

MARCH MEETING

Wednesday

March 18, 7:30 pm

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: Roman Dial will show slides of biking
in the Alaska Range.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Mar 14 Pyramid Peak

Kenai Mountains.

Leader: Wayne Todd 522-6354

Mar 21 Korohusk Peak

Western Chugach, 7030 feet. Class E. 6500-foot elevation gain, 14 miles. One day climb, so you must be in good shape. Crampons, helmet, ice axe, avalanche beacon, shovel, self-arrest skill, avalanche training are all required.

Leaders: Wendy Sanem, Richard Baranow
694-1500

Mar 27-31 Scandinavian Peaks

Class D & Glacier Travel. Fly into MCA's hut on Friday morning. Skiing and climbing day trips from the hut Friday, Saturday, Sunday - no specific goals. On Monday ski to Bock's Den, 9 miles. Ski the remaining 9 miles to the Glenn Highway on Tuesday. Competent skiing ability required, in addition to glacier travel gear and experience.

Temperatures can be very cold, so appropriate equipment and experience is also required. \$100 per person for the flight. Full payment due to the trip leader by March 1. After that, unclaimed spots will go to wait list. Max group size 8. Crampons, ice axe, glacier travel gear, and good physical fitness required.

Leader: David Hart 338-0554

Mar 29 Mt. Eklutna

Western Chugach. Class C. Five miles, 2600 feet elevation gain.

Leader: Joe Anders 345-3917

Apr 11-19 Grand Canyon (Clear Creek)

Class C.

Leader: Dennis Morford 522-1179

Jun 5-7 Kenai Kaper & Traverse

Class D. Strenuous traverse of prime back-country terrain in the Kenai Mountains of the Chugach National Forest with a peak-bagging ridge run. Approximately 13 to 14 miles, mostly above tree line; estimated 6500 feet or more gain. Proficiency

with ice axe/crampons. Must be at least 18 years old. Car shuttle needed to do the trip. Cabin stay Friday and after trip on Saturday evening. Limit: 7 Need ice axe, crampons, water pump or tablets, bug dope, stream wading shoes. \$7 cabin fee. Leader: Scott Bailey 696-7250

Jun 19-21 Mt. Ascension, Lost Lake
Kenai Mountains. Class B to Lost Lake. Class D to Mt. Ascension.
Leaders: Tom Choate 333-5309, Dennis Morford 522-1179, Matt Nedom 278-3648

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Apr 6 Avalanche Awareness
6:30-8:00 P.M. Upstairs at Kaladi Brothers on Brayton Dr. Put on by local guide.

May 2-10 Glacier Travel
On the Ruth Glacier. Trip duration is five days, extra days are set aside for weather delays, since this is a fly-in location. Glacier travel and crevasse rescue will be taught. We have space for 15 students and 5 instructors. Airfare is \$170 per student, instructors' airfare is complementary. Standby list is available. Please sign up and have airfare fee paid by March 18, the next MCA meeting, to reserve your spot, otherwise we go to the standby list. Tent camping, skis or showshoes. Please come to the March 18 meeting for complete details.
Coordinator: Dawn Groth 338-0554

May 4 First Aid for the Backcountry
6:30-8:00 P.M. Upstairs at Kaladi Brothers on Brayton Dr.

TRIP REPORTS

Lucas Marten

by Kneely Taylor



asily visible from Anchorage, including from several downtown bars, are the Tordrillo Mountains. This range is usually regarded as part of the Alaska Range, and the best known peak in this sub-range is Mt. Spurr. Four of the Tordrillo

peaks top 11000 feet. Starting with Spurr in the south and heading north, the 11000 footers are Spurr (11050) Nagislamina (11068), Torbert (11413), Talchulitna (11050) and Gerdine (11258).

The Tordrillos get a fabulous amount of snow on the south side, with precipitation rivaling that of the eastern portions of the Chugach near Prince William Sound. Because the south side is the side visible from Anchorage, and because the range is about 100 miles from Anchorage, the Tordrillo peaks look like relatively boring climbing terrain; that is, as you look out at them from Anchorage.

But up close they are not boring, and in particular the north side of the range is not boring. The north side gets much less precipitation than the south side, and the recent volcanic activity and very active glaciers in the range make for very rugged, very scenic topography.

What is most attractive about the Tordrillos is that fact that the area sees almost no climbers, or other visitors, and is one of the most unvisited range of big mountains in Alaska. It is for that reason that I have made three trips into the range and plan several more, notwithstanding the fact that it is considerably more expensive to fly into the Tordrillos than it is to popular destinations in other parts of the Alaska Range such as the Kahiltna and Ruth glaciers.

My last trip included several old hands from previous Tordrillo trips: Tom Meacham, Mike Frank, and Jim Sprott. We had planned to climb Talchulitna, starting near the headwaters of the Skwentna River at about 2900 feet, but light winter snow fall made it dangerous for landing on skis at this elevation, and so we decided to fly into the North Branch of the Trimble Glacier at roughly 5000 feet in elevation where there would be more snow. We planned to attempt a peak at 9950 feet, which is located about four miles north of the summit of Gerdine. We had no reports of anyone attempting this peak previously, although it is clearly visible from Anchorage, and Jim Okonek at K-2 had never heard of anyone even flying into the North Branch of the Trimble.

We flew in on March 30, 1996. It was a cloudless day and after landing we wandered around in our shirt sleeves. Peak 9950 peak loomed above us to the southwest, and Peak 8750 looked even more interesting to the northwest. We made plans to climb one, two, and perhaps three peaks in the week we had available to us. We believed all were unclimbed and our enthusiasm was high.

We cached a great deal of extra food and gear



at the airstrip, marking it with a six foot bamboo pole so we could find it in the event of heavy snow, and then headed up the glacier for about two hours to make camp at about 6000 feet. That night was cloudless, and comet Hyakutake was clearly visible. There was a full moon which washed out the comet in moonlight, but we figured out that the moon would set behind our peak at about 3:30 A.M., and I set my alarm clock and got up for even better views of the comet. But it was cold at -20 F and I had no luck getting my friends to get up and join me in viewing the comet.

The next day, March 31, we got a late start and moved our camp up-glacier. We used sleds most of the way, leaving our sleds and double carrying our loads for only one short stretch, but when we reached elevation 6700 feet, there was above us and directly in our route a very broken up icefall which appeared impassable except for a narrow steep chute on the far right side. That chute was avalanche prone, and although the conditions were safe that day, we worried about camping above and getting stuck if it snowed while we were up above. And so we stopped early and made camp at 6700 feet in a big, wide open flat area, which appeared safe from avalanche from above.

The next day, April 1, we got an early start and started upward. The narrow chute was not as bad as it had looked from below, and we easily made it up to 7600, where we headed west crossing a very flat area about 1/3 mile across, and then headed up another steep avalanche prone face to the 8100, where we were on the glacier which is clearly visible on the map coming off South side of the peak. But it was very windy and very cold, and the sky to the south-west had filled with mares tail clouds. I couldn't keep my hands warm, and the others wanted to try another day, and so we retreated to camp.

A big storm did not come in as the clouds had indicated, and on the next day, April 2, we once again started up the peak, following the route we had followed the previous day. This time when we got to the 8100 it was nearly windless, and we continued on up the glacier to the summit at 9950 feet.

The view from the summit was fabulous. Gerdine's north face and the summit dominated the view to the south, Denali, Foraker, Russel, and Revelation Mountains were to the north, and to the south east were the lowlands of the Susitna Valley and the Anchorage bowl. (It was too far to make out individual buildings in Anchorage.) But to me the best view was to the west, for there just across the Hayes glacier right below us, was a range of 9000 foot peaks,

all of them extremely rugged, interesting, and as far as I known, very wild and unvisited.

The summit of 9950 itself was half ice and snow, and half rock and rubble. No cairns or other evidence of previous climbs were visible. I suggested various names for the peak, and all were quickly rejected. Various climbing heroes were suggested, dead and alive, and those dead were alleged to be rolling over in their graves at the thought, and those living rejected because it is deemed necessary to die first. I had a peanut butter jar, paper for a register, and a pencil with me, and so I suggested that we name the peak after my old dog Lucas. He was a great mountain climber, was dead, and would not roll over in his grave because of such an honor, and besides, I have wanted to name a mountain for him for years. Mike liked the idea, and Jim and Tom apparently did not hear me. And so I wrote "Lucas Peak, first climbed April 2, 1996" and listed our names, and then put the paper and pencil in the jar, and buried the jar under a cairn I built for the purpose.

The next day, April 3, 1996, dawned beautiful once again, and we attempted a peak at 10765 feet located about a mile northeast of the summit of Gerdine. It also is clearly visible from Anchorage, and is a high point on the long ridge leading northeast from the summit of Gerdine. We went up the same chute above our camp as we had used the previous two days, but once reaching the flat area at 7600, we headed south and then curved south east until we reached a col at 9200 on the northeast ridge of Peak 10765. We had no difficulty in reaching the col, and could easily have continued up the ridge to Peak 10765, and perhaps have continued to climb Gerdine, but the weather was rapidly deteriorating, with strong wind, and the summit of Peak 10765 already obscured in a cloud. We turned back, and by the time we got back to camp at 7:00 P.M. it was snowing.

It continued to snow for three long days, a total of six feet. At times we thought we would no longer be able to shovel out our tents, but eventually the snow stopped.

On Easter day, April 7, we finally were able to move, although the weather still was not clear enough for our pickup by K-2. We spent all day moving down-glacier through the very deep unconsolidated snow. We moved very slowly, with the lead waist deep in the soft snow, and the others carrying his pack so he could more easily plow down the deep snow. When we reached the general vicinity of the landing area, we could not find our cache as both it and the long bamboo pole were covered with snow. We had



run out of food in our high camp, and were already quite hungry. The loss of our cache was a great disappointment.

The next morning dawned clear and we anticipated the early arrival of our pickup, which was now two days late. We got out of our tents at 6:00 A.M. and with empty stomachs packed down an airstrip. We used our skis for packing the snow. At about 11:00 A.M. two Cessnas appeared on the horizon and after repeated touch and gos on our runway, one landed.....and after slowing down sunk in to its belly in the soft snow. Our ski packed runway was a trap.

We spent the rest of the day digging out the aircraft and packing a runway. K-2 air-dropped food and we finally ate. A feast. By late evening the airstrip was still not hard enough for a take-off, and the pilot decided to spend the night with us and let the snow consolidate over night. And we continued packing late into the evening.

While we were working away digging out the plane and packing the air strip, a large marten three feet long came up-glacier to find out what was going on. He (or she) soon learned that he could come within several feet of us with impunity since we would fall up to our waists in the deep snow if we tried to chase him. And so he spent the day and evening with us watching, and crawling into our packs and duffel bags looking for food when we were inattentive.

That night the marten became ridiculously bold. He not only entered the vestibules of both of our tents, but came into the inner areas where we were sleeping, provoking much yelling, cursing, and loss of sleep. Although it was -20 F, I was agitated enough to get up and try and catch him, which I did by zipping him into one of the duffel bags he had entered in his search for food.

We debated his fate, but I am an animal lover and defended his life, arguing that he had not damaged a single bag, pack, or tent, and that we should treat him as our mascot and friend. We decided not only to release him, but to honor him (or her) by naming Peak 9950 "Lucas Marten." After all he had made our glacier camp unlike all other glacier camps, and he lived near Peak 9950 and might climb it. But before releasing him, we decided to scare him, which we did by banging on the duffel bag in which he had been caught. He did not like that, and when we finally unzipped the duffel bag, he took off, running at least a mile back up our packed trail before we lost sight of him. We humans, having accomplished our

purpose, returned to our tents where we finally got some sleep.

The next day, April 9, was beautiful, and our pilot took off in the Cessna taking me with him. It was by far the scariest take-off I have ever experienced, as we lurched from side to side on our narrow runway, almost getting stuck in the soft snow again. But we made it, and later that day, K-2 ferried the rest of us out with a Super Cub which had less trouble with the soft snow. The marten, still hungry and curious, had returned by the time the last of us were flown out, and Jim made sure to leave him a nice snack.

ADZE



Film Festival

Banff Mountain Film Festival will be in Anchorage Friday, March 27, 1998

For Sale

Dagger Crossfire Whitewater Kayak, great shape, w/ spray skirt - \$650. Will take BD Prophet or C Moser ice tools as partial trade. Call Tim at 248-4033.

Looking for Information

MCA member needs information on Marcus Baker and Mt. Eldridge in the Alaska Range. Anyone who has information on northern routes on Marcus Baker I'd appreciate contact information. Any route information on Eldridge and nearby peaks would also be appreciated. Bob Bolin, 15 East Fiesta, Tempe, AZ 85282, (602) 784-4795, bob.bolin@asu.edu

Wilderness Course

Wilderness First Responder is being offered by the Wilderness Medicine Institute in the Mat-Su Valley. 10 day course starting Apr 3. Cost is \$450. To be held at mile 9.9 Knik Road out of Wasilla. Lodging is rough, but better than laying in the mud! Chris Morris, Mountains & Rivers, Box 874254, Wasilla, AK 99687 373-5221

Lost

At the Mint Hut, October 1997: a wooden "Dr. Grabow" pipe. If you found it, please call or mail it to me. Worth a beer in Anchorage next time I'm in town. Mike Laso 554-4464, Box MXY, Glenallen, AK 99588

Seeking Information

Have you had any unusual encounters with ravens or seen them engaged in strange behavior? I'm collecting such stories to use in an article on ravens. Call Max 373-4734 (or e-mail, mca@alaska.net)

History Corner

Joe Anders

As you hike up Wolverine, the remains of an airplane are located several hundred feet from the summit ridge. On June 8, 1956, Capt. Elbert Head, an Air Force rated pilot, was flying a Howard SEL back from Washington, D.C. Capt. Head had purchased the plane there while

on leave and was on the last leg of a flight to Alaska. Capt. Head apparently drifted too far east on his approach to Merrill Field and became lost in heavy clouds and fog present in the Anchorage area. The plane rammed into the ridge, then slid upward 200 feet and burned. The force of the impact carried the engine into a ravine 800 feet downslope. Killed in the crash were Capt. Head, his mother J.C. Head, W.K. Tanner & George Hogue, photographic lab specialists flying to jobs in Alaska, and Mrs. Nellie Hess, wife of Air Force M-Sgt. Wallace Hess. There were no survivors of the crash.

BOARD MEETING

Feb. 10, 1998

Meeting was called to order at 9:45 P.M. Members present were: Mark Miraglia, Kirk Towner, Richard Baranow, Brenda Bryan, Matt Nedom, Tom Choate and Dara Lively.

Treasurer's Report

Kirk handed out the MCA 1998 budget for board members to include in their handbooks.

Beacons

It was decided to amend the Avalanche Beacon and EPIRB policy to require the use of the Alaska State Troopers Search and Rescue Travel Plan. This plan will provide to AST the necessary details to respond to an activated EPIRB. The Hiking and Climbing Chair has the forms and will hand them out with the EPIRB. This policy will be further amended to provide for testing of avalanche beacons upon return by members prior to refund of the deposit.

Glacier Travel Class

A discussion was held regarding the possibility of holding glacier travel training on the Ruth Glacier. This will be presented to the members at the February meeting.

Hut to Hut

The Alaska Hut to Hut project promoted by John Wolfe was discussed and a proposed MCA Resolution supporting the project was approved. Mark Miraglia will type up the resolution and send it to John.

Library Screes

A bound copy of Scree, Volumes 31-35, 1988-1992, is missing from the Vin Hoeman Library. A discussion ensued on how best to secure the library to prevent research material from being taken.

Trail Signs

The posting of trailhead signs was discussed. A sign design was submitted by Dennis Morford at the club's request.

Cost estimates were received from Action Sign and Graphics. Steve Davis is checking with the American Alpine Club for possible funding.

Trips

A discussion was held on the response to January meeting's sign-up sheets for a "5-day high altitude climb," "5-day glacier base camp," and "5-day fly-in base camp" trips. It was decided to put on a trip to the Scandinavian Peaks Hut for five days providing necessary training prior to any trip.

Submitted by Matt Nedom

Edited by Mark Miraglia

MINUTES

JANUARY MEETING

Meeting was called to order by President **Mark Miraglia**. A large crowd of members were present, welcoming 18 guests.

TREASURY REPORT

See final report on budget in this issue. There are only a few 1998 photo calendars left at \$18 each.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Parks Advisory

TRACC meeting in February regarding trails access throughout the state. Contact Scott Bailey.

Equipment

Dave Hart will inventory MCA supplies/equipment at AMH. A list will be available at the next meeting.

Training

Expedition Planning session (how to be organized for backcountry travel) 2/2 at Kaladi Brothers at Brayton. Map reading session will be held March 2. Ice climbing school at Candy Land is planned for March.

Hiking and Climbing

Steve Gruhn presented sign-up sheets for scheduled trips and a trip wish list. Scandinavian Hut Peak Trip with Dave Hart is scheduled for March 27-30. Club supplies will be flown in. Steve Davis gave Echo Bend Ice Climbing Report. On January 9th, 35 people attended the class and a write up is soon to appear in *Scree*.

OLD BUSINESS

A few 1998 photo calendars are left and may be obtained



from Kirk Towner (MCA Treasurer), Alaska Rock Gym or AMH.

MCA Librarian, Ron Kruse, read a list of overdue books with a reminder to return books within a couple of weeks after check out.

NEW BUSINESS

1998 Proposed Budget (see December newsletter) was voted on and passed.

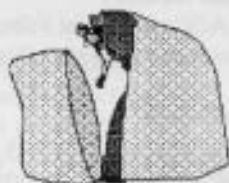
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Alaska River Forecast Center is sending daily snow and weather information to their home page at <http://www.alaska.net/~akrfc> on the internet. Data is provided for various sites throughout Alaska with a heavier concentration of sites in Southcentral Alaska.

After the business meeting, David Roberts showed slides of an ascent of Mt. Dickey.

Respectfully Submitted,
B. Bryan

Climbing Notes



Willy Hersman, Mark Longden and Ed Westergaard climbed Peak 4415 (Crag Benchmark), north of Wolverine Creek, on March 1st, via the west ridge. It's an easy one-day ascent, good for winter days, moderate brush with constant views of the Talkeetnas from the ridge. Probably first climbed by hunters.



Mountaineering Club of Alaska

1997 Budget - Final

		Actual Amount Through 12/31/97	Proposed for 1997	Percent of Budget
REVENUE				
Membership Dues	received during calendar year	4,422.00	3,000	147%
Training	ice climbing, crevasse rescue, other	2,175.00	1,800	121%
Other:	interest, MCA product sales, advertising	153.33		
Mountain House Order		1,579.54		
Grabber Hand Warmers		801.40		
Photo Calendar		1,824.00		
TOTAL REVENUE		10,955.27	4,800	

EXPENSE				
Training	campsite and access fees, instructors	1,347.50	1,200	112%
Scree	postage, mailing, printing (currently free - BP)	1,043.80	1,000	104%
General Meeting	rent, refreshments, entertainment	891.41	700	127%
Administrative	office supplies, forms, PO box, bank fees, rewards	568.50	500	114%
Hut Construction & Maint.	materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees*	1,313.95	400	328%
Club Equipment	climbing gear, misc equipment		200	-
Library	new books, periodicals, Scree binding	204.44	300	68%
Other:	miscellaneous expenses			
Donation to Pia's Memorial		500.00	500	100%
Mountain House Order		1,579.54		
Grabber Hand Warmers		800.80		
Photo Calendar		2,912.08		
TOTAL EXPENSE		11,162.02	4,800	

DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE	(206.75)	NONE
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* lease fees were not originally expected during the planning of the 1997 budget

CASH BALANCE - All Accounts

Beginning Balance - January 1, 1997	6,325.46	6,500
Increase (decrease) during 1997	(206.75)	NONE
Current Balance Through 12/31/97	6,118.71	-
Checking - Northrim Bank	2,507.67	
Money Market - Northrim Bank	2,528.72	
18-month CD - in trust for hut lease - Northrim Bank	1,030.32	
Checking - Key Bank	NONE	
Money Market - Key Bank	NONE	
Petty Cash	52.00	
TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS - Through 12/31/97	6,118.71	
Ending Balance - December 31, 1997	6,118.71	6,500

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

1998 Budget

		Actual Amount through 2/24/98	Approved for 1998	Percent of Budget	Final for 1997
REVENUE					
Membership Dues	<i>received during calendar year</i>	1,041.00	4,000	26%	4,422.00
Training	<i>ice climbing, crevasse rescue, other</i>	-	2,200	-	2,175.00
Other:	<i>interest, MCA product sales, advertising</i>	-	-	-	153.33
Photo Calendar		419.00	4,500	9%	1,824.00
T-Shirts, Patches		-	1,500	-	-
Mountain House, Hand Warmers		21.59	-	-	2,380.94
TOTAL REVENUE		1,481.59	12,200	12%	10,955.27
EXPENSE					
Training	<i>campsite and access fees, instructors</i>	-	1,500	-	1,347.50
Scree	<i>postage, mailing, printing (currently free - BP)</i>	529.00	1,000	53%	1,043.80
General Meeting	<i>rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	616.61	900	69%	891.41
Administrative	<i>office supplies, forms, PO box, bank fees, rewards</i>	7.90	500	2%	568.50
Hut Construction & Maint.	<i>materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees*</i>	22.35	500	4%	1,313.95
Club Equipment	<i>climbing gear, misc equipment</i>	528.77	500	106%	-
Library	<i>new books, periodicals, Scree binding</i>	43.77	200	22%	204.44
Other:	<i>miscellaneous expenses</i>	-	-	-	-
Photo Calendar		-	4,000	-	2,912.08
T-Shirts, Patches		-	1,000	-	-
Donation to Pia's Memorial		-	-	-	500.00
Mountain House, Hand Warmers		-	-	-	2,380.34
TOTAL EXPENSE		1,748.40	10,100	17%	11,162.02
DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE		(266.81)	2,100	(13%)	(206.75)

* lease fees were not originally expected during the planning of the 1997 budget
in 1997 we paid a one-time registration fee for each hut that will not be necessary in 1998

CASH BALANCE - All Accounts

Beginning Balance - January 1, 1998	6,118.71
Increase (decrease) during 1998	(266.81)
Current Balance through 2/24/98	5,851.90
Checking - Northrim Bank	2,225.36
Money Market - Northrim Bank	2,528.72
18-month CD - in trust for hut lease - Northrim Bank	1,045.82
Petty Cash	52.00
TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS - through 2/24/98	5,851.90 ok
Ending Balance - December 31, 1998	