



MAY 1993

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.  
Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Volume 36 Issue 05

## MAY MEETING

Wednesday

May 19, 7:30

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets  
Downtown Anchorage

**Slide Show:** Tim Kelley will show slides of his recent ski trip along the *Yukon Quest*

## HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- 23 Bold Peak Overlook Trail  
Trail maintenance. I need a few people to help put this scenic trail back in shape. Bring a brush saw and work gloves and a bike for the dirt road to the trailhead. Should be wonderful views of spring avalanches on Bold from a safe distance. Leader: Willy Hersman 373-4734
- 29-31 Sheep Valley and Lava Mt.  
Backpacking trip with optional snow climb of Lava Mt. Class C. Talkeetna Mountains. Memorial Day Weekend. Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184
- 5 Rabbit Lake Trail Construction  
Work on trail to Rabbit Lake. Chugach State Park. Contact Debra Brown at REI, 272-4565, or Joel Babb 688-3885.
- 12 Blacktail Rocks, Roundtop, Vista  
Roundtrip 10 miles. Chugach State Park. See 55 Ways Trip 39. Elevation gain 3500 feet. Class C. Leader: Joel Babb 688-3885

- 12 Eklutna Lake Bike Trip  
Mountain bike along the lake trail. Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184h, 271-6656 w

- 19-20 Flattop Sleepout  
Summer solstice tradition. See 55 Ways Trip 31. No leader needed. Class C. Contact Joel Babb 688-3885.

- 25-26 Williwaw Peak  
Hike into Williwaw Lakes Friday, the 25th, camp at the lakes and climb on Saturday. Class C. Leader: Dennis Morford 522-1179

- 26 Crow Pass - Eagle River  
27 miles one way on good trail. Chugach State Park. Class D. Approximately 11 hours. Leader: Allan Shayer 344-3280

- July 10 Mt. Eklutna  
Class B. Chugach State Park. Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069

- 25 - Aug 8 Hula Hula River  
Two-week backpacking trip, with optional non-technical climbing. Brooks Range. Strenuous backpacking with easy rock scrambling on day trips. The route covers about 90-100 miles from the Peter Schrader Lakes to the Hula Hula to the mouth of Red Sheep Creek on the Chandlar River. Class C. \$750 each from Fairbanks. Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184

31 - Aug 15 Logan Mountains, NWT, Canada  
Backbacking trip to the Vampire Peaks area. *Not to be confused with Mt. Logan.* Charter from Finlayson Lake. \$300 each. Moderate pace for 10 days across alpine terrain and icefields. Will climb several peaks along the route compatible with members' abilities and desires. Class: Glacier Travel. See leader for gear list. Leader: Dave Logan 243-4887

Sept 11-12 Bird Peak  
Class C. Chugach State Park. Third annual attempt to beat the weather. Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069

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## TRIP REPORTS

### Mat Glacier Wanderings

by Greg Higgins

Jim Sprott and I met Tom Meacham and Mike Frank at the Matanuska Glacier on March 29th hoping to ski into the club's Scandinavian Peaks Hut. Acting on a tip from Willy Hersman, we jettisoned our tents before skiing down Caribou Creek, planning to stay at Bock's Den, the newest club hut below Mt. Wickersham. Unfortunately daylight's end found us still far to the left on the lateral moraine so we spent a night in the open under a spectacular Northern Lights display. (The First Law of Hiking Kinetics: The distance planned is inversely proportional to your capacity to get there.)

The next day we opted to work across the maze of cracks to the bench east of Mt. Wickersham where we located the new hut without difficulty. An easier approach would be to ski up glacier past it, and then angle back to the northwest paralleling the glacier's natural contours.

Feeling the strain of two days of sled dragging, we decided to stay at the hut which is small, but quite comfortable for four. The windows are nice, but will need protection (the one upstairs is already cracked). There is a good lantern and a somewhat cantankerous new Coleman stove. No latrine has been established, but we recommend the cliff edge just to the east as the most hygienic site.

On March 31st we skied up the bench along the Icing Glacier towards Mt. Sgt. Robinson. We turned around at the second forking of the glacier to retrace our wind-covered route home. There was an impressively diverse number of game trails along the bench.

On April 1st Jim and I skied down to the eastern chute that drains Mt. Wickersham. Skins took us high up the chute without problems to just below the south ridge. From here we cramponed onto the top at 4:30 pm essentially retracing the route of the last ascent (see Scree 9:87:5). Two feet of snow covered a broken glass jar register. The contents were frozen together. We carried these out, and after thawing found entries other than those reported in the 1987 Scree. We had no material with us so this summit is now without a register. While we were up high, the sun had cooked the south facing slopes, so our downhill ski was through dozens of early spring avalanche collections, several of which were of large volume.

On April 2nd we skied back down the glacier to Caribou Creek. Tom's pack and sled conspired to attack him when exiting the glacier, so our trip ended in the Providence Emergency Room for some late night suturing. Since its rabies vaccination status is unknown, Tom's sled is in quarantine.

The new huts up the Mat Glacier should increase the usage of this magnificent area, but be prepared! This is demanding and rugged terrain, and accessing these huts requires planning and stamina.

### Granite - A Second Attempt

by Jonathan Rose

The mountain was a reluctant partner. The gullies which are so obvious from a distance, fell back and hid behind the towers and spires as we got close. The mountain seemed to back away from our touch as we approached. We were as well prepared as we could be; one attempt, photos, a chat with Willy, another winter reconnaissance trip. Even more important was a strong group of like-minded friends determined to get on top. Lets see how our reluctant partner would fare to the combined efforts of Roy, Steve, James and me.

It all looked so simple. Take the "up," "left," "up" line that faces you as you approach. The first "up" had a slight east of north tilt and looked so clear it became base gully, the "left" dodged and weaved behind spires but was obviously the traverse and the second "up" was definitely the summit gully. From a distance, the summit gully looked more like a scoop. A pair of 10 6 40 binoculars helped to shape the connections between the gullies and the traverse; what was a dodge and what was a weave. What they didn't show was the angle of the face or the scale.

A hot sun, fine skiing and snow shoeing with a well-behaved sledge (which traveled in front on decents) made the trip into a relaxed four hours. The ATV trail of

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*Get*

*Additional*

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September had been lifted by the huge depth of snow into the over arching brush. Dammit, it was a bushwhack. The last thing that I had packed was sunscreen, factor 12, and I was glad of it.

Eyeballing our partner continually as we approached, secrets were revealed like an aerial survey. Streaks of snow to the left of base gully became gullies. Something that looked like a down pointing needle, with a dark eye probably only half an inch long, seemed to connect two further northwest pointing gullies which reach the traverse further to the left. Base gully and summit gully disappeared and we looked up small island gully and large island gully, one of which eventually took us to the traverse. Other features which we became familiar with the next day were the south ridge, the south ridge snow field and the S gully.

Camping was at 2500 ft., at the end of the ATV trail. More studying of the face was done. We even had the photos in our pack to remember what it looked like from every angle. It promised to be a perfect day on Sunday despite Steve's diet of partially dehydrated instant cement grout (4 cups). James suggested we do it at night. All the best conquests are made then. The sun set and moon rose and we put our clocks forward an hour as if to kid ourselves that we would get an early night.

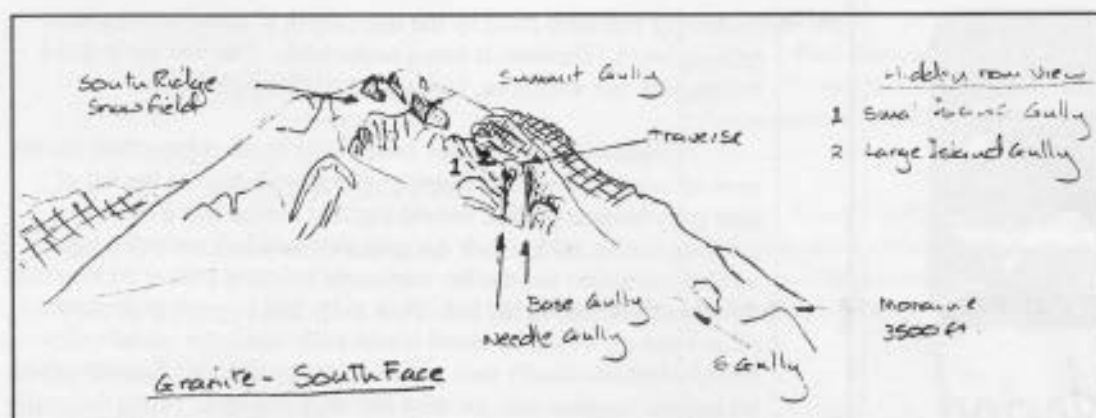
At 3:30 I was wide awake. Why doesn't this happen at 7:00 on weekdays? Nothing was certain as four people ascended out of the darkness on solid snow, with the sun yet to rise. The Chugach fell away as we climbed steadily up: Marcus Baker, Ice Cream Cone, Matanuska Peak, Pioneer Peak. The sun touched the spires above and then it touched us.

We were at base gully, but decided to try a more direct way up needle gully to small island gully. It all connected with no rock pitches. We were on the traverse by 8:30 and having lunch. Marcus Baker had wisps of lenticular clouds and a haze was forming to the south. The slope angle was about 50° but felt like 75°. We traversed around, because of course we were on the traverse. This took the line of least resistance to the ridge, over the top of the south ridge snow field to a spectacular drop and ridge full of gendarmes.

We were just 400 feet from the summit. Even with the photos we had taken the wrong line. Retracing our steps in soft snow and rising temperatures we dropped 1000 feet to the only other possible way up. Just beyond the top of small island gully after about 500 feet of traversing there was a gully that I just hadn't seen because it was out of my upward field of vision.

There it was. The way up. A side view made it look as though it overhung. Did we really want to go? Our partner was wearing us down. The haze was getting thicker and the edge of a front was now over the Chugach. There was a mutiny as I suggested we go 20 feet below the rocks, and lost that all important height. James took over.

The snow was deep and soft; crampons balled up, and my axe was too short. At 1:00 we were on the summit, benign compared with the surrounding fortification. Whoops and photos all round.



John, A.J., Pam Seiser, Ken Hadzima, Nancy Messer, Leila Emmer, and me.

The day was fair although not (sigh) as fair as it had been the day before. There were some clouds in the sky and scattered breezes throughout

### Bomber - Beck's & Snowbird Beer Booties by Scott Bailey

The possibility of telemarking on the slopes around the Bomber Hut and exploring the canyons and lakes west of Bartholf Creek lead to this three-day ski trip. A "record" entry trip of ; 20 minutes round trip per party of two with Mountain Helicopters left 6-7 hours for exploring on our first day, March 27. After securing the hut, including shoveling out the outhouse, we skied down to Bartholf.

The Bomber Hut was a cozy place for dinner with canned Beck's "on tap." Sunday morning we skied down the right side of the drainage to Bartholf Creek and began the climb toward the Snowbird Glacier.

A right hand turn at the lake and one final steep section (this could be a very dangerous area in high avalanche conditions) before we topped out at the eastern moraine. Twenty more minutes and the Snowbird hut was visible. The teleturns on the slopes above the hut and late sun on the nunatak was a picture perfect sight. The diesel fueled stove was great for drying gear but made it mighty warm (90+ F) inside. The northern view from the ridge by the outhouse covered nearly our entire route up from the Bomber Hut.

Monday with clouds moving in we skied south to the pass above the Snowbird mine. Again the flat light made the descent to Reed Creek an interesting one. The final slope above the cabin on Reed Creek was very hard packed. At the Mother Lode a cold pitcher of brew and dinner were most welcome. Members - Kris Hutchin, Dave Hanneman, Paul Reed and me.

### MCA Trip to McHugh

by Mindy Baum

On Sunday April 25 at 9:00 am, ten mountaineers met at Carrs Huffman to ascend McHugh Peak. They were Amy Blumenberg, Christopher Potter, Bob Smith, Walter

the day. It turned out, however, to be quite warm, especially as we were climbing.

We started at the trailhead off Rabbit Creek Road from where we a short, but steep, hill to a ridge. This ridge led in a south direction to the summit and afforded great views of Rabbit Creek Valley, Ptarmigan and the Suicides. We found quite a bit of snow mixed in with patches of tundra and rock. For the most part the snow was firm enough to walk on without sinking. The rocks directly below the summit rock were icy with a slight snow overhang. We congregated on a rocky ledge to enjoy the spectacular view of Turnagain Arm and to sing Happy Birthday to Pam.

We really enjoyed ourselves on the way back as we took advantage of the snow to slide down the mountain.

### ADZE

#### Slide Show

Mt. Logan's Hummingbird Ridge  
by Dave Nettle  
Sunday, May 16, 1993  
7:00 pm, Atwood Center, 2nd floor



#### Ice Tool

Third ice tool for sale  
Dan Gillmore 563-6284

#### Wanted

High quality, dynamic color photos of Alaskan climbing. Looking for the full spectrum of climbing in Alaska's diverse areas for publication in fall of 1993. Send 35mm for larger format slides and photos with SASE to:

Alaskan Climbing Photos, Box 112285, Anchorage, Alaska 99511.

Deadline is September 20th. Please include a phone number and a full description of the photo. Required are climber's names, date, location, photographer's name.

Yes, you will be paid for any photos used, and any unused photos will be returned with SASE.

## MINUTES

### APRIL MEETING

April 21, 1993. Joel Babb called the meeting to order.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT.

Money Market - \$4366.18  
Checking Acct - 3719.14  
Petty Cash - 50.00  
Total \$8135.32

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Several trip leaders described trips they will be leading this summer. See front page Scree.

#### OLD BUSINESS.

##### Ice Screws.

The Soviet titanium ice screws most likely will *not* be available at the May meeting. Liability concerns and competition with local shops are the reasons. The MCA board will discuss it at the next board meeting this summer.

##### Missing Rope.

We paid Steve Locher \$80.00 to replace the rope he lost while volunteering as an ice climbing instructor for last year's Ice Climbing School. If anyone knows the whereabouts of the missing rope, please return it to AMH so we can use it for this year's ice school (it belongs to the club now).

#### NEW BUSINESS.

##### Vin Hoeman Library.

Joe Kurtak made a suggestion that the club purchase some new books for the library at AMH. Contact him with suggestions, 345-5512.

##### The Treasury.

It was brought up that the MCA should find a way to spend some of its funds. Some ideas were:

- a new hut somewhere
- improve existing huts
- build outhouses at selected huts
- more books for the library

##### Scree Mailing.

Paul Berryhill has been in charge of mailing the Scree. He would like to turn the job over to someone else. Please contact Joel Babb if interested.

Thanks to Chugach State Park for a very informative slide show on hiking and climbing in the park. The club was also commended for its efforts in the newly created Park Watch program.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Hart, Treasurer

#### MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips.

NON-TECHNICAL: Following are a few standards used to classify non-technical

trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

CLASS A: Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

CLASS B: Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

CLASS C: Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

CLASS D: Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

CLASS E: Hazardous climbing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

TECHNICAL: Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.