

### MAY MEETING Wednesday May 16, 7:30 pm Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets Downtown Anchorage

**Program:** *Tray Henkels* will show his slides of Antarctica with help from some 1960's slides by Tom Choate.

**Swap:** A gear swap will take place at 7:00 PM, just before the meeting. Bring your unwanted outdoor gear and your checkbook and make a deal.

## (HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE)

- May or June ? <u>Byron Peak</u> Class G. Hike onto the glacier and attempt the summit. Bring crampons, ice axe, and glacier gear. Leader: Matt Nedom 278-3648
- Jun 7 <u>Rainbow Peak</u>

Class C. Thursday evening climb. Leave 5:30 from Rainbow Trailhead on Seward Hwy. Strenous climb, some scrambling may be involved. Limit 5 people (10 if can designate a co-leader). Leader: Bill Romberg 677-3993 h, 267-2366 w

8-10 Temptation and Tanaina Peaks

Class D (for Tanaina). Leave Friday afternoon for a nice circuit that will include a climb of Temptation (5383) and attempt on Tanaina (5357) via N ridge, time and weather permitting. Must be in excellent physical condition, comfortable with some techni cal scrambling, and willing to travel very light and fast. Bring crampons, ice axe, helmet, harness, and 2 locking carabiners in case we need to rope-

up for short sections. Limit of 5 persons. Leader: Bill Romberg 677-3993 h, 267-2366 w

- Jun 16-17 <u>Solstice Backpack</u> Leave Friday, after work, return Sunday. Location will be on the Kenai, exactly where is TBA. Leader: Tom Choate 333-5309
  - 23 Solstice Climb

Class B. Day hike 6-8 miles round trip to this peak with a view. Bring river crossing shoes for any high running streams. Long pants best for brush. Elevation gain 2000'+. Leader: Scott Bailey 269-7572 w, 696-7250 h

29 Winner Creek Gorge

Class A. Friday night family hike—Meet at Potter Station 5:30. Carpool to trailhead in Girdwood. Return to Potter by 10:00. Limit 10 persons. Leader: Bill Romberg 677-3993 h, 267-2366 w

#### Jul 29- Aug 12 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Class B. Backpacking trip into the Canning River drainage. Fly out of Arctic Village or Fort Yukon with Yukon Air Charter. Explore the tributaries of the Canning River, hike up some of the peaks and ridges in the area. Estimated charter cost is about \$600 to \$700.

Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184 h, 271-6656 w

The following trips are a series of mid-week, after-work trips. These are going to be relatively fast-paced trips ranging from Class A to Class D. The destinations are tentative, dependent on weather, traffic, snow conditions, etc. Reaching the destinations with the daylight available in the spring will not be possible if anyone shows up late, so please be on time. Steve would like to gather the e-mail addresses of interested parties. The day before each excursion, he will confirm the destination and time and get a head count. Maximum of 12 people (including leader) on each trip. Dogs will not be allowed.

Leader: Steve Gruhn 344-1219 h, 276-7475 w e-mail: scg@hartcrowser.com

May 10 <u>Bird Hill</u>

Thursday. Class C. 6:00 PM.

- 24 Eagle and Symphony Lakes Thursday. Class B. 5:30 PM.
- 31 California Creek Thursday. Class D. 6:00 PM.
- Jun 4 <u>Acapella Point</u> Monday. Class E. 5:30 PM.
  - 7 <u>Crow Pass</u> Thursday. Class B. 5:30 PM.
  - 11 <u>Bearberry Point</u> Monday. Class C. 5:30 PM.
  - 14 <u>Tikishla Peak</u> Thursday. Class D. 6:00 PM.

## TRAINING SCHEDULE

May 15, 17, 19 Remote First Aid & Adult CPR This is a 16-20 hour course offering instruction in First Aid and CPR oriented to wilderness settings. Minimum class size of eight - no maximum required skills/experience: none. This is an introductory course cost: \$100 per person. Loca tion will be at the Alaska Outdoor & Experiential Education classroom at UAA. Contact: Tom McDermott 263-7258 w, 277-0774 h, or tmcdermott@bhb.com

#### May 16 Leader Orientation

6:30 PM. (Prior to General Meeting). Introduction to club rules and policies for leading club trips. Minimum qualifications, responsibilities, tips and suggestions for leading club trips covered. Required for all persons who want to lead club trips and for current leaders (once every 5 years). Instructors: Steve Parry 248-8710/Bill Romberg

# (TRIP REPORTS)

## Nantina Point - the Hard Way

by Cory Hinds



strong group of five club members climbed the southwest face of Nantina Point (False Kiliak, 6850) on October 14 –15, 2000. This climb may have been the most technical club trip offered in years. The

route was the "hard way" for three reasons. First, the southwest face is not a walk-up. The route involved 4 to 5 pitches of 5<sup>th</sup>-class mixed climbing, 1 pitch of pure ice climbing, and around 500 feet of roped simul-climbing. Second, the climb was made harder by the late season and lack of snow in the main gully. Third, we learned a lesson the hard way. Despite the general lack of snow, we managed to trigger a slab avalanche. However, there were no serious injuries, and all traversed the summit and made it home safe.

The low pressure arrived as predicted, and both forks of Eagle River Valley were pounded by strong winds on Friday night. The trip might have been called at 5:30 AM had it not been for Isaac who was already out at the bus stop waiting for a ride pick up. We were committed.

At Richard's house we quickly reviewed slides of the route. It looked like a snow climb, so we all dumped the second ice tool. We each had bivy gear, some technical gear, and food, with packs weighing 25 to 40 lbs. We made good time heading up Eagle River Valley on the Old Iditarod Trail to mile 5. Anne and the dogs accompanied us to the base of the route.

May 01

We quickly ascended the wide rocky gully as rain began to fall. Taking the first fork to the right, we re-grouped under an overhanging chock stone. One-by-one we solo climbed the rock on the right of the stone and hauled the packs, being careful not to release loose rock on the guy below. The rain changed to light snow as we gained elevation.

Our spirits dropped as we reached the top of the first run of old snow, we couldn't believe our eyes: another near vertical step – only this chock stone had ice dripping around both sides forming a chandeliered ice slot about 40 feet high. Quickly, we broke out the 8-mil and 7-mil ropes as twins, selected the two best alpine tools, and found that the stemming was pretty good; the climbing was not extreme. The pro was tied off icicles and screws. After having a safety meeting to discuss the operation, we lowered the choice tools and hauled the packs.

The face grew more convoluted as we moved up, and we jumped gullies several times. Luckily, Richard had been most of the way up this route and knew where to turn. The group wearied as the day grew late. All the roped climbing had slowed us down. This was not the same snow climb we had seen slides of earlier in the day.

After emerging from a constricted gully, we entered a wide basin and headed for the ridge top (4500 feet) where we hoped to bivy. A steep slope of old snow loaded with new snow on top led up and rolled over near the ridge top. Recognizing the obvious slide potential, we headed up the left margin next to the rock. About half way up the slope the snow depth dropped to about 2inches, and I figured that a 2-inches slide wouldn't hurt anybody, so I moved out to the center of the slope to follow the lower angle route to the ridge, and Isaac followed. After a few more steps, the snow depth increased to about 6inches. Just as I though about reconsidering my decision to leave the relatively protected margin, a 2-foot crown broke about 25 feet above me, and the whole slope started to slide. "Avalanche!" I yelled as I fought to keep from being swept down. It was futile; more snow kept coming, and it knocked Isaac and I off our stance and sent us tumbling down the slope a couple hundred feet. Richard had wisely remained at the margin and watched helplessly as we slid by. The others were further below and able to get out of the way. We were a bit bruised and thoroughly shaken up, but thankfully, not hurt. We were not buried, but we were extremely lucky not to have been hurt by impacting rocks at the bottom of the slope. It was a lesson learned the hard way. We quickly re-ascended the slope (now completely bare), gained the ridge top, and set to work erecting Richard's Kiva and building a rock wall around it. As our position was quite exposed to the weather, Richard took climbing ropes and guyed out the top of the tent ridgepole (his ski pole) in 4 directions. Several hours later we were all watered, fed and stacked like sardines under the Kiva.

Next morning we learned that poor Isaac, who had gotten the worst of the avalanche beating had also slept on top of the biggest rocks. He still didn't complain! We drained the last of our fuel brewing up, and headed up simul-climbing. As we were plenty spooked on avalanches, we went out of our way to stay on the rock. After about 500-feet of simul-climbing, we were able to unrope and continue up another 1000 feet or so to a steep pitch below the ridge. A few delicate moves in snow over rock protected with rock gear brought us to the summit ridge. Less than an hour later, we were all on the summit.

We headed down the into the Icicle drainage, down-climbing a narrow chute choked with loose rock. Continuing, we followed Isaac's example by sitting on one boot and sliding down the 700-foot 30-degree slope to the gut of the drainage, happy to find water at a small waterfall. The sun was setting as we reached the traverse that brought us back down into Eagle River, and it was pitch dark when we reached the Iditarod Trail. Thoughts of a huge spaghetti feed brought us to Richard's place. Thanks to Richard for scoping out an excellent alpine route, and a solid group of climbers for making it happen.

Personnel: Todd Pagel, Michael Kilbury, Isaac Howard, Richard Baranow, Cory Hinds





## Tentbound in the Tordrillos

by Kirk Towner



appiness equals Reality divided by Expectation. We discovered this line in a well-read paperback as we waited in our tiny tents. After three days and six and a half feet of snow, we deliberately put the formula to

the test and found it to be true: we simply lowered our expectations until we found happiness!

Early this April, MCA members Tim Griffin, Jim McDonough, Shawn O'Donnell, Bill Romberg, and I set out on a planned two week trip to climb Mt. Torbert and some of surrounding peaks in the Tordrillo mountains. Keith at Alpine Air flew us to 5300 feet on the upper Capps glacier on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. We left a small cache of food and fuel at the landing site, another larger cache on top of Torbert, then began climbing. About an hour into our journey, a serac avalanche swept down the west wall of the valley, spreading a cloud of dust completely across the glacier, just a few hundred feet in front of us. A bad omen? After a bit of reflection, allowing time for the dust to settle, we elected to continue on. An hour later, we stopped for a hot meal, then continued climbing into the night, guided by the light of a full moon. An orange moon - another warning? About 2:00 AM, we made camp in a crevasse near the bergschrund at around 8000 feet, exhausted but pleased with the day's efforts.

We woke late in the morning to find the weather making a turn for the worse. So we pressed on up in hopes of reaching the ridge at 9300 feet. Immediately out of camp, just across the bergschrund, we encountered an area of wind slab, about 8 inches thick. For at least an hour we tried several alternate routes, but the slab was unavoidable. When Bill described the shooting cracks and Jim told us about the small release he had triggered by tapping with his axe while standing on the bridge across the 'schrund, we had no difficulty making the decision to turn around and try another route another day. So, back to the landing site we went.

We dug in a home for the single-wall tents and tried to get some rest for a new attempt in the morning. Alas, it was not to happen. That evening it started snowing; it didn't stop for three days - six and a half feet of the powder on top of at least three feet of unconsolidated snow from before. If we stepped off of the packed site without snowshoes, we sunk up to our necks! It was almost comical - except we still held out hopes of climbing! We were having fun, but we were not truly happy. On the second day, Jim started a cave so we wouldn't have to keep excavating our tents. The digging provided us with a welcome distraction, as we had packed light and had a limited supply of luxuries like books and food.

Over the next several days, the quantity and quality of the snow dictated a change in plans. Our climbing trip became a snow-camping trip. Happiness increased. Tim re-defined the goal of our excursion to be: returning home to sit on the couch with a pint of Ben & Jerry's. Towards that end, we waited until the visibility increased enough to allow us to begin construction of the Capps International Airport: a snowshoe-stomped runway that eventually grew to be about 650 feet long by 25 feet wide. We were drawing closer to our goal with every step! Happiness increased. Friday the 13th dawned sunny and clear, and Shawn was able to make a cell phone call and leave word with Keith that we ready to return. Happiness increased. Later that evening, the welcome sound of the Cessna brought a bit of revelry to our camp as the best remaining food that had been hoarded for days was freely shared among all.

Although the plane got stuck several times while trying to get positioned at the top of our runway, we were undaunted. After all the stomping we had already done, what was a little aircraft excavation? Keith seemed to take it all in stride, too. So Jim, Tim, and Shawn made it out that evening, then Bill and I followed the next day – Bill's birthday. Several days later, a final flight



was required to extract our cache of food and gear from the north side of Torbert where we had hoped to spend most of the trip.

As we sat around the table at the Moose's Tooth Saturday night, contemplating the trip and the forecast for good weather in the days ahead, we just had to let go of those grand plans we had started with and simply appreciate the reality of what we found: the company of good friends on an unexpected adventure. We talked about plans for the summer and big trips for the future, then toasted the successful conclusion of our trip as we headed home to the Ben & Jerry's!

## <u>Mt. Alyeska – Berg Peak Double</u> <u>Traverse</u>

by Tom Choate



uring the August MCA meeting there was a call to lead a September trip, and I volunteered. I called the phone "hotline" saying I'd do Berg Peak on the 17th, but it came out "Bird" on the message and in the Scree. I wasn't planning on the more

famous peak where several club trips have gone, but rather the little known one hiding between Mount Alyeska and the Berry Peaks. I did a reconnaissance with Steve Gruhn (see separate article) looking at the Peterson Creek approach and the traverse from Highbush Peak to the east. I discussed the climb with Kathy Still and she suggested traversing Mount Alveska, which sounded rather strenuous to me. So, having heard that they and three others were going on the trip, I spent Friday the 15th checking out the Kern Valley route through the forest and climbing the southwest ridges through the berry bushes and fall colors. Coming down via the Kern Point ridge, I was surprised to find a note on my truck that they had been on the same peak via that same ridge route.

Early Sunday morning, only one person of the remaining three showed up for the poorlypublicized trip, so we decided to make it unofficial and go by the fourth route that I had yet to try: up Mount Alyeska to the true summit and down to Berg Peak and back. It was crisp and cool when we started, so with a bit of berry picking and admiring the expanding views, it only took about an hour to reach the restaurant complex, which was not yet open for the day. Continuing up the trail, we were soon faced with the choice between rotten ridge and glacier leading to rotten gully. The latter looked quicker, and by moving up the edge of the snow we guessed that we had avoided crevasses. Unfortunately, the scree ramp leading to the ridge was frozen and difficult (we needed crampons), but the struggle was rewarded with fine views of Winner Creek that stayed with us for hours.

There are several very loose sections on the ridge route before reaching the map-named feature of "Mount Alyeska" (a bump on the ridge that is far lower than the minimum to be a peak), but regular use has left a faint trail to follow. For a short distance after, the ridge is wide and easy, but more narrow and loose sections had to be traversed before reaching a point which rises 200 feet or so and lies over the Virgin Glacier. We didn't find a cairn or register, though I'm assured the route was pioneered many years ago. I placed the traditional vitamin bottle with the suggested name "Virgin Point" before continuing along the ridge to the true summit. Fine views were had in all directions from this large peak, while we read the register. It seems that "Sam" had made the traverse from Highbush Peak over Berg Peak to here months earlier, the same route that Steve and I declined to finish earlier in the summer.

From here it is all downhill (except for a small point) along the ridge to "Berg Pass," where we had lunch on the tundra ledges, trying to avoid the wind. Our MCA predecessors had come down an easier ridge to the southwest. Was that a message about the rest of our ridge ahead? We ignored it and climbed the slippery slope to the rocks and found the ridge to be reasonable scrambling, though narrow and exposed enough that sometimes a rope would be needed. On the easy summit, the only cairn and register was that left two days earlier by Wayne Todd and Kathy, making us wonder about the mysterious earlier ascents in the '70s and more recent folks (like "Sam") whose stories remain untold.

The views were great, but we were getting short of time to reverse the multiple peak traverse, so we decided to follow the shorter ridge back the way we came. Except for growing weakness of the uphill muscles, the return to the true summit was uneventful. More fine views unfolded along the narrow ridge after "Virgin Point" but we had to concentrate not to knock rocks down. Sliding down the now-thawed gully to the glacier, I was glad to be off the poor rock before dark, and sped ahead to the road. When Dave caught up we headed for the restaurant and gondola lift. After all that up and down we decided to "wimp out" when the tram operator said he was about to leave. Rolling down the cable, the high cliffs in the twilight underscored the "Mount" in Alyeska, but inside we were proud to know the truth of that great traverse.

#### Join the MCA E-mail List! MCAKsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

The MCA e-mail list service was created to help club members advertise trips, list gear for sale, look for hiking & climbing partners, and post announcements of upcoming events and activities. It allows a person to contact all club members who subscribe to the list simply by sending one e-mail to a central address. The list is only open to current members of the MCA and you can unsubscribe at any time.

To subscribe, simply send a blank e-mail to MCAK-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Once your e-mail is received and your membership status verified, you will be added to the list and sent further instructions on how to post messages, unsubscribe or change your preferences. This is one way to stay informed on upcoming club activities and local hiking & climbing issues. For more information go to: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MCAK.

#### **Proposed By-Laws Change**

In an attempt to eliminate some confusion about membership applications and eliminate liability concerns, the MCA Board of Directors proposes the following change to the club's bylaws:

Revise Section II, paragraph A. Qualifications to read: (new text in brackets[])

"Any person concurring with this organization may, upon payment of applicable dues [and completion of the MCA General Release of Liability,] become a member in the appropriate classification."

This change will make it a requirement that

persons wishing to become club members complete the MCA Release of Liability. The measure will be introduced at the April meeting and a **vote** will be taken at the **May meeting**. A 2/3 affirmative vote of members present at the May meeting is required for this change to occur. If approved, the Board will adopt a new Membership Policy that spells out how applications will be processed for the different membership categories.

Letters to the Editor

# Training Center is Private Property

Jim Galanes APU

As of August 1, 2000 Alaska Pacific University has assumed the title(ownership) and the U.S. Forest Service operating permit for the Eagle Glacier Training Center, now renamed the Thomas Training Center. Last summer we invested close to three hundred thousand dollars in facility refurbishment's and will complete another two hundred thousand dollars of work early this summer. I would like to point out that this facility and the improvements are private property.

I know under the previous ownership that the facility was regularly used by groups traveling on the Whitout and Eagle glaciers, and some group also used the facility for skiing parties. The facility is barred shut and locked. Any use of the facility is trespassing on private property. In the event of an emergency situation you are welcome to use the facility, but we ask that you immediately notify both the U.S. Forest Service office in Girdwood and Jim Galanes at Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Center.

### Thanks for the Roost

JW Snedgen

On March 20, my girlfriend Kari Hendrich, my brother Greg Snedgen and myself were caught in a small avalanche while climbing Roost Peak. The gods must have been smiling down upon us that day because none of us were completely buried, but as luck would have it I was washed over a couple rock bands and did some fairly serious damage to my left knee. Even though this was an obviously traumatic experience it set forth a string of events that have left me feeling nothing but gratitude and humility. It is the intention of this letter to express to you how big a role the Alaska Mountaineering Club's "Rosie's Roost" hut, and the contents of said hut, played in getting me to were I am now. I am warm, safe, and well down the road to recovery.

In contrast, however, back on the lower slopes of Roost Peak on March 20th I was hurt, scarred and very, very cold. To make along story short, with the use of a mountaineering sled that was stored inside, Kari and Greg were able to ferry extra supplies (2 down sleeping bags) to me, and then they were able to ferry me back to Rosie's hut. It was not a fun 9 hours for any of us, but once inside the hut we all were able to breath a sigh of relief knowing that come what may, we had shelter, additional fuel if needed and a big target for the helicopter to find. As it turned out fortune was with us again, it dawned clear the following day. Greg was able to make it to a phone in stunning time, considering the terrain, skiing alone and thus obviously unroped. Kari was able to set me outside in the sun sheltered from the wind by the hut, as she reclaimed and pack all our gear.





rec.climbing:

#### The Craven

Once upon a rock climb dreary, while I floundered, weak and weary,over

many hard and crimpy moves that almost made me soar. While I trembled, nearly crapping, suddenly I dreamt of rapping,

instead of falling, arm's a flapping, rapping to the valley floor. "Let's bail this epic" thus I muttered, "let's rap down to the valley floor!"

"Only bail, and climb no more!"

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak September, And each separate, desperate pitch, kicked me down upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had fought to follow Splintered cracks that caused me sorrow, — but not my partner Leonard.

The bold and well-honed cranker whom the devil named Leonard, fearless here forevermore.

And the sickened, churning brewing, of my guts before their spewing,

filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating, "Let us get our butts retreating! Rap down to the valley floor!'< Deep into that abyss peering, long I stood there, gripping, fearing,

Visualizing screamers no one ever whipped before; Come on Dude, let's save our asses! This is not Grandes Jorasses!"

The only other word I mentioned was my frenzied plea for "Tension!"

This I yelled, and his echo countered back, the word I feared he said was "Slack!"

Merely this, and nothing more.

Back up to the belay turning, all my soul within me burning, Soon again I dreamt of rapping, to save my life and pants from crapping, rap down to the valley floor.

Finally then I made the belay, when, with hardly any delay, Up there climbed my macho partner of the old school days of yore.

Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopped or stayed he;

But, with quiet disdain, he clipped into the bolt belay. Perched upon a ledge of shale, mocking me in my dark hell, Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this old hardman was frowning, at the fear in which I was drowning,

By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance he wore, "Though your chest is ripped and hairy, why must we do climbs so scary?

Ghastly, grim, and ancient wall rat, living like a climbing whore?!"

"Tell me what your ego game is, on Grade V's with rock this poor?"

Quote my Partner, "One pitch more!"

"Bull!" said I, "the climb is evil! — Bull still, if sport or traditional!

If we send this climb or rap and bail, hang on gear, or aid and nail,

Desolate and fully daunted, this is not the fun I wanted! On this climb by horror haunted, — tell me truly, I implore, Are there — Are there brews in store? tell me, tell me, I implore!"

Quote my partner, "One pitch more!"

And my partner, never flinching, a stubborn cuss still is sitting, on the belay ledge, far above the valley floor; I had to leave him up there, lost my mind, was so damn scared, And the headlamp from him streaming throws light upon the valley floor;

I took the rope and rack to bail, just survive, admit I failed, and Irapped down to the valley floor.

I hope his eyes will see the morrow, and that **SAR** his chalk will follow, and yet I hope and pray that his vengeance won't be sore.

If I offer some repentance, I already hear his sentence, to amend for

rapping down, after climbing once so poor.

He will get me on the sharp end, if I want to make his amends, he'll

demand and I will quote him, we will just climb "One Pitch More."

Karl Baba



## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

#### Officers

Board
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President	Bill Romberg	677-3993
Vice-President	Tom Choate	333-5309
Secretary	Jayme Mack	258-7571
Treasurer	<b>Patty McPherson</b>	336-2225

 Kirk Towner
 344-5424

 Dolly LeFever
 243-7027

 John Hess
 348-7363

 Tom McDermott
 277-0774

 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 June 1st to be included in the June 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.

MAILING: richard baranow, bill romberg, don smith 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



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