



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA  
MARCH 1989

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510  
Vol. 11, No. 3

### MARCH MEETING

The next meeting of the MCA will be held Wednesday, March 15th, 7:30 pm, at the Pioneer Schoolhouse, top floor, Third and Eagle Sts., downtown Anchorage. Ken Zafren will be showing slides of the Kumbu Region ( Everest Base Camp area ) of Nepal.

### HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

March 18 SHAKESPEARE GLACIER

One-day ski and climb. 10 miles round trip, long day. Across Portage Lake. Need avalanche beacon and shovel, glacier gear, crampons, etc. TECHNICAL.

Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132

19 WILLIWAW LAKES

Palm Sunday ski tour. 8 miles round trip. Class A.

Leader: Mark Findlay 337-8666

18-19 MINT HUT

Ski to the hut, 9 miles in. Bring sled or other means to help haul in aluminum siding for the hut. Elevation gain 2000'.

Class B. Overnight at the hut.

Leader: Gretchen Reeve 344-3986

18-21 MATANUSKA GLACIER SKI TRIP

Exploration of the upper Mat Glacier and possible hut site.

Celebrate spring break and the Equinox! We'll fly in with pilot Mike Meekins, and ski out down the glacier, 16-18 miles. Glacier travel skills required. TECHNICAL class, in so far as glacier travel requires some technical skills. \$75-100 one-way.

Leader: Dan O'Haire 561-1141

21,28, SKI LESSONS

Apr 4 Tuesday night cross country ski lessons for beginners. Meet at Russian Jack Chalet. 6 - 7pm. Bring your own equipment (call leader if you have questions about the equipment). Emphasis on backcountry skiing. First night covers waxing and flat terrain, second night ups and downs, last night covers skiing with a pack.  
Leader: Mark Findlay 337-8666

- March        ?    AVALANCHE MT. (Formerly Powerline Pass Peak)  
                  Ski to Powerline Pass, climb the peak, and return. 9 miles  
                  round trip, 2000' elev. gain. Class B. Date to be announced  
                  at the meeting, or call Pete.  
                  Leader: Pete Sennhauser 345-5577
- ?    GOAT MT.  
                  Near Girdwood, 5000' elev. gain, 4 miles round trip. Class D.  
                  Ice axe and self-arrest skills needed. Date TBA.  
                  Leader: Pete Sennhauser 345-5577
- April 22-23   PTARMIGAN PEAK  
                  Round trip about 8 miles, elevation gain of 3000'. Overnight  
                  trip, camp and climb. Class C. Bring ice axe and camping gear.  
                  Leader: Gretchen Reeve 344-3986
- May            20    O'MALLEY PEAK  
                  Round trip about 6 miles, elevation gain 3000'. Class C. Bring  
                  ice axe.  
                  Leader: Gretchen Reeve 344-3986
- 27-28   WILLAWAW PEAK  
                  Round trip about 16 miles, elevation gain 3000'. Class D. Bring  
                  ice axe.  
                  Leader: Don Hansen 279-0829

The Hiking and Climbing Committee is always looking for leaders. If you have an idea for a trip, whether an afternoon or several weeks, give Don Hansen a call at 279-0829. H and C Committee: Don Hansen, Chairman, B. Wakeland, M. Bassett, W. Hersman.

Also, in case this newsletter gets out in time, the first meeting of the H and C Committee for this upcoming season will be at Don's house on March 9. If you would like some input into the schedule, or want to join the committee, contact Don about the meeting.

### TRIP REPORTS

#### Notes on a Few Ski Trips

Kathy Burke

It's the day after Christmas and Linda White, Jane Stammen and I are skiing the Middle Fork Loop Trail (Prospect Hts. to Glen Alps and back). We left in the dark and plugged into nature's socket with all our senses. The weather was perfect, the snow conditions were perfect and we were all in one

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heck of a good mood. We were glad we'd made it through the seasonal demands and had a feeling that the new year was already here, a sense of freshness and turning a new leaf.

The snow was full of tracks: squirrel, lynx coyote, moose, ptarmigan, mouse and rabbit. We saw and heard a Great Horned Owl, saw squirrels, ravens, magpies and chickadees so close we could have touched them.

We crossed the new bridge across the Middle Fork of Campbell Creek and we were glad the snow was stiff enough that our skis got a good edge into it to get us up and out of the ravine. Last year we floundered on our skis, breaking through the snow, trying to get up and out of the ravine and at one point I took off my skis and crawled and walked through thigh-deep snow. Amazing how much fun a little ski outing can be! As we topped out on the other side of the ravine, tracks were all that was left of Linda. Jane and I were sidetracked by the windblown tundra. It was great to see the reindeer lichens and crowberry and even the old, dried, flower seedpods. In the middle of this white and gray winter it was a promise to us that spring and colors would be here again!

It always feels good to head into the hills with good friends. Sometimes we would ski together discussing Christmas presents, skiing, past trips, future trips and sharing the excitement of lynx tracks or answers to questions wilderness had posed to us, such as coyote tracks with scent markings and Labrador Tea. Sometimes we would spread out and ski alone, thoughts turning inward or just basking in winter solitude.

January 2nd, skiing up Peter's Creek, Linda, Jane and I. Good grief! The drive up there was enough to give me cardiac arrest, maybe not so much the drive up as the thought of driving back down those hills. The snow was slow and we seemed to be doing a lot of up and down, I mean we pretty much walked on our skis except for the downhill. The view up into the headwall was spectacular. We saw moose, redpolls, golden crown kinglets, and a brown creeper. The snow made for good control on the hills except for one that had an icy stretch in the middle. After about three seconds on that icy stretch in the middle, I figure I was travelling about 80 mph and dove for the soft snow on the side. The hill was so steep and my speed so fast that when I hit the ground there was a rooster-tail of flying snow and I did a chin-plow for about 15 feet. I mean snow inside my ears, clothes, hair and eyelashes! Oh yeah, the drive back down was a bit of a thrill, too.

January 15th, the Andrew Lekisch Trail, Linda, Jane and I again. Great overlooks from the tops of the bluffs, sundogs and spookey fog. Zero degrees, but no problem keeping warm, this trail is 4/5 uphill and 1/5 downhill! Have to come back and try this one on my mountain bike.

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South Fork Snow River

Todd Miner

The area east of the Alaska Railroad and the Seward Highway on the Kenai Peninsula epitomizes what many of us think Alaska is all about: mountains, glaciers, forests, lakes and coast - a wilderness largely untouched by humans. Over the three-day President's Day Weekend, five of us checked out one of the valleys penetrating this rugged area, the South Fork of the Snow River. We chose it based on the description in Skiing Alaska's Back Forty and for its potential for traverses, glacier travel and the excitement of the unknown. We found all we were looking for.

A short two-and-a-half hour drive brought Bobby Huppert, Phil Manke, Pete Murphy, Jim Sayler and me down to a plowed pull-out across from the USFS Grayling Lake Trailhead. The S. Fork flows right by, backed by intriguing glaciers and mile-high peaks. We followed a trail well-used by skiers, snowmachiners and dog sleds and after crossing several meadows we were skiing on the frozen river bed. In warm years access would undoubtedly be much more difficult. Even after weeks of sub-zero temperatures, open portions and weak bridges made for interesting going. Several miles in, soon after gaining the corner and entering the U-shaped valley, a narrow canyon cut through on the left. We did not explore this, the mouth of the Fireside Glacier drainage, but the map shows that if the canyon can be negotiated a sweet-looking route up the glacier could give access to Hearth Mountain (6182 unclimbed?), one of the peninsula's rare six-thousanders. An adventurous team could even, it appears, drop over to the larger Hearth Glacier west of Paradise Peak (6000+) and traverse over to the main fork of the Snow River. So many mountains, so little time.

On we skrudged (ski-trudged) on the north side of the river. A mile past the canyon we suddenly lost the snowmachine trail and started to run across numerous, troublesome, incised creeklets. We floundered around in thick brush and over dubious log bridges before it dawned on us to head back to the main river on the south bank of the valley. Once back on the mostly frozen river it was smooth sailing. There was no appreciable gain in elevation until just after the first big glacier dropped down from the south. Then we stayed to the left (north) and followed a recently-hacked-out trail through a rather steep stand of hemlock. We put camp on the last part of that hill, across from the foot of a smaller hanging glacier, about six hours after leaving the cars.

Saturday, with just day packs we cruised out over hard wind slab, intent on exploring Nellie Jaun Lake. A second large valley glacier dropped down from the south. It looked like an excellent route for a traverse up to the Godwin Glacier and on out to Fourth of July Creek. However, a strong cold wind dropping off it quickly sent us east and over into the Prince William Sound drainage. A barely-connecting canyon took us through thick hemlock and

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messy moraines and out onto the lake.

What a place! Glaciers descending from all directions, rolling green forest and magnificent (virgin?) peaks everywhere. The lake would make an excellent float/ski plane base for anyone lucky enough to have access to such toys. Our ski back was uneventful except for a "porky" initially identified as an early black bear.

Sunday we checked out the first big glacier we had encountered (Sec. 12, 13, 19, 24, 25). Surprisingly easy access up the east moraine was made free of brush, though the going was steep. From 2000 feet it looked like an interesting traverse could be made onto the Godwin, giving access to half a dozen five thousand-foot peaks, including Godwin (5850 unclimbed?), Kindling (5550 unclimbed?) and Fourth of July (5397 one ascent) and Peak 5503.

On the way out we saw the first folks other than ourselves, a few snowmachiners and skiers. Several wrong-turn stream crossings and four steady hours had us out. Looking back the alpenglow touched both the mountain peaks and our spirits - we had a great weekend, with new plans for many more.

#### Hut Materials

The vote between the huts on the Mat Gl. and Bomber Gl. was very close. Therefore, the Board and Hut Committee feel we should build both. The huts will be built as soon as permits, money and materials are acquired. Each hut will cost at least \$3,200. You can help accomplish the club goals by either donating materials or money. The following is a list of materials needed for the building of a new hut. If you can donate any, contact Gretchen Reeve.

lumber:	
1/2" plywood	visqueen
1/4" plywood	metal roofing
1x4s	metal siding
1x6s	caulking
2x6s	paint
2x4s	lantern
	stove
8-penny nails	fire extinguisher
16-penny nails	flat-blade shovel
assorted wood screws	broom and dust-pan
	dish pan
windows - thermopane	benches
insulation	hammer
door and jam	saw
door knob	screw drivers
door hinges	

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### Cups

MCA Cups are here!

A special thanks to Karen Cafmeyer for the design on the cups. They come in four different colors and are for sale at AMH (thank you Paul). They sell for \$4.00 ea. If you have friends who use the huts, but aren't members of the club, please encourage them to buy a cup. The profits will be used for maintenance and the building of huts.

### State Park Volunteers

Alaska State Parks is looking for volunteers for the 89 season. This includes 45 needed campground hosts. Hosts work 30 hours a week greeting visitors and sharing recreational information. They receive free camping space, access to all park facilities, training, uniforms, and a food stipend. Interpretive volunteers, ranger assistants, biologist assistants, construction, botany, etc. They have several openings...

Annie Bill, Volunteer Coordinator 762-2605.

### MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting took place on the 15th of the month, with Jerry Minick presiding, due to John Baker's absence. John will be missing some of the meetings, since his work schedule is very demanding. There were no corrections to the January minutes. Guests and new members were welcomed.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$3641.45
Checking Acct	-	524.18
Petty Cash	-	7.53
Total		\$4223.16

#### COMMITTEES:

Training Committee. Mark Findlay announced that he would be willing to work out a training program with folks interested in learning more about cross country skiing.

Hiking and Climbing. Don Hansen is our new chairman. Jerry Minick expressed the club's gratitude to Kathy Burke, who had done this job before. ....Don announced that Gretchen Reeve will lead a trip to the Mint Hut and

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was looking for able bodies to come along to help carry aluminum siding. This for the purpose of improving the outside of the hut, which has been under attack by a tribe of plywood-hungry porcupines. The idea is to check if porcupines also like aluminum siding and of course to see who can carry the most siding at once. Dave Pahlke, who has been carbo-loading in the back of our meeting hall for several months, said he can handle at least eighty pounds as long as it's bulky.....Dan O'Haire will lead a trip to the Matanuska Glacier during spring break (March 18-21). See trip schedule..... Gretchen Reeve will do several trips in the next few months if anyone is interested in joining along, please contact her.

Hut Committee. The cups to be sold to support the hut cause are in and for sale at AMH. The gain will be used for repairs and possible new hut construction. Don't forget, March 18 is when the haul to the Mint takes place. Great opportunity to find out where it is, since many a hopeful occupant has ended up spending the night out just in looking for it.

Executive Committee. A letter has been sent to State Parks saying that while the club doesn't oppose military training on glaciers, it does oppose military use of Eklutna Glacier. The letter was present for review by the membership. Bill Wakeland mentioned that folks should contact him to get a clearer picture on the whole issue. He warned that recent editorials in local papers have been insensitive and inaccurate on the present status of park use, specifically by the military.

Parks Advisory Committee. Jerry mentioned public hearings on the Eagle River Greenbelt, one in Eagle River on Feb. 21 and another in Anchorage, Feb. 27 at Loussac.

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS:

The value of having a club recorder was questioned. It came to a vote and it was decided to keep things as they are. The cost of the phone is about \$20 a month. The question has been raised if it is worth continuing, since the money could be spent elsewhere. Those of you who can't come to meetings very often are asked to respond regarding this issue or it might come to another vote. Call in your comment if you like.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Special thanks to Marleena Mooring for doing refreshments, which she won't be able to do this semester due to classes. Mike King will do them for a while.

The Valdez Ice Climbing Festival was announced.

The slide show was by Dave Whitelaw on ice climbing in South Central, and some other exotic places. Thanks Dave.

## MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Just briefly here...the board discussed the dissolution of Alaska State Bank, where our account is; decided there would be no problems with that. Equipment waivers discussed again; no waiver as yet. Tom Choate brought to the attention of the board the possibility of getting money through a program at Sanctuary Travel, a travel agent in town. If accepted into the program our organization can benefit every time someone makes travel arrangements and designates a portion of the earnings to be sent to his favorite non-profit group, the MCA. Good deal eh? The board voted to send a letter to Chugach State Park to express disapproval of a proposal to let the military use Eklutna Gl. And among other things, your board talked about ways to increase membership.

Pete Sennhauser

## International Summits Quiz #4

The Alps - Part 2 (Courtesy Tom Choate.)

1. Which of these ranges in the Alps is not shared by France and Italy?  
A) Savoy B) Graian C) Cottian D) Maritime E) Dauphine
2. What is the highest peak entirely in France?  
A) Grand Paradise B) Argentera C) Barre des Ecrins D) Mt. Viso  
E) Aiguille de Chambeyron
3. How many ranges in the Alps have peaks of 4000 meters (13123') or higher?  
A) 2 B) 3 C) 4 D) 5 E) 6
4. How many countries (crossed by alpine ranges) can claim peaks over 4000 M?  
A) 2 B) 3 C) 4 D) 5 E) 6
5. The highest peak in the Bernese Oberland (Switzerland) is the:  
A) Jungfrau B) Finsterarrhorn C) Eiger D) Weisshorn E) Dom

## ALPINE ANIMALS - A SERIES OF NOTES

Tom Choate

### NO. 3 Ptarmigan (part II)

To continue the ptarmigan story begun last month, I should remind you that in much of Alaska's mountains there are three species of ptarmigan. They are somewhat separated by altitude, with the rock ptarmigan occupying the middle ground, but still above timberline. In places where white-tailed ptarmigan do not occur, the rock species can be found on summits, especially those that are tundra-covered.

Remember that the black-tail (rarely showing when walking, but always visible

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flying) distinguishes their species from the other summit-dweller, and this species flies more readily and at a greater distance from people. In many places you can hardly get white-tailed ptarmigan to fly at all if you move slowly toward them. But in the same localities, rock ptarmigan will fly at 30 feet or so. With any ptarmigan, it pays to back off, be seated, and watch (preferably with binocs). Natural behavior should soon develop and you will be very surprised at the number of birds that "come out of the woodwork."

After Mid-July, ptarmigan begin to leave their breeding territories and move toward the wetter, lusher meadows more recently freed from snow. Ptarmigan are monogamous, so before this time it would be unusual to see more than a pair with their young (4-7 typically). Flocks of 10-50 will be formed in September, accompanied by vertical migrations to lower, warmer slopes as snow accumulates. White-tailed ptarmigan again are the most likely to remain high and sometimes spend much of the winter on windblown tundra ridges.

Spring melting of warm slopes brings ptarmigan around to those areas by March and April. Climbers will hear ptarmigan calling to establish breeding territories on those same tundra ledges as they melt free. Males of the three species have quite different voices as well as appearance during territory establishment. Willow ptarmigan have solid, rusty brown necks and call from the top of tall willows with the well-known, deep call. Rock ptarmigan may choose a rock to call from, giving a higher, more rapid gargle. White-tails scream repeated, high-pitched, two-word calls from cliffs, often on the wing and particularly at dawn and dusk. Keep your eyes and ears open for these masters of camouflage when climbing this spring!

#### Climbing Wall Update

Alan Julliard

The surveys are in and compiled. Most respondents preferred an indoor facility (no surprise). There was almost unanimous support for a user fee. An even split of those interested in practicing technique and those staying in shape. It is our hope that the results of the survey will provide us with meaningful facts we need to find funding and a site. At this time, finding a site is the most urgent necessity and in an indirect way, will affect the amount of funding needed. For instance, a site on public property without an expensive lease would allow us to put our money into the wall itself. Anyone who has any ideas to share on siting or anything else, please get in touch with Todd Miner at Alaska Wilderness Studies, 786-1468 or Alan Julliard at 243-3816.

## 117 Total Responses

Some respondents indicated more than one answer.  
Percentages are rounded.

Would you prefer and indoor or outdoor facility?	Indoor	98	78%	Outdoor	28	22%																							
What time of day would you most likely use a wall?	Morning	17	11%	Afternoon	41	27%	Evening	92	61%																				
What time of week would you most likely use a wall?	Weekdays	101	74%	Weekends	35	26%																							
How many times a month?	1	15	11%	3	31	23%	5	40	30%	10	27	21%	More	19	14%														
Willing to pay for such a facility?	Y	109	96%	N	4	4%																							
How much?																													
Per each use	\$1	26	27%	Monthly	\$ 5	4	6%	Annually	\$ 50	24	47%	3	63	64%	10	43	68%	100	23	45%	5	9	9%	20	16	25%	200	4	8%
Primary purpose for using the wall?	Working out	67	52%	Skill Training	62	48%																							
Are you affiliated with any climbing groups?	Y	62	56%	N	48	44%																							
How would you be willing to help?	Would not	12	10%	Construction	43	37%	Labor	56	48%	\$ Donation	24	21%	Material discount/donation	2	2%	Maintenance/operation	39	33%											

Quiz answers: 1. E) is entirely in France 2. C) is 4102 M  
3. E) Penine, Bernese, Graian, Bernina, Savoy, Dauphine  
4. B) France, Italy, Switzerland 5. B) at 4274 M (14019') Jungfrau 2nd

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