

SEPTEMBER MEETING
Wednesday
September 15, 7:30 pm
Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: TBA.

TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING CLASS

place: Matanuska Glacier
date: October 2-3

fee: \$30.00 covers access to glacier,
camping and club equipment
replacement

meeting: Thursday, September 30, Pioneer
Schoolhouse 7:00 P.M. This
meeting is mandatory, so plan to
attend.

coordinator: Nick Parker

The ice climbing class is for all levels of experience from beginner to leader. We will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice. We will not emphasize glacier travel techniques.

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED.

Sign-ups are at the September meeting for MCA members only. Potential instructors need to call the coordinator, Nick Parker at 272-1811.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 30th. Students are required to bring their boots and crampons for inspection. Club equipment will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) **Fees will be collected.** Questions will be answered. **ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.** AMH, on Spenard Rd., also rents boots, crampons and ice tools for people signed up for the class. Some equipment is sometimes available from instructors, but you should not count on it. Club crampons are not designed for serious ice climbing; you should consider other options. For this class all attendees must have helmet, crampons, climbing harness, ice axe, two locking carabiners, and climbing boots.

The school begins at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, October 2nd, at the Matanuska Glacier parking lot closest to

the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 6:30 A.M. or go up on Friday night (no extra charge). Please leave your dogs, cats, horses, llamas and other four-legged things at home.

Course Goals

- Learn a useful and safe technique for climbing ice in the alpine and waterfall environment.
- Learn to use modern tools in order to insure maximum safety and speed.
- Learn and practice all of the basic state of the art rope management techniques, with emphasis on skills most useful for winter and ice climbing.
- Belaying the leader through mechanical devices and non-assisted or traditional technique.
- Building safe anchor systems, regardless of terrain or conditions.
- Route-finding to rapidly and safely achieve the goal without having unnecessary objective hazards.
- Achieve a climbing and fitness level to assure basic competency in alpine winter climbing.

Equipment for Ice and Winter Alpine Climbing

Technical gear:

Ice axe - your basic tool. Most useful in 55 cm to 60 cm range as the primary tool. Modern ice tools have curved or re-curved picks with serrated teeth for maximum holding power in most ice conditions. Taller climbers or those who primarily are snow-climbers will prefer a 70 cm axe. The second tool will be in 45 cm to 55 cm range, specialized for steep water ice climbing. A great variety is available, so try to use as many styles as possible to find the tool that best suits your style.

Crampons - rigid 12-point are the best choice for ice climbing. The new one-buckle system is *far* superior to the neoprene straps. Footfangs are an obvious choice also.

Helmet - a must for the beginning to experienced ice climber, ice hurts

Boots - double plastic or leather. Plastic boots are the warmest and as stiff as the best leather without breaking down. Alveolite foam inner boots are the best liner yet made, in terms of warmth vs. weight.

- Neoprene socks or booties which are loose fitting are also helpful.
- Neoprene or cloth/insulated overboots are necessary for altitude and all but spring conditions in Alaska. A margin of warmth must be maintained for safety.

Harness - must be adjustable with wide leg loops, that will

open up to put on over all your various clothing systems. Most modern styles have this capacity.

Ice Screws/Spectres - you should employ a variety of types and lengths to accommodate varying ice conditions. Pound-in and screw-in types should be carried on the rack.

Carabiners - you must have two large locking types and several regular carabiners. As you increase your proficiency and the difficulty of the routes you lead, you will require increasing amounts of hardware to protect your leads.

Slings - you will need to carry several lengths, plus you should have a quick-draw for each ice screw on the rack. You will also need several two-meter length slings of 6mm to 8mm perlon for prussik slings and other specialized uses for which tubular webbing is not suitable.

Special mechanical devices - jumars, figure-8 and other gizmos will be used and discussed to establish their relevance.

Clothing Systems for the Winter Alpine Environment:

The clothing system should layer well and be adaptable to a variety of uses and temperatures. Strive to use the minimum amount necessary to reduce both weight and bulk. The use of pile and Gore-Tex should yield a warm and light suit. An expedition parka and/or suit would be the final layer.

Socks - light wool or poly liner, heavy wool or pile outer. Or a neoprene sock, especially built for climbing. Capilene, wool or blends all are used.

Legs - poly or capilene long johns in various thicknesses. Salopettes or pile bibs. Mountain pants or a mountain suit. Bibs - or a one-piece suit are the best choice because they eliminate the waist hassle.

Torso - bib pile or insulated suits are the best choice. Poly or capilene t-neck tops. Pile or wool sweater. Down vest. Mountain anorak or parka.

Hats and Mitts - must be warm and windproof. A balaclava or facemask should be carried. Mitts also need waterproof shells.

Gaitors

Everything in the clothing system should have long zips or full side zips, so they can be easily removed or put on.



TRIP REPORTS

Benevolent Peak, Baked Potato & Pea Soup

by Todd Steele



n August 14, Dave Hart, Jaques Boutet and I biked out of Eklutna TH just before 7am. The 10.5-mile ride around the lake to the E. Fork was a great warm-up for a fast-paced day. Fittingly, our attempt to climb Benevolent Peak (7126) was

aided by the good deeds of a group of teenagers in the British Schools Exploring Society clearing the E. Fork trail. The excellent job allowed us quick and dry access to the drainage 2.5 miles from the junction. Heading east a quarter mile toward the spectacular waterfall, we found a cairn on the south side of the creek, 200 feet short of the falls. A trail led up through the typical Alaskan array of brush - alders, cows parsnip, devils' club, etc. marked occasionally with pink flags. Fixed line placed in some sketchy spots confirmed we were on the trail, although quarter-inch nylon cord around one-inch alders hardly qualifies. I certainly wouldn't jumar up this stuff. After an hour and a half, we lost the trail and ultimately got above it, so watch for a subtle traverse fork 300-400 feet below the upper cliff bands. It will save you time and energy, as the grade is steep and the bushwacking severe. An hour later we broke out and headed down to the creek. After a quick break, we continued for a half-hour on the tundra and braided moraine until we reached the scree slope at the bottom of the gully we intended to ascend.

The first raindrops announced the noon hour but it mattered little since we were already soaked. Jaques, feeling the effects of little sleep and ineffective (and very nasty tasting) energy shots, opted for a nap in his survival sack over the peak summit. Jaques told us to look for a big baked potato tucked under a boulder on our return. Dave & I continued up the nearly 3000 foot gully. Typical Chugach scree slope for the first 800 feet. There we found snow and donned helmets, crampons and ice axes. The steep rock framing the north side of the chute looked eager to shower us with rock fall. But the 40-45 degree slope had excellent snow and our quick ascent to the col at 6750 was uneventful. There is a 150-

200 foot section near the top where it was thin scree over rock for some edgy scrambling up and nervy downclimbing. At the col the weather deteriorated with snow and gusty winds. We got an occasional glimpse of the lower west face of Baleful and the beautiful high glacier cirque thousands of feet below. Twenty minutes of easy scrambling led us the summit of Benevolent and a view not worthy of our effort. However, three mature Dall sheep rams were perched 300 feet below which gave us something to look at during our brief stay on top. The register was in tact and Dave signed in as I unthawed my hands. The ascent from the parking lot had taken about 8 hours.

Soon we were back into the high valley below the spectacular Benevolent Cirque searching for a baked potato in pea soup. At 6pm we found Jaques and started searching for the trail out of the valley, which we found by traveling farther down the creek. An hour and a half later we were warming ourselves by the campfire of the British youths. Great kids, entertaining stories told in wonderful accents and a warm fire made stops at the two camps well worth it. At 8:45pm we were back on our bikes for the home stretch ride around the lake. Muddy, cold, tired and completely soaked, yet thoroughly satisfied with a wonderful climbing experience, we rolled into the trailhead just before 10pm.

ADZE

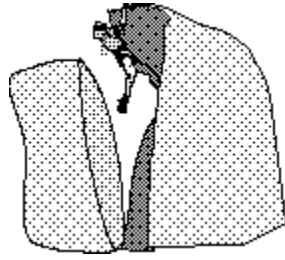


Lost

Black Jansport Day Pack and gear on July 31, 1999, below the cliffs southeast of Stivers' Gully on the descent from Bashful Peak. Pack may have crampons and an ice axe strapped to the outside. If found, please contact me.
Steve 344-1219.



Climbing Notes



Wayne L. Todd

With proper route selection, you can climb East Kiliak from the north without climbing the 45-50 degree ice below the summit. After ascending the Raisin Glacier climb the rock to the left, upslope (east), of the ice. This involves only minor scrambling and requires no rope or hardware.

From the scree saddle north of the summit and just west of the glacier, head south up the scree slope veering toward the right (steep ice direction). Where the scree ends, continue up a gully which angles right (15 yards), then up a gully which angles left (20 yards), then up a gully which angles right (15 yards). Stop just below the ridgeline and traverse 30 yards to the right (west) to a notch in the ridge. This is just below the summit block.

Drop to the other side of the ridge (south) on the scree and partially circumnavigate the block in a clockwise direction until reaching a gully which heads up and left (20 yards), continue up gully (10 yards) then traverse up and right to the summit (10 yards).

We did this route safely in very wet and inclemental conditions. A number of other minor scrambly routes would be possible up the rock.

MINUTES

AUGUST MEETING

The meeting was called to order at about 7:45 pm. There were a total of approximately 50 people in attendance. Approximately 5 new members or visitors introduced themselves. The club president was out climbing, so vice president **Tom Choate** presided over the meeting.

TREASURER

Total Revenue (year to date)	\$6,800
Total Expense (year to date)	\$3,700

We are at 87% of projected membership revenue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing

The hiking and climbing chair was out climbing. There was 1 new trip announcement. A list of upcoming trips was published in the August *Scree*. Signup sheets were available for the upcoming trips. The phone system needs to be updated. A signup sheet for the formation of a hiking and climbing committee was posted and approximately 10 people signed up to help organize club trips.

Huts

Chairperson **Mark Miraglia** reported that Chugach State Park is in the process of developing a draft policy on huts that are located on State lands. This would include several MCA huts. Current word is that the State Park will assume liability for the huts (thus releasing MCA). The draft policy will also include provision that commercial guides can not exclude other hut users. The draft policy will be made available for the Board to review.

Construction of the Bomber Hut outhouse is still slated for September.

Plans for construction of the Elkutna Hut are proceeding. Bids have been released for materials. Construction should begin in September. Contact Mark Miraglia if you can help.

The hut guide for South Central Alaska is due out this week. Expect hut usage to increase.

Parks Advisory

Heads up for the trail/winter route access issue. Some issues involved here include releasing landowners from liability and potential increased snow machine usage.

Equipment

Chairperson **Todd Steele** reminded the group that the club has equipment stored at Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking (AMH) that can be checked out with a current membership card. Remember to return the gear promptly.

Training

The date for the ice climbing school has been changed from 25-26 September to 2-3 October. Signup will be at the September meeting. **Bill Romberg** agreed to lead a future training session.

OLD BUSINESS

Seward Highway "climb responsibly" sign project: The signs are up along the highway. Paper signs will be placed at Thunderbird Falls, Elkutna Canyon, and Elkutna Lake.



NEW BUSINESS

A moment of silence was observed for member **Steve Garvey** who was killed in a climbing accident.

Word is that there was a bit of a **rock avalanche** at approximately mile 6 of the Crow Pass trail (1/4 mile east of the Icicle drainage).

Photos are due for the **calendar contest**. Last chance is to mail photos to Kirk Towner by end of August.

Wayne Todd announced a Mountain House **food order**, but has since cancelled the order because Walmart had the food on sale (8/22).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A black Jansport day **pack was lost** along the East Fork of Eklutna River near Stivers Gully. Contact Steve Gruhn if you find it.

Wayne Todd showed some beautiful slides from a spring trip to the Wrangell Mountains. (Note for future slideshows: the blue extension cord is toast).

Respectfully submitted,
Cory Hinds

