

JULY MEETING

Wednesday

July 21, 7:30 pm

**Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage**

**Picnic: The club will provide the dogs, burgers, buns
and drinks. Please augment this snack with
something appropriate, i.e. salads, bean dishes,
chips, watermelon, fruit, etc.**

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

**Jul 24 - Aug 7 Jago River, Arctic National Wildlife
Refuge**

Backpacking and nontechnical climbing trip to explore the Jago River drainage and surrounding mountain peaks (7000-8000 feet). Fly in trip by charter out of Fairbanks, Alaska. Costs \$750 per person. Trip will include about 30 to 40 miles of backpacking (Class B-C) over the two week trip with several camps along the river with 2 to 3 days of day hikes at each camp. We will return to the same airstrip that we will be flown into.
Leader: Don Hansen, 243-7184

Aug 8 Grant Lake
Kenai Mountains. A beautiful day hike to and around the Grant Lake area. Class B.
Leader: Matt Nedom 278-3648

Aug 20-22 Lost Lake and Mount Ascension
Kenai Mountains. Leave Anchorage after work on Friday. Eight mile backpack up to beautiful Lost Lake in the Kenai mountains at the foot of Mt Ascension. Saturday, those who would like can make the easy climb of the glacier to the summit. Required equipment: backpack and a smile; if you climb the peak, bring a harness, crampons, and ice ax. And bring a camera! Class B to the lake. Class D to the peak.
Leaders: Matt Nedom 278-3648
Tom Choate 333-5309

TRIP REPORTS

Bellicose Peak NNW Ridge

by David Hart



No doubt about it, I've had great luck with weather this summer and Bellicose Peak kept the tradition alive. Kathy Still, Wayne Todd, Todd Steele and I had the fortune of climbing the "standard" north-northwest ridge of

Bellicose on June 18 and 19. We approached the mountain from Eagle River via Ram Valley, continuing over Bombardment Pass (5000) and descending to 2500 feet in the upper Peters Creek valley. Ascending again, we soon reached Rumble Pass (5000) due south of Mt. Rumble (7630). From here we could view the constant barrage of avalanches pouring off the west face of Bellicose onto the Wall Street Glacier directly below us. We easily descended the east side of Rumble Pass onto the Wall Street Glacier and placed a camp at 4300 feet near the base of the west face of Bellicose, heeding the huge seracs hanging near its summit. It took us about 8 hours to travel the 12 miles and 6000 feet of elevation gain from the Ram Valley trailhead to our Wall Street camp.

The next morning we woke to blue skies, although the forecast was for afternoon showers. At 7:30 AM, we started hiking towards the 40-degree snow slopes one mile north of the summit and immediately left (north) of Bellicose's impenetrable west face cliffs. We would use these slopes to traverse up and right onto the upper mountain and eventually gain the NNW ridge. As seen on the USGS topo, just west of and paralleling the NNW ridge is a hanging glacier commonly known as The Shroud. The standard route avoids the NNW ridge proper until about 7250, and instead makes an ascending traverse up to and then onto The Shroud negotiating a couple problematical crevasses along the way. This route can also be approached from the Eklutna Glacier via the Benign/Bellicose Col. From the Col, head up Bellicose to 5800 feet where one can make a short rappel west off the NNW ridge and then join the traverse towards The Shroud. From either approach, take care traversing onto The Shroud, as a slip on the 35 to 40 degree slopes would result in an 800-foot free fall over the lower west face cliffs below. Also beware frequent summer-

time wet snow point-release avalanches along the entire upper mountain route. Once on The Shroud at about 6200 feet, roped glacier travel is recommended. Continue on 30 to 40 degree slopes until reaching the final bergshlund at about 7000. Surmounting this is often tricky and spooky, and we belayed a pitch here with pickets. It might prove easier to simply traverse left to its far end, although that would involve traversing back right on the steeper slopes above the 'shlund.

Once past the bergshlund, continue up the final 200-foot 50-degree headwall to the crest of the NNW ridge. Be sure not to gain the ridge too low, lest major gendarmes severely hinder your travel. The most obvious and best spot to gain the ridge is just right (south) of a fairly major gendarme where the ridge levels out around 7250 feet. Continue on easier ground, traversing or ascending the ridge as required until a prominent 40-foot cliff appears. Traversing right onto the 60-degree west face is not recommended; it's best to pony up and climb this 5.2 step, the crux of the ridge. From the rappel anchor on top of this step at 7400 feet, exposed scrambling leads along the horizontal crest for one more pitch until the final summit snow slopes are reached. We placed a couple nuts and slung a few boulders for running belays. It took us almost six hours to reach the summit from camp, but only 2-1/2 hours for the descent. We returned camp at 4:30 PM just as it began to rain. Recommended gear: 2 pickets (3-footers are better for soft snow), 4 assorted nuts, 1 ice screw, 2 ten-foot slings, 3 four-foot runners and assorted 'biners and slings.

We debated spending the night in camp, but ultimately decided to hike out that evening. Todd and I immediately packed camp and hit the trail at 5:00 PM, arriving at the truck just before 11:00 PM. Kathy and Wayne were hot on our heels hiking about an hour behind us.

A note to anyone heading up Bellicose: the summit register container is shattered and a new one is needed. The sign-in sheet is now only protected by zip lock baggies.



Moose's Tooth – Ham and Eggs Route

by David Hart



More climbers stood on the true summit of the Moose's Tooth in 1999 than all prior years combined. Why? Publicity – a recent issue of 'Rock and Ice' magazine contained a climbing guide to the Ruth Glacier. Krakauer's 1975 3,000-foot Ham and Eggs 5.8 WI

4 ice route up the sheer south face became a rediscovered classic. Denali National Park rangers estimate at least 10 parties attempted the line this year with most reaching the true summit.

Brad Gessner and I decided to make our attempt after talking with Peter Haeussler and Harry Hunt who described their ascent as a safe 20-pitch grade 3/4 ice climb with short cruxes and fixed rappel anchors leading all the way to the true summit. This differs from the popular southwest ridge route as described in '50 Classic Climbs' which leads to the smaller west summit, and is rarely traversed to the main summit. Brad and I decided we'd like to reach the true summit, so we opted for Ham and Eggs.

Brad and I flew into 7000 feet at the base of the south face on June 8 with Talkeetna Air Taxi. We spent the entire next day sleeping in preparation for our lightweight marathon ascent. At midnight on June 10 we left camp carrying only day packs with extra gloves, food, a quart of water and a stove. Five minutes from camp we crossed the bergshrund and traversed up the 45-degree snow slopes leading to the base of the couloir 500 feet above camp. Brad led the first belayed pitch, a steep rocky and wet dihedral. The 2:00 AM twilight made it easy to see occasional sparks as Brad's crampons scraped against the granite. Neither our front points nor ice picks would resemble new after the next 24 hours. Two pitches of 50-degree snow led to our first ice pitch. Being late in the season and facing south, the ice was hollow, rotten, chandeliered and often unprotectable. I was glad this pitch was Brad's lead, especially as I followed blindly swinging my ice tools over the final overhang with spindrift pouring into my unbuttoned jacket. This was the first of several times I wanted to go home that day. We simul-climbed five more pitches of 50-degree neve snow past a few minor rock and ice steps until we reached a fork in the couloir. We opted for the right where the ice appeared less desperate. I backed off my lead which Brad finished via a 70-foot 5.8 mixed line avoiding the ice entirely. At this point we agreed

we were a couple weeks late for this stellar ice route. But, we were still having fun.

The 11th pitch turned out to be the crux ice fin pitch. I once again deferred the lead to Brad. Two solid screws down low gave Brad the confidence to explore the rotten vertical ice above which was capped by overhanging rock. One final screw placed sideways into the fin allowed Brad to traverse left below the overhang onto thinly iced rock slabs. Protection was nonexistent from here to the belay 30 feet above. The statement 'the leader must not fall' was at the forefront of both our minds. It was a relief to hear 'off belay' a few minutes later. As my turn came and I pulled over a final small overhang, I could understand the urgency in Brad's voice as he encouraged me to hurry. We were once again in the main trough and billions of ice ball bearings were pouring over us, packing every conceivable opening in our clothes with spindrift. I would have surely suffocated had I looked up during the final 50' of that pitch. This was the second time I wanted to go home, but with our belay consisting of only one ice screw I grabbed the rack and pushed on. Mellow grade 2 and 3 ice found me at the next belay, still pummeled by billions of ball bearings. Soaked to the bone, Brad and I discussed descending. We knew we were close to the top of the couloir where Rob Hancock told us the route mellowed out. I voted for going down, but Brad convinced me to try one more pitch to see what it looked like above.

Brad led this final grade 3 ice pitch and hollered down welcome news that it looked good all the way to the col. We did running belays up the final 5 pitches of 45-degree snow to the col, 500 feet below the summit. It was 4:00 PM; we had been climbing for 16 hours and our water was long gone. As fortune would have it, the sun was out and there was no wind so our wet clothes dried quickly once we left the shadowed couloir. We did running belays up the final 10 pitches of the ridge, encountering slopes up to 60 degrees. Finally at 5:45 PM we reached the summit cornice. There was not a cloud to be seen, and Denali towered above us a scant 10 miles distant. An amazing site, although we spent less than a minute on top in anticipation of our long descent. We brewed water for our parched throats at the col before starting the long descent down the couloir. After fighting off sleep during 20 long rappels we down-climbed the final 45-degree headwall at the base of the route and stumbled into camp at 2:30 AM, 26-1/2 hours after leaving it. A heck of a day trip.



We flew back to Talkeetna later that morning – a mere 60 hours after having left. This safe route will certainly continue to receive increased traffic and will likely replace the southwest ridge as the most popular route on the peak. Still, April and May are probably the ideal months for this route.

MINUTES

JUNE MEETING

The meeting presided by Richard Baranow started promptly at about 7:50 PM, approximately 50 people were in attendance, and 12 newcomers introduced themselves to the group.

TREASURER

Kirk Towner reported that to date the revenue is \$6,150.87 and expenses \$2,708.21; 70% of budgeted membership dues were collected.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing

Wendy Sanem, chair of the committee, summarized past trips and announced new ones. She also reminded members to use the updated Club Trip Hotline 566-4MCA (566-4622). **Richard Baranow** gave an extensive and animated report on Scandinavian Hut/Marcus Baker trip, where club members successfully climbed the highest peak in Chugach Mountains and completed an impressive traverse starting on Matanuska and finishing on Knik Glacier.

Park Advisory

Scott Bailey reported on Forest Service, Vertical Times, and Access Fund activities regarding the National Policy on Climbing. He also summarized a survey on avalanche beacons, which could be helpful if club wants to order a bigger amount of new beacons.

Training

There might be a possibility to organize an Avalanche Rescue Training for the club next year.

OLD BUSINESS

Road signs to increase the awareness of climbing dangers along the Turnagain Arm were being made thanks to the

grant from REI. Matt Nedom is going to organize a working weekend to decide on placement of the signs.

Richard Baranow reported that our club, in conjunction with Chugach State Park, received \$30,000 from the State of Alaska to **build a hut** at the end of Eklutna Lake; it has to be yet decided on the exact location near the last bridge - mile 13. Contact Nick Parker from AMH if you are willing to hand a helping hand, the construction is scheduled to start in the early fall this year.

NEW BUSINESS

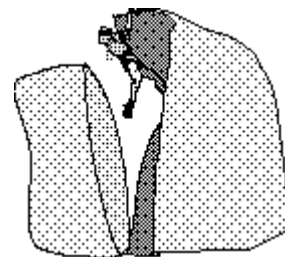
Photo contest for the Year 2000 calendar has been announced, the deadline is August club meeting. There will be four categories: Hiking, Climbing, People, and Scenery; you are to submit one photo for each category.

Next meeting is the annual picnic. Basic buns and burgers will be provided by club, please bring some other goodies like salads, fruits, and desserts.

This month's slide show was about the idea of having a Hut system in Alaska as it is common in other countries (New Zealand, Europe), but with a unique Alaskan flavor.

Respectfully submitted,
Elena Hinds

Climbing Notes



courtesy Dave Hart

On April 16 Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters flew Paul Barry, Jim McDonough, Shawn O'Donnell, Kirk Towner and myself to 10500 feet on the upper Anderson Glacier in Kluane National Park. After placing a high camp at 13,300' we repeated the 1959 first ascent routes up the east ridge of **Slaggard**, 15575 (Alaska Grade 1) and the south ridge of **Macaulay**, 15400 (Alaska Grade 1) – reference the 1960 AAJ. We then moved camp 3 miles southeast over SE Macaulay, 14500 to 11900 feet on the ridge towards **NW Steele**, 13845 (Alaska Grade 1). Our hopes of making its first ascent were dashed when we discovered faint crampon imprints in the ice on the north-



west ridge just below the summit. Rangers later confirmed an earlier party had climbed NW Steele the prior summer – could their tracks have lasted that long?

We descended back to base camp where Paul and I attempted the unclimbed east ridge of **Mt. Strickland**, 13800 (Alaska Grade 2). We reached 12500 feet before turning back due to dangerous snow conditions and steep ice. Our pilot returned for us May 2 after 17 days in this seldom visited corner of the Canadian St. Elias Range.

On May 9 Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters flew Dawn Groth, Ben Still, Kathy Still, Wayne Todd, Cory Hinds, Elena Hinds and myself to 9000 feet on the upper Nabesna Glacier below Regal Mountain, 13845. We established a high camp at 10800 feet from where we made the possible first ascent of **Peak 12454** via its east ridge (Alaska Grade 1). The next day we climbed **Regal Mountain** up its southern slopes (Alaska Grade 2) after retreating from its striking southwest ridge.

We then spent two days skiing 15 miles west over Mountaineers Pass to an 8000-foot camp below the north face of Rime Peak, 12741 and Atna Peak, 13860, scrambling up **Peak 8560** en route. Cory, Wayne, Ben and Cathy then climbed the northwest face of **Parka Peak**, 13280 (Alaska Grade 1) via Mountaineers Pass, only removing their skis for the final 700 feet. Cory, Elena, Wayne and Cathy then attempted the east ridge of **Rime Peak** (Alaska Grade 2) from the Atna/Rime col, before turning back at 12500 feet. Exposed snow and ice climbing up to 60 degrees made for exciting climbing. Future parties should be aware that all routes up Parka, Atna and Rime Peaks from the north are exposed to sometimes considerable serac avalanche danger.

Our group also made ascents of **Peak 10060**, **Peak 8500** and **Peak 7280** before our pilot returned for us May 22 after 14 sunny days in the Wrangells.

note from the Editor

During the 4th of July weekend, Phil Fortner and Chris Brown climbed **Awesome Peak** in the Western Chugach. It is better described as an 'awesome pile of rubble.' The usual lousy hand-holds and lack of protection were reported.

Eklutna Glacier Access

Time and change are at work at the face of Eklutna Glacier. No description here would stand as accurate for long, but let it be known, in case you are headed back that way, what the latest beta is. The glacier has melted to a point just beyond the Mitre Might, where it has basically been for the last five summers or so. An icefall at that point is breaking apart in large blocks at the toe of the glacier. Except during winter and early spring the face is too risky to attempt. Four years ago Alex Kopperude and I placed two bolted lines on the Mitre side of the approach allowing easier travel along the cliff ledge next to the Mitre Might waterfall. Last week Mark Miraglia, Ed Westergaard and I placed two bolted fixed lines on the Benign side of the approach to guard the ascent and descent of the cliffs above the Eklutna River. At that time I was able to see the fixed lines from four years ago still in place.

Both approaches are temporary and not without some risk. The Mitre side has occasional to frequent stonefall in the vicinity of the waterfall, additionally there will eventually be great difficulty actually getting onto the ice as it separates from the rock wall. It appears that it is still possible to get through, however. While the Benign side has less stonefall, it will soon have difficulties beyond the cliffs where the river is beginning to swing wide towards the walls of Benign. Moraine material, seeming very thick and hilly is actually only a veneer over dead ice which is giving way to blazing summer days. Perhaps as soon as next summer this access will not be feasible, it is anybody's guess, since the river will take the path of least resistance, and it is hard to tell just where that is.

If you want to do the Eklutna Traverse before June 15, you may want to check it out first (prior to that there is usually enough snow to make an easier approach). Pichler's Perch could become a very quiet place in the next few summers, until things get sorted out.

Willy Hersman

