



APRIL 1998

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Volume 41 Issue 04

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

### APRIL MEETING

Wednesday

April 15, 7:30 pm

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets

Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: *Alpine Climbing in the Pacific Northwest*  
with Cory and Elena Hinds

### HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

#### May 16 Near Point, Wolverine Peak, and Rusty Point

Western Chugach. Class D. Elevation Gain:  
Approximately 3600 feet. Distance: 10 miles,  
round trip. Traverse the prominent skyline ridges  
of Wolverine Peak.  
Leader: Dennis Morford 522-1179(h) 269-0639(w)

#### May 16 Gull Rock

Class B. Round trip 10.2 miles. Elevation Gain:  
645 feet  
Leader: Curvin Metzler 333-8766

#### May 30 - Jun 7 Scandinavian Peaks

Class E. Glacier Travel and Mountaineering  
experience required. This is NOT a training class.  
Limited to six people plus leaders. Participants  
will be expected to pay for travel costs. Contact  
leaders for mandatory pre-trip meeting place and  
location.  
Leaders: Richard Baranow and Wendy Sanem  
694-1500

#### 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

#### Jul 25- Aug 8 Kongakut River and Aichilik River

Brooks Range. Distance: 60 miles. Elevation  
gain: 4000 feet. Class D.  
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184

## TRIP REPORTS

### Ice Training

by Mark Miraglia



evin Feldis, Laura Grant, Megan Perkins and Michael Netterman left the Eagle River Visitor's Center in the company of Aze Azegami and me on Saturday morning, March 7th. We headed back to an ice climb known as Spruce Pitch at Echo Bend. It

was a beautiful sunny day in the high 20 to low 30 degree range. Student Bruce Kittredge had spent the night camped at Echo Bend and was waiting for us at the base of the climb when we arrived.

Two top ropes were set up on 60-80 foot, grade II and III ice on the right side and one rope was set up on the left side of Icicle Delight in grade IV condition, about 50 feet long.

We climbed for about four hours trying out everybody's different tools. The Labrador retriever that had followed us in from the parking lot left shortly before we did when he wasn't being fed anymore. He met us again at the parking lot along with Wendy Soren and Richard Baranow's group from the Mt. Significant trip. Most folks from both trips met at Garcia's to end up a most pleasant day.

### A Winter Ascent of Eagle Peak

by Dahr Jamail



hile skiing in towards Eagle Peak from the South Fork Eagle River Valley trailhead on March 3rd with club member Evan Phillips I could feel that it was going to be a good trip. Skies were clear, conditions were excellent, and the weather was cold and stable.

During the approach we gazed at Cantata Peak, Triangle Peak, and Calliope Mountain as the sunlight accentuated their different faces. The trail was packed well as far as Eagle Lake, so we made good time to the headwall six miles in which leads up to Flute Glacier. Here we slogged up the slope under the blazing sun, then skied a little further to a snow cave which Evan had excavated on a prior trip. We found this filled with fresh snow, so we spent awhile clearing it out before we could move in.

It was a chilly evening as this area is continually in the shade this time of year, and the cold was accentuated by the constant wind blowing off of the Flute Glacier above us.

After eating and melting snow was completed, we got a good night's rest inside the cozy snow cave, while outside the temperature dropped to around -10. With the clear and cold evening, things looked good for the next day. We were on the way towards the base of our route by 9:00 AM, slogging upwards in the brisk morning breeze. High clouds were present as some weather looked like it could be brewing over the inlet, but it was stable nevertheless. Roughly an hour later we found ourselves at the base of the South Face of Eagle Peak, gazing up a large couloir that led up to around 6000 feet, where it runs up onto the SE Ridge. Here we intended to make a traverse across the face to pick up our couloir where it would (hopefully) lead us up to the summit.

We slogged up onto the couloir to where it bottlenecked into a lower rock band. We'd opted not to haul in a rope and gear in order to keep our loads light, and luckily for us it proved to be the right call. Conditions were bomber, kick stepping rarely found the snow any deeper than our boots, and the snow was very consistent. Taking turns leading we quickly got to around 5300 feet on the 35-degree slopes, ditched our ski poles for ice axes and continued on. We didn't find it necessary to use our crampons until 6000 feet, where the snow grew more firm, and the angle increased to around 45-50 degrees. As we gained altitude the view opened up to include Flute Peak, the ominous North Face of Organ Mountain, and once we attained the SE Ridge we had a grand view of Polar Bear Peak. Here we took a snack break, and were impressed with the grand alpine landscape which was laid out before us. The sun shimmered off the Flute and Organ Glaciers, and seemed to almost glow from within the peaks.

From here we jokingly made the 'traverse of doom' (due to a small cliff beneath us) across the face in order to regain our couloir. Aside from the aforementioned cliff, a fall from this high on the route would entail a very long run-out, hence the name. Once across this and back into the couloir we climbed the 50-degree slope up some sketchy snow and rock (near the top), where we found ourselves atop the summit ridge. As I popped my head above the small cornice I was taken aback by a clear view of Denali, Hunter and Foraker shimmering in a yellow hue in the distance.

A brisk wind chilled us, so we layered up to finish the ridge. The summit ridge is a knife edged cornice of surprisingly soft snow. Evan led us across to the true summit, sometimes wading thigh deep in the snow. Due to how deep the snow was, as well as the chilly breeze, we opted to forgo a search for the summit register. The summits of Polar Bear, Cantata, Flute, Yukla and Organ Mountains all thrust into the sky in this rare alpine landscape. We sat smiling, awed by the blue ice of the Flute and Organ Glaciers far below, Redoubt and Iliamna Volcanoes standing like sentinels in the distance. Aware of the fact



that not many folks have stood atop Eagle Peak, and the fact that the perfect conditions allowed us to do so on this day found me feeling quite grateful. After taking a few photos and sipping some icy Tang, we plunge-stepped our way back down the couloir to the base of our route. We stopped once on the way down to bask in the warm sun and savor the view a little more, then arrived back at camp only an hour after departing the summit. Once at camp we quickly broke camp and skied out to the trailhead, hot coffee dangling like carrots in our minds!

## Gold Mint Trip

by Dennis Morford and Peter Clifford



On October 12 Charles Lane, Matt Nedom, Rayna Swanson, and non-members Sue and Pat were headed to Arkose Peak. Due to fairly high flow in the Little Susitna River, together with ice on all rocks, it was not possible to cross without getting wet feet. The group did not want to do this (Temperature of 20 degrees), so we hiked the Gold Mint Trail and climbed into a hanging valley in the ridge between Idaho and Montana Peaks. Blue skies made for good weather.

## Trip up Isthmus

by Hollis S. French



Doug Huvar, Willy Hersman, John Burton and I went on a fine March trip recently. Our goal was to climb Isthmus Peak. We left Girdwood with Alpine Air beginning at 8:00 AM on March the 6th. I'd forgotten my ski boots in Anchorage, so there was a bit of scurrying around at the outset, finding replacement gear. Keith, the owner and main pilot for the flying service, took two trips to put us in at the 3500-foot level of the Spencer Glacier. John and I went in on the second run. When we arrived, Doug and Willy already had a tent up with wind walls around it. The sun was shining brightly, all the peaks looked inviting, and I was so jazzed to be in the mountains that I jumped out of the plane, leaving behind my one and only pair of mittens. Thank goodness for friends with extra gear!

We left camp on skis about 10:30 AM. The peak looked like a fairly straightforward affair. We picked the north face, where the sun would not shine for at least another month, as we couldn't stand to be warm and comfortable. The skiing was not difficult: we simply angled

left onto a shoulder of the lower mountain, and then crossed a small glacier to some rocks. The wind had picked up, and the slopes there began to steepen, so we left our skis and began to climb.

The route we chose took the left-hand gully of the north side. The snow was good styrofoam. We swapped leads as legs and lungs demanded. There was one spot where the angle kicked up and the gully narrowed. We put on crampons and clambered past some shattered Chugach rocks. After that the angle lessened a bit, and the gully widened. We grabbed a bite under the summit, out of the worst of the wind, and then topped out.

Isthmus is 6532 feet high. It straddles the north-eastern end of the Kenai Peninsula. The weather was pouring over the ice fields, flowing from Prince William Sound westwards across the glaciers. The wind was gusting from 30 to 40 mph. The views to the west, north and south were all good, though clouds covered everything to the east. After a few minutes we went down.

We rappelled the one tight spot. Then we followed the wands that Willy had thoughtfully planted back to camp. At 6:30 PM we were high-fiving each other, and the climbing portion of the trip was over.

The two-day return was marked by some excellent map and compass work by Doug as we hunted the two-mile wide outflow of the Spencer glacier in a near total whiteout. Having found it, we skied the five miles to the toe with little effort. Getting off the Spencer took a more doing than we had anticipated, however, and we wound up camping on the glacier, with the train tracks in sight, when it began to get dark.

As we made breakfast the next morning, John spotted something moving above us on the glacier. Binoculars revealed that a wolf was perched on a serac, watching and waiting. We dubbed it the Glacier Wolf. We also spotted some tiny tracks in camp, which sparked a small debate. Three of us felt they belonged to a marmot, or a vole. Doug maintained that the markings could only have come from a gerbil.

All that was left was to wind through some more breaks in the glacier to an exit on the left-hand side. There we found snow machine tracks that led us down the hills and across the lake to the train trestle. Doug and John skate-skied out, I pulled my sled on foot, and Willy stumped along, with everything on his back, like the true mountaineer that he is.



## Mt. Eklutna Hike

by William L Mathews



Despite howling winds in the Anchorage area, 8 MCA'ers turned out to hike up Mt. Eklutna on March 28th. Mike Nettermann, Andrew Romanoff, Michele Champion, Kent Muehling, Roger May, Greg McDuffie, Joe Anders and Ron

Rickman arrived at the Peters Creek trailhead to find the wind had dropped off to a gentle breeze. We hiked up the road to the bowl trail, gained a ridge and followed it to the top. A quick lunch break on the windy summit, then a fast glissade brought us back to the road. Decent weather and a nice group of folks made for a very enjoyable hike.

## ADZE

### For sale

35mm Sureshot Canon camera, great for climbing, waterproof, many features, great shape, \$120. Brand new Leatherman, \$30. Brand new mini-mag light, \$10. North Face expedition sized pack-7000 cu. in. Large Mens. \$100. Dachstein mittens, \$20. Call Dahr 274-0512.



## Arctic Orienteering Club 1998 Schedule

May 5(Tues) Ed's Orienteering-Palmer, starts from 6:00-7:30, Crevasse Moraine Park

Contact: Ed Strabel 745-4190

May 11(Mon) Beginner Training, Classroom session at REI at 7:00 PM. To pre-register, contact REI at 272-4565

May 12(Tues) Beginner/Intermediate Orienteering, starts 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Russian Jack Chalet

Contact: Kathy Means 333-8977

May 19(Tues) Kimball's Orienteering, starts from 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Kincaid Park chalet

Contact: Kimball Forrest 278-3277, kimball@resdat.com

May 26(Tues) Jim's Orienteering-Fun Event, Meet at 5:30 PM, mass start at 6:15 PM APU Moseley Center

Contact: Jim Green - 333-7268, jgreen@williwaw.com

Jun 2(Tues) Mike's Orienteering, starts from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM, Elmendorf AFB,

Contact: Mike Kotowski 248-0603 or 269-8812

Jun 9(Tues) Weird-O Orienteering, starts from 5:30-6:30 PM, Russian Jack Chalet

Contact: Bud Rice 696-0221 257-2466

Jun 16(Tues) Tom and Scott's Orienteering, starts from 5:30 - 7:00 PM, Pia Margrethe

Contact: Scott Banks 333-9779, banks@mail.akrr.com or Tom

Dougherty 243-4645

Jun 27(Sat) Anchorage Parks Relay Teams or solo. Score-O format registration inside Northeast Comm. Rec. Center 8:30-9:20 AM. Start is a 20 minute, walk east from the Muldoon Mall. Mass start at 10 am.

Contact: Dan Ellsworth 265-5528, dellsworth@gsi.com or Jacquelyn Rosser 333-5429, ellsworth@pobox.alaska.net  
Jun 30(Tues) Mark and Giselle's Orienteering, Score-O Meet at 5:30 PM, mass start at 6:00PM, Hillside Park, Abbott Rd parking lot

Contact Mark or Giselle Bergeron 345-1010  
Jul 7(Tues) Jen and Ian's Orienteering, starts: 5:30-7:00 PM, Mile 1.1 Basher Rd

Contact: Jen Joliff or Ian Moore 348-0237, ian@resdat.com  
Jul 14(Tues) Memory Orienteering, starts: 5:30-7:00PM, UAA Arts Bldg.

Contact: Patricia Thompson 349-0658, newt@alaska.net  
Jul 25(Sat) 12 and 24-hour ROGAINE

Peters Hills, Call for directions, mass start at 12:00 noon. 2 person teams required, rigorous terrain, unpredictable weather. Bring extra clothing, water, food, and emergency gear for the trail.

Contact: Ted Cahalane 345-6681, 263-4684  
tcahalane@mail.arco.com, Joe Anders 345-3917, jlanders@alaska.net, Ron Rickman 345-7919  
Jul 28(Tues) Pixie and Graham's Orienteering, Meet at 5:30 PM, mass start at 6:15 PM

Contact: Pixie or Graham Siebe 346-3329  
Aug 6(Thur) Dan and John's Orienteering, starts from 5:30-6:30 PM, Mile 2 Basher Rd.

Contact: Dan Rogers 243-8298, John Rogers 243-4757  
Aug 12(Wed) Orienteering Festival-Day 1, "B" Meet for national ranking points. Starts from 5:30-7:00 PM, Elmendorf AFB

Contact: Dick Hawkins 337-0498 Eric Follett 346-2294, 562-4279, efollett@alaska.net  
Aug 13(Thur) Alaska Orienteering Festival-Day 2, "B" Meet for national ranking points. Starts from 5-6:30 PM. Meet at the Muldoon Mall, S. end.

Contact: Eric Follett at 562-4279 efollett@alaska.net Eric or Jill at 346-2294

Aug 20(Thur) Mountain Bike Orienteering starts: 5:30-6:30 PM, Kincaid Chalet.

Contact: Jill Follett- 346-2294 efollett@alaska.net  
Sept 12(Sat) Search and Destroy-O Orienteering mass start at 1:00 PM, Score-O format, Elmendorf AFB

Contact: Bill Spencer 346-3582 or 786-1285 Karl Swanson kswanson@dtus.com  
Sept 12(Sat) Orienteering Club Annual meeting/potluck 6:30 PM Northeast Community Center

Contact : Eric or Jill Follett 346-2294, efollett@alaska.net  
Oct 8(Thur) Night-O, Score-O format. Meet at 7:30 PM at UAA Arts Building Parking lot, mass start at 8:00 PM

Contact: TBA  
Oct 31(Sat) Halloween Orienteering, starts from 7:30-8:30 at Kincaid Chalet

Contact: Pat Thompson 349-0658, newt@alaska.net

## ESSAY

### Judgment at Altitude

by Alan S. Reiman

Mountaineering is a sport that requires good judgment and decision making skills. Every year poor choices are made that indirectly cost lives. Throughout an expedition a team must assess a multitude of dangers such as the hazards of avalanches, crevasse falls, and altitude sickness. While evaluating potential risks, the mountaineer must also be able to monitor their own current state of mental functioning (meta-cognition).

Hypoxia (experience of the lower amount of available oxygen encountered at high elevations) affects many of the higher mental functions, causing deficits in learning, memory, attention, and other intellectual abilities. To describe it more simply, "hypoxia resembles overindulgence in alcohol" (Houston, 1987). Meta-cognition is also severely impacted, making subjects' self-evaluations less accurate than thought. Mountaineers make potentially life-threatening choices based upon invalid self-assessments. This questions the safety of monitoring one's condition while at altitude.

These deficits in concentration, long- and short-term memory, and motor coordination have been found to persist in mountaineers even after they have returned to lower elevations. This central nervous system damage is to some extent irreversible.

#### Altitude Sickness

Altitude sickness is the primary result of the body not being adequately acclimatized to the hypoxic conditions. Individuals who ignore the natural amount of time required to acclimatize often experience mountain sickness. This is occurring more frequently as people are attempting to summit peaks faster than ever thought possible.

Altitude sickness manifests itself in three progressively dangerous forms. Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is the first to appear, and if AMS goes untreated, it can evolve into High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE), which is caused by an accumulation of fluid in the lungs. AMS can also develop into an extremely serious form of alti-

tude sickness called High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE), caused by fluid accumulating in the brain. Often the onset is more rapid than HAPE, and the individual can lapse into a coma within hours.

#### Effects of Diamox

Diamox (acetazolamide) is a drug that has been found to reduce the frequency of AMS occurrences in the majority of climbers using. Diamox induces a state of artificial acclimatization, in which the body metabolizes oxygen more easily. The effects of hypoxia are reduced with an increase in the amount of usable oxygen.

I have participated in three expeditions climbing to high altitude to investigate the decline in mental abilities and the effects of Diamox. I have not yet collected enough data to determine whether Diamox helps make better judgments at altitude.

I need your help. If you will be climbing to high altitude in the and would like to get involved in the study future (whether or not you are planning to use Diamox), I would be glad to send you the testing packets and instructions for free. The simplicity of administration of these diagnostic tests allows for anyone to serve as an experimenter. If you would like to learn more about this project, you can visit the web site that has been created to promote this study at <http://local.uaa.alaska.edu/~asasr1/>, or contact:

Alan S. Reiman  
(907)243-3249  
[asasr1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:asasr1@uaa.alaska.edu)

With your help we may resolve the question: Does Diamox saves lives by helping make better decisions at altitude?

## MINUTES

### FEBRUARY MEETING

Meeting was called to order by President Mark Miraglia. 85 members and 11 visitors were present.

#### TREASURY REPORT

See final report on budget in March issue of *Scree*.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### *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. Ice climbing school at Candy Land is planned for 1-2 days in March. Mt. Significant trip, March 7, with Richard Baranow and Wendy Sanem. Grand Canyon (Clear Creek) trip with Dennis Morford is full but there is a waiting list. (April 11-19). Joe Anders is getting a climb organized for Mt. Eklutna. Mt. Ascension, Lost Lake with Matt Nedom and Tom Choate is planned for June 19-21. Chilkoot Trail trip is in the making this summer, June 29-July 4, with Diane Sallee. Korohusk Peak trip with Wendy Sanem and Richard Baranow is coming up the end of March or the beginning of April. (Dishwater Creek/Eagle River Valley - one day).

**Richard Baranow** and **Wendy Sanem** reported on their Cumulus Mt. trip with participants (11 summited).

### *Training*

The Upper Ruth Glacier trip is scheduled for the first week in May. This will be a five-day fly-in trip for a limited number of members. The price for students is \$170 and full payment must be made at the March meeting.

### *Parks Advisory*

**Scott Bailey** reported that in order to keep climbing areas open, fees will eventually have to be charged. This will include Glen Alps and other state park areas.

### *Equipment*

**Dave Hart** requests members to please return MCA equipment that has been checked out within one week. This equipment is stored in the MCA library at AMH.

The EPIRB that the club has is the same as an aviator's ELT. It is not coded and gives only approximate locations. The State Trooper's two page trip plan forms should be filled out and faxed to trooper headquarters prior to trips.

### OLD BUSINESS

A few 1998 photo calendars are left and may be purchased at the reduced price of \$16 from Kirk Towner.

MCA's avalanche beacon use policy: it is the responsibility of the borrower to supply batteries for the beacon.

### NEW BUSINESS

Volume 31-35 (1988-92) bound edition of *Scree* is missing from the MCA library. If borrowed, please return asap. Bound issues of *Scree* are simply for reference, not for

check out.

After adjournment, Bob Shipley presented an outstanding slide show on trekking in the Swiss high country. Thanks to the Great Harvest Bread Co. for the delicious breads!

Submitted by B. Bryan

## MARCH MEETING

Meeting was called to order by president Mark Miraglia at 7:45 PM, 82 present, 11 guests. Handouts were available for new members.

### TREASURY REPORT

See final report on budget in March issue of *Scree*.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### *Training*

Anyone needing to make their payment for the Ruth Glacier trip was asked to see the treasurer after the meeting.

### *Hiking and Climbing*

Sign up sheets were available, as usual, for those wishing to participate on trips. Trip criteria and agenda for the Korohusk Peak climb were covered by **Richard Baranow** and **Wendy Sanem**. Other upcoming trips were also covered.

### *Huts*

**Mark Miraglia** reported that one of the huts has a hole in the floor, please mend. Pitchler's needs a fire extinguisher and you need to take your own shovel.

### *Equipment*

Eight new ropes were purchased.

### OLD BUSINESS

MCA patch design is available to review and approve.

Library rules were reviewed by Ron Kruse.

### NEW BUSINESS

None.

Meeting adjourned with slide show presented by Roman Dial: Biking in the Alaska Range.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helga Bashor





POLICY: EPIRB and Avalanche Beacon Use - Amended February 10, 1998

EMERGENCY POSITION INDICATING RADIO BEACON (EPIRB)  
AND AVALANCHE BEACON USE RULES

The EPIRB and avalanche beacons, referred to as BEACON in this policy, are only to be used in emergency situations. An EPIRB transmits a signal so that rescue aircraft can "home" to the EPIRB.

1. Club sanctioned trips have priority use even if a member has previously scheduled a BEACON for a personal trip.
2. Only members may check-out and use a BEACON.
3. A member checking out a BEACON must provide a \$250.00 deposit and assumes responsibility for loss or damage which would result in forfeiture of deposit.
4. An MCA sanctioned trip Leader or Co-Leader checking out a BEACON is not required to provide a deposit. The Club assumes responsibility for loss or damage.
5. The Hiking and Climbing Committee Chairperson stores the BEACONS. Club members can make reservations for the BEACONS by contacting the Chairperson.
6. The BEACONS may be checked out for club trips of any duration. For non-Club trips the BEACONS may be checked out for a maximum of two weeks.
7. BEACONS must be returned to the Chairperson within one week from the scheduled return date or forfeiture of the deposit will result. The BEACONS will be tested for proper operation prior to return of the deposit. If the return is to be later than scheduled due to weather, injury or such the Chairperson must be notified immediately upon members return from the trip.
8. When using the EPIRB a member must fill out and file an Alaska State Trooper Search and Rescue (AST SAR) Travel Plan. These Travel Plans are available from the Hiking and Climbing Chairperson.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Checked Out

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date to be Returned

I have read these terms and agree to them. I know how to operate the BEACON.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date