

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Volume 44 Issue 12

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

DECEMBER MEETING

Wednesday **December 19, 7:30 pm** Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets **Downtown Anchorage**

Potluck: Annual **Christmas** Dinner. The club will provide turkey, stuffing, bread and beverages. You bring the more interesting stuff (for 4-6 people).

Last name begins with - bring:

- vegetable (hot dish) A-C

D-H - pasta, rice, potatoes

I-M - salads, fruits

N-R - appetizers, condiments

S-Z - desserts

Slides: "Open mike" format - please bring 10-15 slides from a trip you have been on in the past year to share with us.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Dec 9 Williwaw Lakes

Class B. Gentle ski over fairly level terrain. Less than 10miles round trip. Skis only. Recommended: Shovel and probe, and headlamp. If conditions look bad, we'll stay away. If you bring a shovel, we can practice digging snow caves. Leader: Matt Nedom 278-3648

Dec 26 Snow Hawk Mountain (Point 3245) Snowshoe by the lower Snow Hawk cabin and up

Snow Hawk valley. Turn right when the alders clear and climb to the top. 2400 ft. elevation gain. The army has given me a tentative okay for this one. I'll need SS#s and ADL#s one week before departure. The military calls the peak Snow Hawk. It is the one behind Muldoon that looks like a pregnant sleeping lady. Leashed dogs okay. Class C.

Leader: Stuart Grenier 337-5127

Jan 6 Hidden Peak (hidden behind O'Malley)

> XC ski approach, ice axe and crampons required. Not expecting avalanche conditions (turn back), but will update closer to trip. Class C - limit 6

Leader: John Hess 348-7363

Jan 26 Teleski at Hatcher Pass

We'll look for some good slopes to drop into and then re-enact every turn at the lodge over hot and cold refreshments. Your choice of ski gear, beacon, probe, shovel and avalanche knowledge a must. Poor conditions will alter to XC ski tour. Class C - co-leaders may be needed.

Leader: John Hess 348-7363

TRIP REPORTS

Rubbletop

by Steve Gruhn



went up California Creek Saturday, September 29, 2001, and attained the ridge between Gentoo Peak and California Peak. It had dropped below freezing that night and a fog had moved in so the rocks were glazed with verglas, which made for slow go-

ing. I proceeded up the ridge until the notch before California Peak, then dropped down into the basin at the head of California Creek and headed up to the saddle between California Creek and the West Fork of Bird Creek. From there I headed down the West Fork of Bird Creek drainage a short ways until reaching a promontory to the right. I made my way up to the ridge, which was tricky because of the verglas below 4500 feet and fresh snow that obscured holes between boulders above 4500 feet. I made the summit of Rubbletop Mountain. Tim Kelley, Jim Saylor, Richard Baranow, Wendy Sanem, and two friends of Richard's have reportedly climbed it, but I only saw Tim's film canister and business card and a note from Wendy.

I dropped back into the West Fork drainage by dropping to the low point on the ridge and heading down a gully and gradually making my way down and east. The route up Camp Robber Peak looked pretty snowy and it was kind of late in the day for me to head in that direction, so I abandoned the thought of heading up Greyjay Peak.

As it was, I headed up to the pass connecting to California Creek and dropped down the other side. I contemplated heading up to the ridge between California Peak and Gentoo Peak again, but it was late and I figured I was going to get caught by the darkness and all of the rocks had verglas on them, so I opted for the long

bushwhack back to the trail. Unfortunately alder and devil's club look the same in the darkness. I surprised myself by finding the trail an hour and a half after dark. I was able to follow it until I reached a mudhole, where I lost it in the darkness. More bushwhacking followed, but I found the trail where it entered the timber. From there I felt the hard-packed trail with me feet to find my way out. I reached the car at 12:15 a.m.

The Picture Postcard One

by Tim Kelley



ow! I thought to myself as I knelt next to the battered cairn, "This is special!" Peering out from the ring of rocks was a young maiden on an old "Marie's Blue Cheese Dressing" jar.

The price on the jar said "89 cents". Before opening the jar and reading the contents, I knew who had left this register. It must have been Grace.

Sure enough, the register note said: "Bard Peak (the picture post card one) Aug 21, 1969 weather clear Grace Hoeman." This was the date that Grace climbed Bard Peak solo for its first ascent. She explained her reference to the post card in her write-up of the trip in the September 1969 Scree: "One cannot enter a stationery or drugstore where picture postcards or slides sold without the mountain staring at you above the caption, 'Beautiful Portage Glacier'."

No doubt back in the late 60's when Grace passed post card racks the pictures of Bard Peak almost flew off the rack towards her. Why? Because she was a peak bagger. And back then she knew that there was no recorded ascent of Bard Peak.

For those readers unfamiliar with the late Grace Hoeman, she was a core figure in a legendary group of MCA mountaineers that included her late husband Vin and the late Bob Spurr. These climbers lived in what I refer to as "the kid in the candy store" era of local Alaskan mountaineering. During the 60's a boom in recreational mountaineering was happening. And here in Southcentral Alaska there were many peaks waiting for first ascents. And this group knew it. Scenery on the drives north and south of Anchorage, views from airplanes, maps, mountaineering photos – all

presented gems of unclimbed peaks. With so many beckoning first ascents it was probably hard for Grace and crew to decide what to climb next.

Bard Peak was no doubt a desired summit for Grace. During the winter prior to her summer ascent she had tried two winter attempts. On one attempt from the Whittier side her party "got almost blown into Passage Canal and fled back through the tunnel on foot." Grace tried a third time for this peak by starting from the Byron Glacier and working her way though the cliff bands of the NE ridge of Byron Peak. At the start of this trip, at Byron Creek, she met a mountaineer from Seattle. She invited him to come along. He said that he had heard of her exploits before and emphatically said "No thank you!" to her invitation. She decided not to push for the summit on this attempt, but scouted out a feasible route across Portage Glacier.

Two days later, on August 20th (according to Scree, although the summit register said the 21st) Grace started again from Byron Creek. She made her way across the NE ridge of Byron, crossed the Portage Glacier and climbed the West face of Bard Peak to the summit. She returned the same way. This was a hard and ambitious climb. As she said in Scree: "I had climbed about 7500 feet to reach my 3850 foot summit, enough for one day." To me this climb also makes a statement about Grace. There are many good female climbers in Alaska these days. But how many go on solo mountaineering exploits? Hardly any. And here is a woman doing hard solo peak bagging trips back in the 60's. She did other solo first ascents too, like Mt. Palmer in the Hunter Creek drainage. Impressive.

On July 28th this summer, Bill Spencer and I decided to give Bard Peak a go. We started from Begich Towers at Whittier. The Begich Towers are 14 story, concrete block, WWII era military barracks turned condominiums for most of Whittier's residents. The day was mostly overcast and the Begich Towers condos would be a landmark that we would use frequently to determine our progress and position. It's quite amusing when you think of it, how many places in Alaska do you use condominiums as navigational aids in mountaineering? "Hey Bill, there's Whittier down there. I can see the condos!"

The toughest part of the climb occurs just pass the condos, that of crossing Whittier Creek. In the summer this stream can get feisty. Fast

glacial water and smooth slippery rock footing makes this a wet, though short, crossing. Once across the creek we climbed up 1000 feet through alders and along streambeds to the Whittier Glacier. Passing nary a crack in the ice we hiked up the glacier to the 2400-foot level. From there we took a snowfield up to a rock band just below the ridge that connects Shakespeare Shoulder and Bard Peak. After a little rock scrambling we got on top of the ridge and worked it up into the clouds to the summit. Clouds kept the views limited to a few prominent peak tops, Carpathian and Byron in particular.

On top we found Grace's cairn. Apparently only one other party had found the Grace's Bard Peak register (with pencil and paper). On August 22, 1991 Vreni Ruegg and Michel Kuster of Eschenback, Switzerland signed in. The register jar was leaking and Grace's note was wet. I don't like removing any register items from peaks. But due to the fact that this note was not going to last much longer, I decided to bring it down. Back in town I contacted Grace's sister to see if she wanted the note. She said that she thought it would be best to turn it over to the MCA. So I sent the note to Steve Gruhn for archiving.

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Arca 21 1969

VEATLE CLEAN

FRACE

HOENAN

While in the area Bill and I wanted to check out another peak, Peak 3609 on the east side of the Whittier Glacier. This peak looms over Blackstone Bay further to the east. When we got back down to the Whittier Glacier we were clouded in heavily. From here on it would be compass orienteering time. We set a bearing for the peak and then overcorrected to the right so that we would hit the south ridge. We hoofed up the glacier, following the magic needle, for a mile and a half in 50-foot visibility. When we got to the point that the glacier suddenly dropped off in front of us we knew we were on the top of the south ridge.

Taking a left we enjoyed some varied rock and snow scrambling to the summit, where we found a cairn. We then followed the ridge to the portheast over the two minor summits of this

peak. Though there were no views to be had, what was interesting here was the eco-zone boundaries. On the left, leeward side of the ridge, huge cornices and gaping bergshrunds abounded. But only a few feet away on the windward side patches of lush green tundra clung to the ridge. Such verdant vegetation next to a permanently frozen realm was quite a contrast. The warming affect of Prince William Sound, the prevailing southeast winds plus the massive amounts of rainfall in this area are no doubt are factors in this phenomenon.

Eventually we bailed off the ridge, onto the glacier, and groped our way around crevasses down through the clouds. Near the 2000-foot level on the Whittier Glacier we broke through the clouds and soon viewed "the condos" down below. A quirky sight for sure. The Begich Towers were there when Grace climbed Bard Peak 32 years ago. Standing alone on top of Bard Peak, Grace too must have thought of Whittier as an odd sight to see from an Alaskan summit. And a sight not as worthy as Bard Peak when it comes to making picture post cards.

Indianhouse

by Wayne Todd



e headed south from the gloomy fog of the city before daybreak. The date was November 25, 2001. Our destination was Indianhouse peak. Not knowing what we would encounter, we carried snowshoes, crampons, axes,

helmets, shovels and beacons plus the usual accouterment of gear.

The Falls Creek trail was very icy from previous hikers and the pittance of snow. Hobnailed boots, or cleats would have been ideal, yet we declined to don our crampons (maybe for the descent). Despite conditions, we made good time and found ourselves where the valley splits two hours later. Now well above the fog, the day was calm and blue-sky clear. Just as there was beginning to be enough snow for reasonable traction the post-holing began through the rain-crusted snow. Ben and I looked at each other in disbelief, 'we're actually going to have to wear these snowshoes.' I allowed him the pleasure of leading into the right valley as I was getting over a cold (best

excuse for that day).

It was interesting observing various animal tracks upon the snow and entertaining to watch someone breaking trail with snowshoes in less-than-ideal conditions. Heading up the last slope before our climb, I poked at a small dark object just below the snow. It was a dead but entirely intact mouse. I propped him up in the snow as a trail guard.

A minor disappointment of the ascent was a lack of direct sunshine due to high ridges, curved valleys and low sun angle. Consequently, we were only able to watch the sunlight move up valley and down ridge, but not able to make contact.

We left snowshoes at the base of the summit block and headed up a prominent, narrow gully that led to the left ridgeline. The gully angles of 40-60 and the very unconsolidated snow made seconding quite difficult in places. I had the discipline to keep this to myself.

We briefly followed the ridge, where we had minute sun exposure, but angled back into a gully for easier traveling. Four hours after commencing our adventure, we summitted into glorious sunshine and stupendous views including lliamna, Redoubt, and the Tordrillo, Chugach and Kenai ranges, blanketed down low with fog. There was a slight breeze on top, but a few feet down on the west (sunny) side it was still and incredibly cozy. We could have kicked back on the summit for hours, but a daylight descent had its merits so we headed down after less than an hour.

Oops! I dropped my bomber hat and it rolled animatedly down our ascent gully. We watched it tumble as if in slow motion. I expected to find it a short distance down the gully. The descent was made quick by bombing through the sugar snow and the steep sections no longer seeming so steep. I checked for my hat at the little overhangs and rock outcroppings, but the further we descended the less I expected to see my hat again.

Upon reaching the alluvial fan at the base of the block, I saw a dark object 100 yards distant from the snowshoes. Ben, Still in front, investigated and amazingly it was my hat. It had descended 1000 feet traveling down at least three different gullies and residing within a stone's throw from our cache. All was well in the universe

once again.

Snowshoeing down was even more comical than snowshoeing up in the various snow conditions. We noticed the guard was AWOL, but the moldy discarded sandwich was not. Hmmm? Shortly after heading down my little toes felt as if they were being rubbed raw. I ignored them as any foolish hiker would, thinking I was just being a wimp. When we returned to the start of the icy trail and removed snowshoes, I checked my toes and indeed they were rubbed, down to meat. Consequently I have a very fine, fairly new pair of La Sportiva size 8.5 boots for sale.

The icy trail was of course even more treacherous on the descent, but we again declined our crampons, 'too new they are.' By use of brush, trees, off-trail snow and wicked break-dancing recovery moves we managed to make it to the foggy trailhead relatively unscathed, except for my toes.

BOARD MEETING

November

The following members attended the November "welcome the new" board meeting held at Harry's Restaurant: Bill Romberg, Tom McDermott, Steve Gruhn, Jayme Mack, Richard Baranow, Karen Herzenberg, Dave Hart and John Hess.

Human Waste Disposal System

Mark Miraglia is currently in the process of purchasing the human waste system for the Scandinavian Hut. The TRAAK grant for a similar system at all Eklutna Traverse Huts has been submitted and is being reviewed.

Awards

The Board will be sending nominations for the Vin Hoeman and President's Award to the Awards committee soon. Any last minute nominations for either award should be made to Bill by the first of November.

Meeting Place

Tom McDermott is still researching possible sites with the help of the Board. The board hopes to have the new site announced in the December Scree, so keep your eyes and ears open. Possible sites being researched include: Campbell Creek Science Center, University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University and Municipal Recreation Centers.

The board meetings agreed to continue meeting upstairs at Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking at 7pm on the Wednesday before the General Meeting. Any members or committee chairs interested in attending are welcome.

Calendar

The new photo calendar should be available for purchase at the December meeting.

Equipment

Carl Battreal has taken the position of the Equipment Chairperson and will soon be starting construction on the new rope storage system at AMH with the owner's consent.

T-Shirts

With the departure of Dolly LeFever, the board is in need of someone to store the remaining t-shirts. They will also need to bring them to the general meetings to sell to the general membership. Please e-mail him at: wromberg@gci.net if you are interested in helping with this task.

2001 Review

The board discussed many new ideas and revisited old discussions. Most of the board agreed that more trips should be solicited and offered by the club. A number of suggestions for getting a fuller slate of trips for 2002 were discussed. Board members committed to leading at least 2 trips in the next year. Look for some of these in the December Scree. The board also decided to revisit the MCA Leader requirements at the next board meeting since some raised the concern that the requirements were discouraging trip leaders to lead trips.

The Budget

The board will discuss and draft a 2002 budget at the next Board meeting, Dec 12th. Any committees with suggestions or requests should direct all inquiries to Bill Romberg and Steve Gruhn. Committee chairs will also be encouraged to attend the December Board Meeting for the budget discussion.

Respectfully Submitted, Jayme Mack

Proposed Budget

Should be available by the December meeting, but was not available at press time.



For Sale

Gore Tex Bibs...Mountain Hardwear 3 Layer gore tex bibs-black. XL, 34-38" inseam, full leg zips, back zip pocket, belly/chest pouch. \$150.00. These are two years old and worn twice. But, click on the current link to get an idea...http://www.mountainhardwear.com/clothes/shells/000545.html Just in case you didn't know...MHW are ex-North Face so, good quality. Robert 232-0392 Wasilla Cell



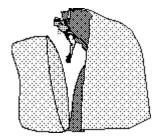
Wanted

Prophet...gotta have another Black Prophet, preferably bent, will pay \$ to good response.

Charlie 258-8770, clarity@gci.net

For Sale

La Sportiva Pacific Crest boots, Size 8.5, used twice \$100 obo. Wayne, 522-6354 or 563-3989



Climbing Notes

With the help of Craig Medred the Turnagain Arm Tower mystery is solved. In past *Screes* I questioned what the purpose and history of the fiberglass communication towers near Hope Point and on Maynard Mountain were. Come to find out, the towers are the property of the United States Forest Service. Craig routed me to Orville Lamson, a telecommunications guy for the USDA Forest Service/ Chugach National Forest. Orville said that the tower site near Hope is still active.

Of the Maynard site, Orville said that he had seen it from the air and believes that the USFS must have abandoned communications tower prior to his tenure, which started in 1985. He said that he didn't know that there were old batteries at the site, but that he does a lot of helicopter work in the area and that he would stop by and clean up the batteries soon. Thanks Orville. Thanks Craig.

Tim Kelley

Web Chat



Need a stocking stuffer for a short person this Christmas?

Epic Stick Clip

Price \$168.00

Detailed Description

The Stick Clip is a great way to avoid hair raising runouts when your first fixed protection is high off the deck We've found it also to be useful for extending your reach while aid climbing, or protecting sketchy sections on route The Stick Clip will work with any non-locking carabiner, and is compatible with many extension devices



... who ever said being a weenie was cheap?



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA) was formed in 1958 to promote the enjoyment of hiking and climbing in Alaska and the exploration of its mountains. We welcome anyone who wishes to become a member.

Participate & Learn The MCA conducts scheduled hikes and climbs led by experienced club members, technical mountaineering and climbing courses, and other instruction throughout the year. The club maintains 8 mountain huts in the nearby Chugach and Talkeetna mountains. The MCA / Vin Hoeman Library, located upstairs in Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking on Spenard Road, contains hundreds of books, numerous periodicals, bound volumes of the SCREE, and a 'Peak File' with information on local climbs. The club also loans climbing gear to members, including ice axes, helmets, crampons, snowshoes, and avalanche beacons.

Stay Informed The MCA publishes a monthly newsletter, *SCREE*, and sends it to all members. The *SCREE* contains the minutes of the previous meeting, announcements of upcoming events, the hiking and climbing trip schedule, and trip reports written by club members. A monthly meeting and slide show is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm in the basement of the Pioneer Schoolhouse (corner of 3rd & Eagle Streets, downtown Anchorage). Special events or changes to the meeting will be noted in the *SCREE*. Be sure to visit our website at: **www.mcak.org**

- ♦ Complete <u>both</u> sides of this form. To participate in club-sponsored trips, every member must read and complete the Release of Liability Agreement on the back of this application.
- ♦ Please make checks payable to **Mountaineering Club of Alaska**, **Inc.**
- Dues are \$10 for an individual or \$15 for a family (one SCREE per family).
- Membership is for one calendar year, through the 31st of December.
 Memberships paid after October 1st are good through the following year.
- ◆ If applying by mail, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your membership card. Otherwise, you may pick it up at the next monthly meeting.
 Our address is: PO Box 102037; Anchorage AK 99510-2037 www.mcak.org

NEW RENEWAL	DATE NAME			
INDIVIDUAL (\$10) FAMILY (\$15)	FAMILY MEMBERS			
How do you want your SCREE delivered? (check one or both) ELECTRONIC Fastest! Direct to your email address specified below PAPER Postal Service – please include \$5 extra if outside US				
STREET or PO BOX				
CITY / STATE / ZIP				
TELEPHONE				
E-MAIL ADDRESS				
COMMENTS				

Paid: □ \$10	□\$15 on Date:/	Membership Card Issued for Year:
☐ Cash or	Check Number:	Address Added to Mailing List \square

RELEASE OF LIABILITY—READ CAREFULLY

I,
(initial that you have read this paragraph)
GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS By signing this Agreement, I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA and my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage for any claim is provided by an automobile insurance policy or related excess insurance policies). I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes or negligence on the part of either my fellow participants or the MCA. (As used in this agreement, MCA means the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc., and all of its officers, directors, guides, instructors and trip leaders.) I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until such time as I provide signed written notice of its revocation to the MCA.
(initial that you have read this paragraph)
MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE I agree that I will not sue, or otherwise make any claim against, the MCA or my fellow participants in MCA activities for injury, death, or property damage which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering sports. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or this release shall only be filed in the Superior Court for the State of Alaska, Third Judical District., Anchorage, Alaska. The provisions of this release are severable and if any part of this release is found unenforcible, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.
(initial that you have read this paragraph)
MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY I also agree to release and discharge the MCA and my fellow participants in MCA activities from all actions, claims, or demands, both for myself and for my heirs, dependents, and/or personal representative, for injury, death, or property damage occurring in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering sports.
(initial that you have read this paragraph)
MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY I agree to pay all expenses, including attorney's fees and court costs, that the MCA or my fellow participants in MCA activities may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of injury, death, or property damage suffered by me.
(initial that you have read this paragraph)
MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT I consent to any hospital care or medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment which may be necessary as a result of my participation in activities with the MCA. I also understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all applicable charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue cost.
(initial that you have read this paragraph)
I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A BINDING, LEGAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN ME AND THE MCA.
Dated: Signature:
Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 19):

42590/9999.12 11/12/2000

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Officers Board

President	Bill Romberg	677-3993	John Hess 348-7363
	Tom McDermott		Karen Herzenberg 223-0351
Secretary	Jayme Mack	258-7571	Dave Hart 227-9584
Treasurer	Steve Gruhn	344-1219	Stuart Grenier 337-5127
ricasurci	Steve Grain		Richard Baranow 694-1500

Annual membership dues: Single \$10.00 Family \$15.00 (one *Scree* per family)

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter, or have questions about your membership, contact the club treasurer. The post office does <u>not</u> forward the newsletter.

SCREE is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles and notes submitted for publication and other communication related to the newsletter should be mailed to my address: 1106 W. 54th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99518, or e-mailed to willy @ mcak.org Articles should be received by December 28th to be included in the January issue.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be "camera ready" and pre-paid. Your cooperation will be appreciated... Willy Hersman, Editor, 561-7900.

Missing your MCA membership card? If so, stop by one of our monthly meetings to pick it up or send us a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

E-MAILING: willy hersman

HIKING/CLIMBING CHAIRS: matt nedom, 278-3648, richard baranow, 694-1500

HUTS: mark miraglia, 338-0705

WEB: www.mcak.org (go here to change your address)
MAILING LIST SERVICE: mcak@yahoogroups.com