frolicking lambs.

Next day we scrambled up to the low spot on the ridge and worked our way down the other side to the north fork of Ship Creek -- all snow on this side. With much sliding and glissading down slopes. Just after sitting high on a hillside for lunch, we were entertained for a half hour by a wolf checking out two ewes and a lamb. The latter did not care for the lunchtime show and themselves checked out to unwolf-like territory. We stopped at the lake near Bird Pass, had a leisurely dinner and good nights sleep, except Pat, who after a thorough search of the area, managed to find an uncomfortable spot every night,

Pancake morning for me and we were off to try a "Stiver's shortcut" to Ship Lake via a couple more steep ridges. We headed to the back of the next cirque after Bird Pass and came face-to-face with a steep snow-sided ridge with a cornice on top. A narrow vertical strip, was visible though, and we decided to try it. Up we went, but found that chunks of grass and sod would sluff off as we stepped on them. We finally made it to the top, but not before Pat slid off the mud into a steep snow gully. He arrested himself with his ice ax about half-way down and managed to get back to the snow-free area. We climbed higher on the ridge to a sheep trail, angled to a stream gully and back up another ridge. Here we sat a long time and enjoyed the view. We dropped down to a bench below. In camp, after finishing Reader's Digest, I glanced out of the tent in time to see to see a moose. But it ran funny. I got out the binoculars and found it was a large chocolate brown grizzly out looking for a marmot dinner.

Next day we took the same route as the grizzly. We crossed Ship Lake pass. Bill and I finally made it up and over behind Pat. After lunch we hiked to the powerline via the new bridge that goes nowhere. We caught up with Pat and the van in the parking lot to end a super trip. Bill's knowledge of this area paid off again.

John Nevin

Glen Alps to Indian via Ship Lake

July 14-15

While the rest of us moved up to Glen Alps, Don Hansen delivered his pickup to the Indian Creek trailhead and my wife provided taxi service back to the parking lot, from where we got away at 9:30. The hike up south fork of Campbell Creek trail and up and across the Hidden Lake outlet creek to Ship Lake Pass (4000') was rather uneventful except for worsening weather and a cold breeze.

Willy Hersman had joined us for a day hike, and he and Don were emerging from the fog descending the Ramp (5240'), as the rest of us went up--they then did the Wedge. Rain turned to snow and the fog lifted enough to afford some views over Ship Lake and to the east. Our junior climber, Peter Mitchell, age 9, made it virtually to the top--leaving his mother, Mary, behind.

We were happy to return to the pass and then down the steep 1500' slope to Ship Lake valley, and out of the wind. Good tent sites were found on the lichen just north of the smaller lake.

Fashion rain gear award for the day went to Mary for her black garbage bag with armholes. And the neatest stream crossing was by Peter--Don threw him across to two catchers!

Weather moderated for dinner, after which several of us walked up to Ship Lake, spotting some more sheep (there were many along the Ramp earlier) and learning there were some 6" trout in the stream. The next morning was clear and we got a late start after lazing around in the sun--and after I made a short scramble to photograph three young rams above camp.

The walk around the point into the next valley leading to Indian Creek Pass

was beautiful, in a lush and park-like setting with many flowers blooming amid the brush clumps and alpine hemlock--columbine, paintbrush, tundra rose, geranium, etc. We came across a recent sheep kill, probably by a grizzly--known to be in the area recently.

We started down the Indian trail from the Pass about 1PM and got to the trailhead in well under three hours, a distance shown on the sign as 8 miles. There were several stream crossings, one of which most waded and the others were on logs. Inducements to a rapid pace and short stops were hordes of black flies, mean little b----. Terrain gradually changed through zones of open alpine, willow, alder, and eventually large hemlock and cottonwood. Trip mileage was 19 or 20 miles including the Ramp.

A good hike and a good group. Besides Don, myself and the Mitchells were Kris Erickson, Doug Knutson and David Judish.

Bill Wakeland