



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

SEPTEMBER 1990

Volume 33, Issue 9

SEPTEMBER MEETING

September 19 7:30 pm Wednesday, top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse,
Third and Eagle Sts., downtown Anchorage.

SLIDE SHOW A European Vacation by Bill Lorch. See slides of climbing and
traveling in the Alps near Chamonix, Zermatt and Greindelwald.

===== TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL =====

place: Matanuska Glacier
date: September 29-30
fees: \$ 5.00 equipment replacement fee
12.50 access to glacier and camping
meeting: September 27, Pioneer Schoolhouse 7:00 pm. This meeting is
mandatory, as it is every year, so plan to attend.

This school will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice, such as waterfalls and gullies. The second day will include crevasse rescue practice.

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 meeting you may call Paul at AMH, 272-1811. We will not be signing up students (or new members) at the organization meeting on the 27th. All students should be members by the September MCA general meeting since AMH does not collect dues.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 27th. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons and ice axes for inspection. Club equipment will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) Fees will be collected. Tickets to get in will be handed out. Questions will be answered. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.

The school will begin at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 29th, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 7:00 am or go up Friday night (there should be no extra charge if you are part of the class). Bring the ticket you get at the organization meeting or you will have to pay again!

ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL EQUIPMENT LIST

(Everyone must have all equipment underlined.)

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

Ice hammer (optional, get one if you can)

Crampons - 12 points, hinged or rigid or foot fangs

Helmet

Harness - 1 or 2-piece or 22 feet of 1-inch tubular webbing

Locking carabiner (or two regular carabiners)

Rigid-sole mountain boots - not hunting boots; plastic boots are best

Lunch - for two days, a thermos is a good idea

Wind parka and pants - Goretex or other semi-waterproof

Pile or wool pants - definitely no jeans or cotton

Pile or wool jacket (or synchilla, polarguard, whatever they have these days)

Wool hat

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

Overmitts - water repellent

Gaitors

Sunglasses, sun cream, bandana, camera, guitar, violin, sax, trumpet, drums, walkmann, post-climbing refreshments, etc.

Day pack - for all this junk

Car camping gear, lawn chairs, salmon roasts, barbeque sauce, campfire stories

TRIP REPORTS

Pichler's Perch

May 26-28

Neil O'Donnell

On the 26th, Alan Johnson, Joel Babb and I biked around Eklutna Lake and ascended Eklutna Glacier to the hut. The purpose of our trip was to finish the work that had been started in March, but not completed due to lack of materials and high winds. Several days prior to our trip, Lowell Thomas, Jr. flew in additional lumber, paint, nails, caulking, windows and kitchen items. Lowell's contributions to the MCA extend over two decades and continue to be invaluable. Thanks again Lowell!

The benefits of the lift were brought home to us as we located and retrieved the cache of building materials left by Lowell. Ten-foot 2 x 4's do not pack well. After hauling the lumber and assorted materials to the hut we cooked dinner outside in glorious weather. We were joined that evening by Brent and Colleen.

Brent and Colleen were awakened at 8:00 the next morning by the screech of rusty nails being pulled out of the hut. Ah, the peace and solitude of the mountains. They decided to go back to Anchorage on Sunday even though it was a three-day weekend. We labored on.

We finished placing a new layer of plywood on the windward side and covered the wall with rolled aluminum. This required removal and replacement of the rock wall abutting against the hut. A section of old aluminum siding was placed against the lower part of the wall, under the rock pile, to keep the wind from blowing snow into the hut through cracks in the floor. An additional window was placed in the windward wall. It was a thick piece of

Sept 1990

glass from an aquarium, donated by Tom Choate. We also replaced one of the yellowed plexiglass windows with a new lexan window.

Additional work included installing the emergency loft exit constructed by Dave Pahlke on the leeward side, nailing battens over the rolled aluminum and painting inside. The hut looks great. An additional gallon of white paint remains at the hut. Hopefully, someone can find time to do some painting inside. If you are going to the Perch, please take one or two 4-inch paint brushes with you. The paint brushes at the hut are suffering from rigor mortis. The hut could also use a tube of caulking.

Mountain bikes are a great way of getting part way to the hut. It took us 7 hours, 45 minutes from car to hut and 6 hours going out, all at a reasonable pace. Coasting down long stretches of the 12-mile road around the lake (with gear in panniers) was made even more enjoyable when contemplating past trudges around the lake with heavy packs in deep, wet snow.

Cantata Peak South Face

Tom Choate

The club trip on June 2nd and 3rd was a good one for the summer of good weather we have had. Some showers and clouds on Saturday made us doubt the forecast and I was surprised to have six of us walking in, with Pam Kirk already ahead of us and two promises for Saturday evening. The trail on the west side of the South Fork of Eagle River is very good these days, although the beginning is unmarked until you enter the subdivision and there still isn't a parking area. After a rest at the bridge, we worked across to the old mid-valley track and continued over intermittent flooded sections to the foot of Eagle Lake. Finally, across the rough talus route to the octagon, we joined a reclining Pam and chose tent sites. It continued to improve, all except for the summits, so within an hour I led a group on a recon of upper Symphony valley.

Years earlier, when climbing Calliope, I had noticed gullies on the south face of Cantata leading through the lower cliffs to the scrambling above. I could find no one who had tried this face, although the "standard" route traverses onto it from the west ridge (in its upper reaches) to avoid gendarmes. Just past Symphony pond I climbed a snowy moraine hill and studied the face with binoculars. The prominent, deep gully not only penetrates the cliffs but there was enough snow to minimize the amount of garbage rock on the route. But it is subject to stonefall and leads to the right of the summit and uncertain traversing. Two more gullies to the left penetrate the cliffs almost to the bottom, where they merge above a small cliff. The left one ends directly at the summit and was my choice. Arie, a seasoned climber from Holland, was skeptical and so we moved higher for more views.

Suddenly, the view opened and I hastened to the top of Triangle Peak for a good look around even though it was 7:00 pm. On top a group of Dall sheep emerged from the south face, hearing Arie approaching and fled by only 40 feet from me, where I sat, unnoticed on the summit. Intermittent views improved as we descended the southwest ridge and rapidly hiked the flat tundra on the divide between Symphony and Ship Creeks. A quick glissade to another bench with thawing lakes and then a final slide down their outlet stream brought us back to our original route, arriving by 9:00 at the octagon.

Stephen came in late, so eight of us responded to a 7:00 am start on Sunday, in good weather. The hour of walking through scattered brush to the step above the pond was pleasant and ice axes came out for the snow above, particularly for the going around the left side of the pond and up to the gully. Here Ken Zafren declared it looked too ugly and fears of rockfall generated eight climbers, so he went off on a photo mission over Triangle Peak.

The rest of us were surprised to find the bottom cliffband an easy scramble and soon were kicking steps rapidly up the gully above. The move leftwards to the next gully was a bit hard to find, but everything went smoothly with only one mere steep step. Stan and Peter got well ahead of their old leader on the easy upper slopes but everyone was on top well before lunch. What a view! The north side drops spectacularly to Eagle Lake and rises again precipitously to Hurdy Gurdy. The deep gorge of Flute Glacier was even more impressive and the route from there to our summit (done last year) looked pretty mean.

The trip down was surprisingly uneventful despite softened snow. No rocks fell on anyone and although marginal, the ropes were never brought out on the steep places. We even had plenty of time for a pub stop after we reached the cars. Arie made sure that we compared superior Dutch beer to the pitcher we ordered and I think it fitting that his first club trip and first Chugach summit should have been a possible new route.

Pioneer Peak

August 11

Neil O'Donnell

Pouring rain on Friday and forecasts of continuing rain throughout the weekend deterred many of those who signed up for the Pioneer Peak climb from rising early Saturday. Those who did faced the unexpected challenge of sunburn and heat stroke as there was nary a cloud in sight and temperatures soared into the upper 70's. Those participating in the climb were Alan Johnson, Charles Lane, Pamela Page, John Pratt, Harry Pursell and myself.

Harry had earned the distinction of making the first recorded ascent of the peak (to the true summit) with Paul Crews in 1953. He was 27 years old at the time of the climb and is now 64. Harry had not been back to the true summit in 47 years. He was in tremendous shape and said he felt stronger now than when he when he did that climb in 1953. I believe him! Our main challenge was keeping up. Harry also ended up carrying gear of other party members who were running out of steam. Harry exemplifies the fact that climbing and hiking are lifetime activities.

At the summit we met Tom Choate and Ken Zafren. They came up the new Pioneer Ridge Trail, recently described in the Daily News and up and over the south summit to reach the true summit. They did not need a rope until reaching the base of Counterpoint. Tom and Ken described the trail as being in excellent condition. There is a well-marked parking lot at the trailhead, several miles down Knik River Road on the right.

Our group took much longer than expected to both reach the summit and descend the mountain, arriving well after dark - an unlikely feat, given the long summer days. Nevertheless, all agreed it was a great climb.

Sept 1990

K-K Traverse

Willy Hersman

"There's no way I'm going to be able to make such a long climb today. It was too hot last night and I didn't get any sleep. None. There's no way."

So said Tom Choate at 5:00 am on August 15th. But Ken Zafren and I knew better. Tom loves Chugach scrambles, even if it means two nights in a row without sleep. And that's what it would mean for the three of us before this traverse was over, not planned that way of course. We sort of talked ourselves into such a long day. It really had been an unusual evening for warmth, but I guess it goes along with this unusual summer for weather.

Our campsite, 300 feet above Eagle River near Dishwater Creek, would not really seem to make sense except that camping along the trail is illegal (for the second year in a row) for several miles in the vicinity. A pesty black bear had reminded us of the reason as we sat at The Perch the day before, checking out the brushy approach. Clouds came by to help with the temperature on Wednesday, as we hiked just west of Dishwater. We spooked several legal rams from the waterless trough astride Kiliak Glacier's moraine when we popped out of the brush. It was a pleasant hike up to the wide scree gully on Korohusk's south face. We also found an old broken ski, resting there at least 7 years. (It's former owner took a fatal fall during the 2nd winter ascent of Denali.)

We reached the summit of Korohusk Peak (7030) about 6 1/2 hours from camp and ate lunch. There was only a small register left by Brian Okonek and John Mucha's ascent of the same route in October 1975, the peak's second ascent. Art Davidson had soloed Korohusk ten years before (see Scree, September 1965, p. 6). The peak has been climbed many times since. After leaving a new register and cairn, we continued along the ridge towards Mt. Kiliak (7450), two miles away. The ridge down to the col at 6450 took about an hour, being but a pleasant scramble. About 50 yards from the summit is a perfect campsite with good water.

From the col we connected with the original ascent route of Kiliak, expecting that we might come back and bail out via Kiliak Glacier. The narrow ridge took three hours and one belay. It was probably easier than most other times of the year. All snow was gone and we had trusted this year's dryness enough to leave crampons and ice axes at home. Kiliak's first ascent (Scree, November 1968, p. 3) by Vin and Grace Hoeman and Dave Johnston was still represented by its original jar and entry. The mountain has had several ascents, of course, but only one other entry was written, Phil Fortner's party (Peters Creek-SE ridge) earlier this year. One of the routes popular is from Icicle Creek valley, the Western Chugach's gift to masochists.

Like the Hoemans we did not wish to descend the rock we'd come up, and made the same mistake of going into Icicle's valley. There was plenty of day left, the MCA meeting hadn't even started yet, but now our lack of sleep and unfamiliarity with the route did us in. After rapping below most of the cliffs we had to feel our way down scree and boulders in the dark and got little comfort laying on rocks next to the creek. At first light we finished the traverse by thrashing our way to Eagle River and hiking back to camp. The weather and bear had been kind to us.

Crow Pass to Eagle River

Kathy Burke

We knew it was gonna be a long day so we hit the trail at 5:45 am. It was cool and the sun was still behind the mountains, perfect weather for the uphill to the pass. Heading down from the pass we saw a black bear grazing up on a slope on the right and three Dall sheep were near a peak on the left. We kept a steady pace behind Jenny, who for some reason had a full size backpack on!

After some sweaty miles it was discovered that Mary had a bag of corn chips. This may have been the single most important discovery of the day, through the remaining miles those chips kept our minds occupied with great scheming, collaborating and plotting to get them. Jane came loaded with chocolate-chocolate chip cookies and they were just about the only thing good for a chip trade. At each rest stop there appeared to be a downright brawl with everyone vying for a seat next to the chips.

We crossed Eagle River around noon. It was uneventful, just hooked elbows and went for it. It was mid-thigh deep. We lunched and dried out on the other side where Jenny pulled a regular bed pillow out of her pack. With the river deeper than usual there are many places where the old trail just dead ends into the river. A new trail has been brushed out but it seems to meander back and forth and around every blade of grass for miles. It was a weary kind of hiking. At one point we lost the trail and ended up in a swamp. The bears around the area had an impatient attitude, they wouldn't stop to do their business, just dropped it in little plops as they traveled down the trail. We scared up a moose along the trail who had a nice "starter" set of velvet antlers.

Then came Icicle Creek. That day, the cry "Remember the Alamo" was nothing compared to "Remember Icicle Creek." We knew there were two small creek crossing besides Eagle River. At mile six, half of the Clear Creek bridge is out and we waded it mid-calf, no big deal, so that's what we expected from Icicle. It was wider and looked deeper, so we hooked elbows and had a great start, but towards the end was a channel about four feet wide and croch deep. The force of the water rushing through that channel caught us by surprise, we almost lost Mary (and the chips), when I got there I went downstream a couple of feet. Fast water sure can lurk in unsuspecting places. The looks on our faces must have been a bit strained, the two backpackers who were watching us decided to stop there and not cross. Luckily, the only damage done was a bunch of small rocks in our boots and socks.

At mile 22 the "where on your body doesn't it hurt" contest broke out. Janes's hair felt not pain and Jenny's right pinky was OK. It took us around 14 hours, we felt this long time was due to the trail meandering from Thunder Gorge to Yakedeyak Creek. Actually, at the end, we were still cruising along at a hefty pace and smiling and we were all still having a good time - guess that's the point of it all.

Jane Stammen, Mary Savage, Jenny Parks and I will remember Icicle Creek.

Sept 1990

Rumble !!

Pete Murphy

Three of us started on a very wet Saturday, July 7, from Prudhoe Bay Road. Tony Degane was there to traverse from Ram Valley to Peters Creek, while Steve Johnson and I had grand plans of traversing Mt. Rumble (7530) by the north couloir and then down Hoeman's Gully and then to climb East Kiliak and possibly Korohusk.

We camped at the base of Rumble with great views of Benign and the Raisin Glacier. That evening we were treated to aerobatic displays of two golden eagles and a gyrfalcon, swooping down on each other, and if that wasn't enough we saw a mountain goat ambling up the slopes from the creek. As far as we know, there has not been a previously reported sighting of one in this drainage.

On Sunday we awoke to light rain, but things started looking more hopeful, so we hastily packed up, bid Tony farewell and started towards the gully. Light clouds still shrouded the upper part of the mountain as we reached the glacier at the base of the gully. Here we put on crampons while my usual fear factor escalated to a slight whine. Steve looked like Ted Bundy in a women's dorm, so I grit my teeth and started up the steep ice with a lot of fresh rockfall. We hadn't gotten very far when Steve's right crampon fell off. With a little effort, he hopped around on one foot on the steep ice next to a crevasse and fixed it. We zigzagged towards the gully, crossing deteriorating snow bridges. Our main concern, as we entered the gully, was rockfall; we saw lots of baseball-size rock scattered. The snow was wet on top and pretty hard about four inches down. Steve led most of the way and I carried the rope. The going was consistent until about the last 2,000 feet, where we hit rock-hard ice! I kept brushing away the snow to make sure I wasn't front-pointing rock. With the ice getting difficult, we headed for the rock, which was typical Chugach Crud. We did mixed climbing to the summit ridge and had a relatively easy walk to the summit.

We found the register and signed in. Steve had been up Hoeman's Gully once before, but had left the gully too early and had found that route to be quite spooky. So we left the summit uncertain as to the route down; fear factor on the rise again. Somebody was looking out for us, for we found a very straightforward way down into the gully. While scree-sliding down the 4,000 feet we found a weather balloon transmitter and a 150-foot patch of snow, our only glissade. What a place if it was full of snow!

We got back to camp at 1:00 am. Later that morning, due to weather and our feet, we decided to head down Peters Creek to a cold beer! Well, I guess one out of three isn't too bad.

KENAI ICEFIELDS NATIONAL PARK ?

Dan O'Haire

Conveyance of public lands within Kenai Fjords National Park is being processed by the Bureau of Land Management. If all lands requested by the villages of English Bay and Port Graham were to be conveyed, the park would lose approximately 60% of its coastline. The name of the park would then seem inappropriate.

Previously, the name was Kenai Fjords - Harding Icefield National Park, but it was shortened. If the park loses most of its fjords then the name should be changed to Kenai Icefields National Park, and perhaps take in the Sargent Icefield along with the Harding Icefield.

Sept 1990

Climbing Notes

Alan Julliard reports that Shawn Lyons made a marathon summit venture recently of the peaks above Anchorage. Early on August 13 Shawn reached the last of 12 summits, all the ones above 5000 feet on the eastern skyline, after 27 1/2 hours. His goal had been 24 hours. Peaks climbed, in order, were: South Suicide, North Suicide, Avalanche, Ramp, Hidden, O'Malley, Williwaw, Koktoya, E. Tanaina, W. Tanaina, Tikishla and Temptation.

On August 21st Jim Sayler and Willy Hersman traversed from Crow Pass to Paradise Creek and made an ascent of the peak just north of Paradise Pass via its NE ridge. No evidence of a previous ascent was found and the name Delgga Mt. was placed in a register. Delgga is the local Taniana Indian word for raven. Earlier, on July 4th, Jim and friends climbed Peak 5477 to the northeast. Hunters may have possibly been on either summit before.

UAA Student Life and Alaska Wilderness Studies will cosponsor an Equipment Gear Swap and Outdoor Slide Show on Friday, September 28. The gear swap is 5-8 p.m. in the UAA Campus Center Cafeteria. The slide show "Rock, Ice, Dirt and Asphalt" is about rock and ice climbing and mountain and road bike racing in Alaska and begins at 8 p.m. in the UAA Campus Center Pub. Admission is free for UAA and APU students or \$2. Call 786-1219 for more information.

HISTORY CORNER

Tom Choate

Mary's Mt. is a near-peak, a prominent bump (4895) on the ridge west of the summits of Pioneer Peak. It has a very early climbing history and association with the MCA. The first ascent was July 3, 1949 by Joe Pichler, M. Jordan and C. LuBozasky. It was climbed again in June 1950 by D. Noyes and on July 14, 1950 Pichler returned with his 6-year-old grandson. Eight years later another "burst of activity" began with the fourth ascent, June 28, 1958 by R. and J. Bruns, the first club trip, June 7, 1959 (led by Pichler), and the second club trip May 10, 1960 (led by Pichler).

The name Mary's Mountain, doesn't seem to have been established until the first club trip, since the note in the summit register states it was named for Mary Nelson, first woman to its summit. We all think of a hut named "Pichler's Perch," but perhaps this little peak should have been the true Pichler's Perch since he led four of the first six climbs!

A third club trip took place 14 years later (July 13, 1974, led by Wolf) and aside from a 1983 climb by Peter Flournoy, it had been ignored until I made the apparent 9th ascent in 1987. I suspect several hunters have been on or near the top, because a small, occasionally marked trail leads up to the ridge from the high point on the powerline, and a messy camp was found over-looking "Goat" Creek with its good population of Dall sheep.

Getting to the powerline from the old Palmer Highway is a pain unless you can obtain permission to pass the no-trespassing signs of the reluctant owner of the property where the road comes out. I took the public right-of-way through Goat Creek itself for 1/4 mile from the bridge, then battled alder growing over old logging roads until I came out on the powerline, 1000 feet higher. Perhaps this route could be cleared so we could have a club trip.

Sept 1990