



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

SEPTEMBER 1986

Volume 29, Issue 09

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The meeting will be held Wednesday, September 17th at 7:30 pm at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets, Anchorage. After the business meeting, Tom Meacham will show slides of a climb, this year, on Mt. Gerdine. Next month will be the annual elections and equipment swap.

MINUTES FOR THE AUGUST MEETING

The meeting was held August 20th at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, and called to order by President Mark Findlay at 7:45 pm. The reading of the minutes for July was waived and approved as published. The club welcomed new members and guests. Thanks to Barb Byrne for typing the August newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

\$ 203.00 - Petty Cash
716.20 - Bank Account
4,040.44 - Money Market
47.50 - Undeposited
\$5,007.14 - Total MCA Monies

We mail no membership cards unless you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your dues...rates and address are on back of Scree .

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Hiking Committee

Rick Maron reported on an upcoming hike to the ridge west of the Seward Hwy. near Turnagain Pass. The elevation gain is about 5000 ft.

B. Ice Climbing Class

The annual class will be held September 27th and 28th. This is for beginning and intermediate students. The class is for vertical ice only. No glacier walking techniques will be covered. MCA members only. Sign up by the September meeting. The club has limited supplies of gear, so

please try to provide your own when possible. Cost of the class will be \$5.00 plus entry to the glacier. See equipment list in this Scree. There will be a mandatory indoor meeting for all students the week before the class weekend. Questions should be directed to Paul Denkwalter at AMH, 272-1811.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mint Hut

A Personal Use Cabin Permit for the Mint Glacier Hut has been received from the State of Alaska. It is renewable every year.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Library

More shelves will be added to the MCA library at AMH, as soon as costs of the project are figured and approved by the club.

B. Peak Registers and Hut Journals

The project of replacing peak registers is being revived. In the past Greg Higgins did a fine job for the club of keeping up with this. Willy Hersman has volunteered to continue the work. See article in this Scree. The Mint Hut needs a new waterproof journal since the pages are running low. Someone needs to take the journal down from the Mint Glacier for typing and replacement. If no one else volunteers for this, Dave Staheli says he'll do it.

C. Elections in October

For President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and two Board Members. Anyone interested should contact Mark Findlay or another officer. Please.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Picnic was held on August 16th at Eklutna Lake. There was a small turn out and lots of leftover food. Quorum of those attending made the decision: the picnic will be held in town, on the parkstrip, on a Friday night. Attendees will not have to utilize the weekend for an overnight hike during the weekend.

B. The American Alpine Club, Alaska Section is having its annual meeting in Anchorage October 4th. More details in this Scree.

C. Mail

Climbing Magazine, Trail and Timberline
Mountain Travel, Geographic Names

Hatcher Pass Management response to key issues from public meetings
Center for the Environment - letter involving Prince William Sound

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Thanks to Mark Findlay for his slides of kayaking from Valdez to Whittier.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bernie Helms



THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB

ALASKA SECTION

Annual AAC Meeting to Feature Mt. Kongur, Logan in Winter, and Tibet

Saturday, October 4th

All are invited to attend the sixth annual meeting of the American Alpine Club, Alaska Section. This is the most active of the nine sections of the AAC, a national organization devoted to the sport of climbing. This is the same club which publishes the American Alpine Journal. Like last year the section meeting will consist of a business meeting, short presentations of local interest, a banquet and social hour, and an evening of slide presentations. The meeting will take place at Stuckagain Heights.

The feature presentations this year are: "The First Winter Ascent of Mt. Logan", "Tibet-1949", and "The All-Women's Expedition to Mt. Kongur in China". The last two programs will be especially interesting as a comparison of the Tibet of today with Tibet of 40 years ago. The former is a film made by Lowell Thomas and Lowell Thomas, Jr. in 1949, one of the first trips made by westerners to the area in decades, at that time.

Registration begins at 1:00 pm and the general meeting starts at 2:00 pm. The banquet will take place in the restaurant area at 5:30 - 7:30 pm followed at 8:00 pm by the feature shows. Admission to the annual meeting and roast beef banquet are \$18.00 for section members and \$20.00 for non-members. Those wishing to attend just the evening programs may do so for \$4.00 (section members free).

This is a good chance for climbers to get familiar with the AAC, the Alaska Section, and much of the state's climbing community. Ask questions freely, and please consider joining the club. You can make early reservations for the banquet by calling Ernie Borjon, 344-8661.

Directions to Stuckagain Heights: Go to Tudor Rd. and turn south onto Campbell Airstrip Rd... follow this 3.5 miles... veer left and follow that road to mile 4... veer right onto Basher Drive... Basher Drive will take you to mile 5 and just beyond is the restaurant.

Peak Registers

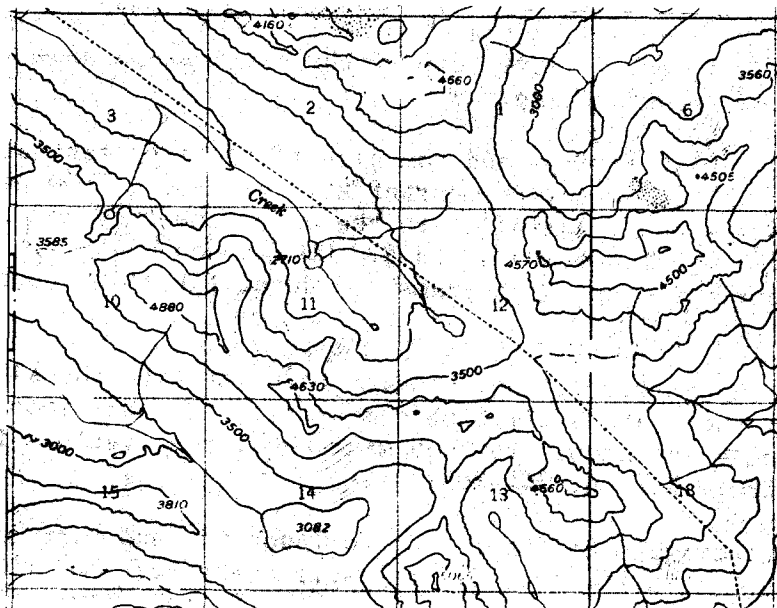
It has been noted that some peak registers are in need of replacement due to water damage, lack of paper, or in some cases they are completely missing. If you climb a peak and find this to be the case, carefully remove the contents and bring it in for typing and replacement. Try to leave some paper in the container for the interim until the new register is placed. Whenever you put a register back after reading and/or signing it, be sure to place it carefully under a small cairn for protection from the wind. Be sure to also seal it well from the elements and keep food out since varmints get curious.

These registers placed by the MCA are a source of enjoyment and important information for many of us who climb Alaska's mountains. They may not be in line with your climbing philosophy. Even so, if you do not agree that they should be there, simply leave them alone. Don't sign them if you don't want, but let others enjoy them. Several which were recently placed are already missing, such as the ones on Yukla and Ptarmigan. The register on Pleasant Mt. was buried so deeply that I must have removed 30 rocks to get to it.

Volunteers are needed to take registers to some of the following peaks if you are headed that way: Yukla, Whiteout, Byron, Goat, Gunsight, Hidden, Magnificent, Montana, Pinnacle, Koktoya, Tanaina (east), Temptation.

Willy Hersman
338-5132

MAP TRIVIA



Easy one. What is the 4880' peak here on the Anchorage Quad?
Answer to July: Organ Mt. (6980)

TRIP REPORTS

August 16, 1986

What: The Annual MCA Picnic
Where: Under blue, sunny skies at Eklutna Lake Campground
When: 8-16-86, Saturday
Who: Twelve adventurous MCA members
Why: For food (the hot dogs were all left over!)
"Colorful" political and economic conversation
Sun (surf and sand?)

Moral: Next year in town
On the parkstrip
On a Friday night!

Bernie Helms

Harding Icefield Traverse

During the 1986 crossing of the Harding Icefield, five MCA members braved storms and unusual glacier conditions before arriving at their final destination one day late. Doris Curtis, Kathryn Engel, Ton Grenier, Bob Lohr and Dan O'Haire formed two rope teams which traveled safely across forty-five miles of ice. The third annual traverse followed in the footsteps of the 1985 trip, crossing Tustamena Lake in an ocean dory skippered by local guide George Pollard, and gaining the icefield via Tustamena Glacier. But this year the route led up the right fork of the Tustamena, instead of the left, and followed a long, sweeping arc across the southern edge of the icefield. The group then returned to the land of the living by the Exit Glacier trail.

The mountaineers failed to find an ice route all the way up the Tustamena to the icefield, and so picked their way through low glaciated hills and sat out a storm before finally approaching the icefield. The final obstacle was a slush field on the uppermost Tustamena Glacier. Once on the icefield, the explorers put their skis on, but travel was slower than expected because of volcanic ash on the surface of the snow which prevented gliding and had produced huge suncups ten feet in diameter and one to five feet high. The surface of the icefield in places resembled badlands topography.

The weather was perfect as the group skied up into better snow conditions and up over the gentle summit of a three-mile wide ice corridor. They camped on the other side with thoughts of gliding downhill all the way to the Exit Glacier trail, but the next morning ice fog reduced visibility to seventy-five yards. The group was able to travel for two hours across the ice flats in whiteout conditions, navigating by compass, correcting direction every twenty paces, before the wind picked up and the rain began. With one or two members of the party verging on hypothermia, a wind wall was constructed and for the next 10 hours five people huddled together inside a forty-dollar dome tent to keep warm as the storm raged outside. Once the weather cleared, the group skied down and across more miles of suncups, reaching the Exit Glacier trail on the evening of the eighth day.

Dan O'Haire

MATANUSKA (BYER'S) PEAK (6119')

July 12, 1986

I had not intended to write up this aborted hike, but after returning from our wet and cold Brooks Range hike I thought this one should be written up - it provides some useful, perhaps life-saving information.

Only three of us showed up at the U of A parking lot, and journeyed north in threatening weather and started hiking near the base of Lazy Mt. up a one-time moose trail, that I had used 30 years ago, toward the McRoberts Creek bowl at the base of Byers Peak. Naturally it started raining. My companions assured me they were a match for the weather, and we proceeded through the dripping brush and grass and into the fog until we were above timberline. A 30-minute break for lunch, huddled under a space blanket, afforded an opportunity to question the wisdom of continuing, since we would soon be making camp and then either make a late dash for the top, or await better weather the next day.

After about 30 minutes, the younger of my companions wondered why I (an old guy like me) was not shaking like he was. Well, to spare you any more suspense, it developed that he not only had no rain pants, but also had all cotton clothing, including the blue jeans, as did my other companion, and further, one of them discovered he had lost his sleeping bag somewhere along the trail. Well now, ain't that just dandy! At least we lost no more time wondering what to do! We found the bag and had a good laugh over the mis-adventure, but please, guys, the MCA warning about cotton clothing is serious - wear polypro, wool, pile, or various synthetic blends and do carry a change plus full rain gear.

My thanks to the lucky two who made this example possible, and who shall remain nameless.

Bill Wakeland

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

July 26 - Aug 9, 1986

Nine of us met at Fairbanks International on 7-26, flew to Fort Yukon via Arctic Circle Airlines, and by stages between storms arrived at a newly created landing spot on the Sheenjek River, some 150 miles north of Fort Yukon. Our 185 pilot was Roger Dowding, who had pioneered the spot the previous day, since all of the previously selected landing spots were under water - from Last Lake north, for perhaps a dozen miles, the whole valley was water or ice.

Three camps later we were some 20 miles up the Sheenjek, deep into Joe Want's guide district, still enjoying the crummy weather, during which the nice stretches were doubly appreciated, and occasionally getting a look at bull caribou on high meadows, or scattered sheep. Steve was catching grayling for food variety, blueberries were plentiful, and we celebrated Steve's birthday with a gala party in the rain with a good fire on a sheltered gravel bar, some

assorted spirits and a fantastic cake baked in the coals.

At this camp we split up for day hikes on both sides of the river - the "north group" got into rams and more blueberries and the "south" party I was in included Jane and Linda (always ready to go) and Don. We had a long and close encounter with three nice caribou bulls, with brief, sunny interludes lasting into higher glacier country. We attained 6440' - the highest point of the trip - and also a horizontal snow storm. That morning a sudden squall at 7 am nearly flattened Jane and Linda's tent - one consistent fact about the weather - if you don't (or do) like the weather, wait 5 minutes, and it'll change.

Started retracing our route next day when weather was too foul for day hikes - still 55 miles to pick-up over mostly an unknown route. River now up and fast and dirty and stayed on south (and west) side. Make 10 miles that day traveling high rather than close to river - we are now used to putting on wet socks and boots and traveling wet. Lots of wet areas, high creeks, etc. Camped inside the mouth of "Dry Creek" - often dries up, but not this year. As with most camps, we had good spots and slept well - dry clothing, tent, and bag is pure luxury - and a Therma-Rest pad is worth the extra pound.

Next day was perhaps the hardest of the trip - some 8 miles up to a pass, to 4760' from 3100', slopping back and forth through the creek and rock-hopping - to a miserable, but welcome, little shelf on a creek bank that was sheltered from the wind. We hoped to lay over here and explore the high country, but no such luck - left the next day as rain was letting up - and journeyed down into good weather, and a skinny dip, hair wash and gear drying spree when the sun burst forth down in the Sheenjeck West Fork valley.

Two camps later we had a fine view from camp on high ground looking southeast into the Chandalar valley - where we watched several caribou following the earlier migration southeasterly over a route we had traveled, which looked like thousands had just passed through - trails everywhere. Saw our only grizzly on way to this camp. Had more grayling to eat - enjoyed some more sun - and rain.

Next day, most fished and stayed close or Jim and Pat crossed the Chandalar and climbed a 5000' mountain to the south. By now four of our group were in low cut tennies - with a variety of foot problems including an inflamed toe, and inflamed achilles tendon and a sore heel spur, partly attributable to wet boots. Jane, Linda, Don and I took off on a day hike to Guilbeau Pass at 4800', some 8 or 9 miles away, to cross the Continental Divide and look into the Hula-Hula watershed.

Along the way we encountered a group of 5 hikers including Stewart Ollanek and Wendy Block, who I had coordinated plans with much earlier, so we didn't end up on the same route at the same time. They started on the Hula-Hula and were also being picked up at Red Sheep, but Audie was their air transport. They had so many supplies we called them the 7-11 group, and later managed to relieve them of some of their burden. Our hike was long and harder than usual, with so much high water in the canyon, but the weather held off until we started back - at the pass we reviewed notes in a bottle (a larger one is needed), including the MCA trip in 1977, one in 1978 by Steve and me, and several more recent ones. Saw one nice ram in the canyon.

Four camps later we were at Red Sheep, with more rain and wet going, an

aborted day hike and feelings of gratitude we weren't on the originally planned route requiring river crossings - even the Chandalar, broad and slower, appeared uncrossable. We had river enough on the side streams.

But we had one memorable day left. Camp 11 was near a creek within our first spruce forest at elevation 2700' and the day we were to arrive at Red Sheep dawned clear and beautiful, so we loaded up and hiked a mile or so, dropped the packs and climbed this big rock of a mountain with a couple nice rams on it, to the 5000' summit - fantastic up there - a fitting last day. Then a hard couple miles through a wet forest and a couple more surprise miles on good going, a surprisingly easy crossing of Red Sheep (picked out from the mountain) and there was the strip - one end still in ice! Larry Rivers had his base camp there for a guiding business.

In keeping with the tradition of flexible plans up in this neck of the woods, we learned first that Arctic Circle Airlines went out of business, and with it one of the planes to ferry us to Fort Yukon, and all of our tickets to Fairbanks were invalid. But no matter. Three of us got to Fort Yukon later with "Joe", an associate of Roger's with a 206. The 7 of us at Fort Yukon got to Fairbanks on Audie Air - a deal Joe worked out because Audie owed Arctic Circle some money. See how simple it all is! We actually had a darn good trip, thanks to not having one single complainer - a strong and happy group and thanks to Roger Dowding.

Our group was: Jane Stammen, Linda White, Don Hansen, Jim Schiewe, Steve and Marcia Wakeland, Jim and Pat Gonski and myself.

P.S. Roger Dowding was impressed with our group and said he would give a discount to any future MCA groups - he specializes in flying groups for river running - from Circle to Canada - and can be reached at 2293 Walrus Court, North Pole, 99705 or Ph. 907-488-3942.

Bill Wakeland

Bombardment Pass

The name sounds like it came from flying missions out of Elmendorf, but actually the pass got its name from Vin Hoeman (who else) when he and Dave Meyers did the first ascent of Mt. Rumble in 1966. Constant rockfall from the steep cliffs of Korohusk to the pass is the reason. We might add snow avalanches to that after watching from the pass for a while. Luckily in August there isn't much snow, these were "termination dusters" and seemed to melt into thin air before our eyes.

Labor Day weekend, as you probably know, was not the best for weather, but the weatherman gave us optimism in the Saturday newspaper and so four people turned out for this MCA trip: Don Hansen, Rick Ebert, Tom Saville and myself. We didn't do too bad...traveling over 25 miles, mostly cross-country, and climbing three peaks just under 7000'. The blueberries, excellent this year, were a delightful treat. But we took none home with us because we were either too hungry or too wet to worry about later. If you get a chance before they are gone it's worth it to go out with one of those blueberry pickers, and you

probably won't have to go far.

Tom, Don and I placed a register on Raina Peak (6798'), then Tom and I trucked over to Peeking Mt. (6950') to dig up that register and have a look. Both of these peaks were first climbed in 1966 by Gayle and Helen Nienheuser. The next day, the last day of August, Tom and I climbed Pleasant Mt. (6425'), placing a register there and carefully descended the icy gully just east of the west summit. This peak has three summits, and hardly 5 feet difference in the three tops. It was first climbed in 1960 by Norm Pichler, Lois Willard, and Irma Duncan. On that MCA trip, so long ago, was John Dillman.

Our trip ended with the lengthy descent of Peter's Creek via trail and high wet grass. If you ever go up there, please take a roll of flagging and mark the upper part of the trail. It keeps disappearing. To drive the entire road requires very high clearance, a lot of guts, or a half-track.

Willy Hersman

Climbing Notes

Geoff Radford, of Anchorage, reports that this year's American expedition to Gasherbrum IV was a success. Four team members were put on the summit in June, the first time for Americans, and a new route. The weather, so important to success on the mountain, was favorable at the right time. Geoff reached a point fairly high above the highest camp, but not quite to the 26,000-foot top due to lack of time.

Todd Miner, Bob Antonson, Dave Blanchet, and Ray Koleser reached the summit of Mt. St. Elias (18008) earlier this year, in May. Their route was via the South Ridge (Harvard Route), included one daring food drop by the pilot, and is estimated to be just the 15th time anyone has stepped on the top since it was first climbed by the Duke of the Abruzzi in 1897.

Geographic Names

Not much has been put in the Scree about decisions made by the Board of Geographic Names since Grace Hoeman was around, and many of the names since then are already on most of the U.S.G.S. topo sheets you can buy anyway, but here are a few you might not be aware of:

AVALANCHE MT. was given for the 5050-foot peak that most of us knew as Powerline Pass Peak; near Mt. Alpenglou, and just S.E. of Sunrise is 3007-foot BRADLEY PEAK, named for homesteader Lois Bradley; just west of Mt. Hayes in the Alaska Range is MT. BALCHEN, at 11,140 feet, named for Colonel Bernt Balchen, arctic explorer and aviator; and on the S.E. slope of Mt. Spurr the glacier which runs S.E. to Chakachatna River, and which was originally named Easter Glacier by those who first climbed it, is now called KIDAZQENI GLACIER, the Indian name for Mt. Spurr - "one that is burning inside".

Willy Hersman

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- Sept. 13 THE SUICIDES
13 miles round trip; 3500' elev. gain. Maps: Anch A7. Twin peaks on the Anchorage skyline, above Rabbit Lake. Call Mike for meeting time.
Leader: Mike Miller 345-5718
- 14 KNOYA PEAK
14 miles round trip; 4600' elev. gain. Maps: Anch A7, A8. 55 Ways #35. A nice ridge walk to this peak above the north fork of Campbell Cr. Meet at UAA 8 am.
Leader: Jim Pommert 344-5656
- 20 WOLVERINE PEAK
11 miles round trip; 3340' elev. gain, mostly on trail. Maps: Anch A7, A8. 55 Ways #34. Excellent views of Anchorage. 8 am at UAA.
Leader: Mark Findlay
- 21 HURDYGURDY MT.
from S. Fork Eagle R. 14 miles round trip; 3200' elev. gain. Must be in good shape, non-technical. If it is raining, forget it. Meet UAA 7:30 am.
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132
- 20-21 SWAN LAKE
28 miles round trip; 1500' elev. gain, all on trail. Maps: B8, C7, C8. Start at the Devil's Cr. trail at the Sterling Hwy. Car shuttle involved. Stay overnight in the Swan Lake cabin. 55 Ways #14. Meet 7 am at UAA.
Leader: Kathy Burke 346-2841
- 27-28 ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL
Meet at the Matanuska Glacier...see details in Scree article.
Leader: Paul Denkewalter, AMH 272-1811.
- October 5 HIDDEN PEAK
Leave UAA at 7:30 am. 10 Miles round trip from Glen Alps. Non-technical, but must be in good physical condition. Ice axe helpful since there will be snow at higher elevations. Elevation: 5105'. If it's raining, forget it.
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132
- 11 INDIAN CREEK PASS
Leader needed Jim
- 18 EAGLE RIVER TRAIL Rainbow Pk.
Leader needed D. Hansen

TECHNICAL ICE SCHOOL

Place: Matanuska Glacier
Date: September 27, 28
Fees: \$5.00 class, \$10.00 access to glacier
Classroom Session: September 23 at 7 p.m. at Central Junior High, 15th and E St.
Rm. ? 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 were at the August meeting for present members and will be at the September meeting for present and new members. If you cannot attend the September general meeting you may call Paul at AMH, 272-1811. We will not be signing up students (or new members) at the classroom session. All students should be members by the September club meeting. (A list of alternates will be kept, and used in chronological order at the classroom session if there are more than 44.)

This annual extravaganza will begin Tuesday September 23rd, with an indoor session. This class will include equipment, knots, clothing and answer your questions. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons and ice axes for inspection. Rental equipment will be handed out. (Please try to borrow equipment as the club has limited supplies.) Groups will be assigned. Fees will be collected. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.

The outdoor session will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 27th, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 6:30 a.m. or go up Friday night.

ICE CLIMBING CLASS EQUIPMENT LIST

(Everyone must have all equipment.)

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

Crampons - 12 points, hinged or rigid

Helmet

Harness - 1 or 2 piece or 22 feet of webbing

Locking carabiner

Rigid sole mountain boots - no hunting boots or wafflestompers

Ice hammer - optional, get one if you can

Day pack - for all this junk

Lunch - for two days, a thermos is nice

Wind parka and pants - Goretex or other semi-waterproofs

Wool or pile pants - no jeans or cotton

Wool or pile jacket - or polarguard type

Wool or pile hat

Wool or pile gloves and mitts - bring extras, it's wet out there

Overmitts - water repellent

Gaitors

Sunglasses, glacier cream, bandana, visor hat, camera, guitar, violin, sax, trumpet, drums, walkmann, etc.

Camping gear for overnight