



SEPTEMBER 2004 *A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska* Volume 47 Issue 09

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

### SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday

September 15, 7:30 pm

First United Methodist Church

9th & G Streets

Next to the Phillips Building

(you may use marked parking after hours...)

Downtown Anchorage

Program: TBA.

### HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

#### Sep 2 Kern Creek

Class B. 6:00 PM.

Leader: Steve Gruhn,

steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 344-1219 (h), 276-7475 (w)

#### 8 Winner Creek

Class B. 5:30 PM.

Leader: Steve Gruhn,

steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 344-1219 (h), 276-7475 (w)

#### 9 Bear Valley Ridge

Class B. 5:30 PM. Storch Park (on Clark Rd. just off of Rabbit Creek Rd.)

1400 feet elevation gain, 6 Miles RT. Estimated

Duration: 3.5 hrs.

Leader: Deb Luper 345-3543

#### 10-12 Bomber Hut

There is no sign-up sheet, since this was added late. 8 miles to the hut, 3000 feet elevation gain. Go in on Friday early afternoon. Spend both nights at the

hut. Climb Parliamint. Limit 4 members. Rain will cancel the trip, or at least delay it. Class D.

Leader: Willy Hersman 561-7900

#### 14 Bird Creek

Class A. 5:30 PM.

Leader: Steve Gruhn,

steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 344-1219

#### Sep 18-19 Thunderbird Peak Paddle/Climb

Paddle out to, spend the night, and climb Thunderbird Peak (6575'). Call for details.

Leader: Stuart Grenier 337-5127

#### 25 Eagle River Ridge

Come complete this classic hike above the North Fork of Eagle River. Hikers have two options, you can bail out at the half way mark (Mt. Significant) or you can hike all 10+ miles. Gain over 5000' but then lose it all in the last 2 miles. All participants meet at Mile 11.8 Eagle River Road (leader's house) to car pool at 8:00 AM. Party at the leader's house afterwards. BYOB and bring a dish to share.

Leaders: Richard Baranow, Jayme Mack 694-1500

**MCA membership applications are available on-line at <http://www.mcak.org/MCAMembers.htm>**

## TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING CLASS

place: Matanuska Glacier  
 date: October 1-3

fee: \$35.00 covers access to glacier, camping and club equipment replacement

meeting: Wednesday, September 29, First United Methodist Church, 7:30 P.M.  
 This meeting is mandatory, so plan to attend.

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 29<sup>th</sup> meeting - **for MCA members only**. Potential instructors should call Steve Parry, 248-8710 or Jayme Mack, 694-1500. Participation will be limited by how many instructors there are.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Students are required to bring their boots, harnesses and crampons (only) for inspection. **Fees will be collected.** Questions will be answered. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND. AMH, on Spenard Rd., 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. For this class all attendees must have helmet, crampons, climbing harness, ice axe, two locking carabiners, and climbing boots. Note: Minors must be accompanied by their guardian.

The school begins at 6:00 P.M. on Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, at Mile 102 Glenn Highway - Matanuska Glacier - Glacier Park Resort campground. Actual hands-on instruction begins on Saturday. Please leave your dogs, cats, horses, llamas and other four-legged things at home. Under-age drinking will not be tolerated. Tentative slideshows, climbing competition and informative clinics by reps to be scheduled. There will be prizes and gear demos.

In order to promote the Ice Climbing School, AMH will be offering a special "MCA NIGHT" on Tuesday, September 21st from 6PM - 8PM. All ice climbing boots, crampons, helmets, harnesses and ice tools will be 20% off. Other related climbing items are 10% off for current MCA members with a card. Quantities are limited. No double discounts applied. Offer expires October 10th, 2004.

AMH will also be offering boot, crampon, helmet and tool demos from Vasque, Grivel, Petzel, Charlet Moser, Black Diamond, La Sportiva, Scarpa, Mountain Hardwear, Integral Designs, Patagonia, Arc'Teryx and more. Demos should be available starting September 27th. Call AMH for availability.

### 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*

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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

### Williwaw Traverse

by Stuart Grenier



s hoped June 19 dawned clear and blue to find eight of us at the Prospect Heights Trailhead at about 8:30 am. The team was co-leader John McCormick, John Maltas, Kristin Dahl, Annette Iverson, Tom Choate, Charles Kennedy, John Rectenwald, and myself. We went up the middle fork of Campbell Creek at a leisurely pace. Stopping to watch the usual moose and a griz feeding on the north side of the creek. We picked up Jim Szender near Williwaw Lake to make nine. We continued to the base of the south face of Mt Williwaw, 5445.

After having such a good snow year I wasn't surprised to see the gully still had a near continuous snow field going up it. Last year when we climbed this face it had melted out so we scrambled through the rocks to the right of the gully. This year I thought we would have an easy time just going up the snow, or so I thought. After we all donned our helmets and got our ice axes out we started up. About a third of the way up the gully my stomach began to turn so I pulled off the snow into the shade. I seemed to be over heating in my long sleeve polypro. Choate, just three months shy of seventy, took over kicking steps. The team went by me one by one as I waved them by me between bouts of vomiting. With Jim Szender staying with me I managed to climb out of the steep part of the gully still occasionally spewing. We were very fortunate that everyone stayed on the snow rather than getting out on the rocks which could have sent rocks down on Jim and me.

I waved Jim on so he could summit and proceeded to take a rest. I told Jim that I would meet everyone at the col where we would drop down into Ship Creek. This would buy me the time I needed to get my strength back. Slowly working my way up to the col I found I had to rest after every four steps. Seeing me in a weakened state John Maltas came down to give me a hand with my pack. I appreciated this.

At the col I got under a tarp and took a nice long nap. Maltas went to join the others on the summit. As I rested I could feel my head clear

and my energy slowly return. It felt good to have the mountain under me in the state that I was in. It was as if the mountain had a pull to it and was refusing to let me go.

Stretched out under my tarp I stared up at the crowd on the summit. I decided then and there that I wouldn't be going to the Brown Bear Saloon in Indian with the others, but that I would be spending the night with the mountain on the summit. After all it was a day away from the solstice and perfect weather. As the others descended I climbed up. When we met I tried to recruit folks to join me on a sleep over. I assured everyone that I was fine and that they could continue on without me. I formally handed leadership of the trip over to McCormick who had done this exact traverse with me the year before. Only John Rectenwald considered staying, but he said he would only do it if I had a couple of beers in my pack. In the end I enjoyed sitting by a crag as I watched the line of climbers descend. At the col Tom and Jim broke off from the group to climb the ridge leading to the Ramp. As the others disappeared into the shadows of Ship Creek Valley I listened to Tom's voice talking Jim through the ridge to the Ramp. After a couple of hours I could no longer hear him and I was alone on the mountain.

At 8:40 pm I moved to the summit and grabbed the register. There wasn't a cloud in sight but there was a breeze so I moved to a protected spot just west of the summit. From there I could see Sleeping Lady, Denali, and all points south. I enjoyed watching the cat's-paws on the lakes to the north as everything took on an illustrious alpine glow. Reading the lengthy register between naps and long spells of taking in the view, I began to see my weakness as strength. So many times we come out to the mountains to take a summit and leave with the same mindset as someone driving to work. The mountains have energy about them and tonight I was in the mood to let it flow through me.

At 11:50 the sun set to the west of Foraker. I poked holes in the sides of my foam pad and laced it over the top of my body with parachute cord. Then I rolled up in my tarp and leaned my back against a rock. The lights of Anchorage slowly began to twinkle. At 2:30 AM I had a slight shiver and by 3 it was getting light again. I returned the register to the summit cairn and slowly started my descent. The sky over the Talkeetnas was a bright pink. I picked my way through the rocks in the twilight. The wind had died down and

the world was so silent. It was as if I was in a dream.

At the first rivulet I came to in the scree, I stopped and gorged myself. Then I continued down into Ship Creek where the sun peeked over the mountains. Just as I entered the flower zone the gorgeous light appeared. Breath taking is an understatement.

As it turned out Tom and Jim didn't summit the Ramp but made Glen Alps just after midnight. McCormick's group got to the Brown Bear Saloon at about 11:00 PM., badly in need of a beer. When I got there at 10:00 AM it wasn't open, so I hitched a ride back to town. That was the 04 Williwaw Traverse.

## Elliot Bear

by Tom Dolan



On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, I ate lunch with a teenage black bear on the summit of Mt Elliot, which I climbed via the ridge from Wolverine; I call the bear Elliot Bear! All along the ridge from Wolverine, there was a sheep in front of me acting very peculiar, he would let me get within twenty to thirty feet then take off along the ridge and every time I approached him he would be looking very tentatively up the ridge, so much so that he acted like he didn't hear me coming. When I got to the saddle between the false summit and summit, he dove off the north side (he wasn't able to do that till then because it was too steep and I guess he didn't want to go down the south side). At this point the ridge gets very narrow and ascends at much more of an angle. So as I'm kicking steps in the snow and climbing over the rocks, always looking up to pick my route, off to the right of the summit on top of a rock outcropping that's a little lower than the summit I see a black figure.

Earlier on the ridge I saw some bear tracks in the snow (which was odd I thought at the time but had forgotten about till now) so I kicked in some good steps and took my pack off and got my binoculars out and sure enough there was a black bear standing on a pinnacle just kind of looking around! Well, needless to say I was kind of pissed off, I wasn't going to let a damn bear stop me from summiting, I had worked way too hard to get there. So when I got a bit closer I started really



yelling as I was climbing, he looked at me for a while and then kind of ambled off down the other side. As I approached the top I was very cautious and went up a way that wasn't the most direct so I could approach from the side that had the best visibility. As I climbed onto the very top I saw that no bear was present. I slung off my pack and proceeded to eat my sandwich and a candy bar. After enjoying the sun and view (about 85 % clear) picking out all the mountains around that I could recognize, I decided to take a small walk to the far edge and look down at a pass that I have skied through a number of times.

After about twenty feet in the direction apposite of the way I had come, a black head popped up with a brown nose then, a whole bear! He was smaller than I had thought but still probably 250, 300 pounds. I yelled a bit and he disappeared again and I got my look over the far edge. I went back to where my pack was and sat down again for a bit more of a rest. I was once again looking around and I saw right below me about 50 feet away was Elliot bear again just looking at me and sniffing the air. He was so close that I could hear him slapping his mouth open and shut (which is normally a bad sign I have been told. I watched him very closely and he did climb up over from the little ledge he was behind, which made me a bit nervous so I got my ice axe in hand and stood up waving my hands and shouting very loudly for this bear to get off my mountain (funny because its more his than mine) well he didn't budge, just sat down on the ledge that he was no longer behind. So I sat down also and we looked at each other for about ten minutes. When it was time for me to leave, he watched me go and I said goodbye to Elliot Bear, I watched my back very closely for the first few hundred feet down the mountain.

## Mt. Fairweather and King Peak

by Dave Hart



It took us four attempts over four years, but my climbing partner Paul Barry, his wife Carolyn, and I climbed the East Ridge of Canada's stunning King Peak (16972) on May 21, 2004. King is the sixth tallest peak in the combined Canada/Alaska region, behind Denali, Logan, St. Elias, Foraker and Lucania. We had previously attempted the 1967 Japanese Southwest Ridge in both 2001 and 2002 reaching high points of 13400 and 15200, respec-

tively, while last year we turned back from the standard East Ridge at 14100 due to avalanche concerns. Our recent 24-hour summit day was our longest one endured to date among the combined sixty-plus expeditions in which Paul and I have participated. We also found King to be one of the most challenging peaks of the twenty-one 14,000-foot peaks in Alaska or Canada that we have climbed. Each of the six existing routes presents continuously exposed climbing, as demonstrated by the dozen or so ascents of the peak to date.

Our strategy for King Peak was simple: acclimatize with an ascent of Mt. Fairweather (15300) then fly 200 miles north, ski to a well-stocked 14000 high camp and wait for a good weather window. We were tired of going back to the same peak each of the last four years, and were committed to staying as long as needed to give it a fair go.

Mt. Fairweather is the southern-most peak of the twenty-six 14000-foot peaks in the combined Canada/Alaska region. Some claim it is the closest major peak to the Gulf of Alaska, though Mt. St. Elias (18008) has also claimed that distinction. In any case, its proximity to the moist Gulf of Alaska has created an element of notoriety for its terrible weather. As such, we left Haines, Alaska on May 10, 2004 in Paul Swanstrom's Cessna 185 ski plane with four weeks of supplies for both trips. Our participants were Paul and Carolyn Barry, Wayne Todd, two of our Dutch friends Wytze Rijke and Joris Endel, and I. Wayne and the Dutch pair would return to Anchorage after Fairweather, while our trio would fly 200 miles north to the Alaska/Yukon border and ski into King Peak. Our route up Mt. Fairweather was from the Grand Plateau Glacier to the north of the peak. This route has become the standard walk-up route, though crevasses, slab avalanches, serac exposure and poor weather make this route potentially a much more severe climb than the benign experience we had.

We spent our first day on the glacier ski touring from our 10000-foot base camp for an hour up to an 11000-foot pass overlooking the Gulf of Alaska. The second day was also spent ski touring for a couple hours up to 11500. At this point we felt marginally acclimatized, and decided we'd try for the summit the next good weather day we had. As it turned out, it was the very next morning. We left at 8:30 AM, unroped, with plans to link up in two teams of three once we reached the crevassed area. An hour later, Wytze, Joris and Wayne skied past the ½ mile section of serac exposure, roping up 30 minutes later. Paul, Carolyn



and I followed, leaving our skis behind as soon as we roped up at 11000, preferring the security of crampons on the hard pack steep snow. By 11:30 AM, we all regrouped just below a 13000-foot pass for lunch. It was a relief to be past all of the serac exposure below. Our day was stellar, cloudless with no wind. A rarity for the region, I'm sure.

Upon intersecting the west ridge at 13500 directly below the summit, we figured the last 2000 feet would get a bit windier so we put on our Gore-Tex wind suits. Up to this point we had been dressed in fleece only. Occasional crevasses forced us left, off the ridge crest up 30-40 degree slopes. After a snowstorm these slopes would certainly pose a deadly avalanche hazard, but we found mostly styrofoam, kick-stepping all the way to the top. We crested the last rise at 2:30 PM, six hours after leaving base camp, 5500 below us. No clouds could be seen. Clearly visible waves were crashing on the Gulf of Alaska coast a scant 10 miles west of us. It was hard to imagine that we had been camping at sea level in Haines only two days prior. After a few photos we headed down, arriving back in camp by 6:00 PM, shocked at having finished our first peak in record time.

As it turned out, ours was the third ascent of the season with at least one more occurring after ours out of the eight teams attempting various routes on the mountain this spring. Such traffic is unheard of for the seldom-visited Mt. Fairweather. We called our pilot the next morning and by 10:00 AM Paul and Carolyn were flying 200 miles north to our 8000 King Peak landing site on the Alaska/Yukon border. By 2:00 PM, Wayne and I were retracing their path, with a quick stop in Yakutat to fill the plane with gasoline. The flight along the entire southern extent of the coastal St. Elias range was stunning. At 4:00 PM, Paul, Carolyn and I bid Wayne and our pilot Paul farewell as they taxied down glacier and headed back to Haines in time for dinner. We were on our own at our Alaska/Yukon border base camp. The black rocky pyramid of King Peak towered an impressive 9000 feet above us, 15 miles to the east.

Friday morning, May 14, 2004 we prepared our last real breakfast for 12 days – coffee, pancakes and fried ham with a striking view of St. Elias to the south and Logan and King Peak to the east. Not a bad place for breakfast. We loaded up our sleds with food for 12 days, fuel for 16 days, and all the requisite cold weather gear and climbing gear for King Peak. Our loads were debilitating, as always. It was 9 miles into Canada and 1000 feet elevation gain to the standard Mt. Logan King

Trench base camp. American air taxis are not allowed to land in Canada without prohibitively expensive insurance premiums, forcing the additional 9-mile ski from our base camp on the border. We would share the King Trench with several Logan expeditions for 9 more miles up to the 13500-foot King Col where we would branch off to a final camp 700 feet higher.

We spent two days skiing through sun and repressive heat up to King Col, cursing our heavy sleds at any steep incline. Our third day was relatively easy, only gaining 700 feet to our 14100 high camp, which we placed in our previous year's exact location, pinpointed by remnant snow walls barely visible on the wind scoured saddle. At this point we were second guessing bringing in so many supplies and warm clothes, as the weather was stellar with more sun forecasted. It was easily 20 degrees warmer than our prior several years on King Peak. We went to sleep that night hoping to start our summit bid the next morning at 4:00 AM. We were already planning what other peak we might climb in the extra week that we'd now have from finishing early.

It was not to be. We ended up spending the next six days confined to our tent. It was in fact clear as predicted, though lenticular clouds scoured Logan and King Peak for the entire week, buffeting our tent the entire time. Our snow walls required daily repairs as the intense wind would erode our snow blocks daily. After day 4 or 5, we had mastered construction of triple thick walls, protected by an angled upstream deflection wall to extend the life of the main walls. It is impressive what three bored engineers stuck in a tent for a week can create.

Finally, at noon May 21 the winds mellowed out and our satellite phone text message forecast was for one day of improving weather before another storm hit. We had to give it a shot. We expected a 12-15 hour day to climb the 3000 feet to the summit and back. We took 12 Gu packets and 2 quarts of energy drink each, plus all the requisite hardware and extra clothes. Little did we know how much we had underestimated the route as we left our base camp at noon that day with broken clouds above, occasional snow flurries, but generally improving weather.

The terrain was steeper than expected, with ice and hard snow requiring running belays and careful climbing. This slowed our progress, but we gladly sacrificed speed for protected climbing. The weather was still marginal all afternoon with





high winds and lenticulars licking the summit as we climbed higher. Multiple fixed lines littered the route all the way from the base of the ridge to 16000. We clipped most of the visible anchors as we passed, supplementing with our own, as required. The consistent 45-degree snow and ice slopes provided enjoyable climbing, before increasing to 50 degrees for the last three pitches below the top of the prominent couloir at 16000. Some erroneous fixed line led us off route forcing an hour of traversing four 50-degree snow and ice pitches through the rocks only 100 feet above a bergschrund and the easier snow slopes below. At 10:00 PM, we finally hit the 16500-summit ridge, a mere 500 feet from the top and reevaluated our situation. We'd been climbing for 10 hours, the weather was deteriorating, and it looked downright nasty on the summit.

Would it get worse, or better? Who knew? Retreat was sure to be slow, especially in poor weather. We had on all our clothes, including down parkas, neoprene full-face masks and goggles. We'd never climbed before wearing so much of our clothing, but it was difficult to stay warm even wearing all our clothes. If it got worse, descending would be a real challenge, especially with twilight approaching. But if it got better, we'd regret turning back from our fourth attempt. What should we do? We huddled behind the leeward ridge crest and gathered our senses out of the wind as best we could. Ten minutes later, we decided to give it another hour, as it seemed to be clearing up with the setting sun. Up we went and the higher we got, the more the winds dissipated. We finally reached non-technical terrain, and could enjoy the views down to the Seward Glacier 10000 feet below us, as the setting sun cast long pink shadows on all the major peaks in the range – Logan, St. Elias, Vancouver, Augusta, Cook, and beyond. We could even faintly make out Mt. Fairweather 200 miles to the south of us.

Finally at 11:15 PM, I saw Paul stop climbing a pitch in front of me and start belaying in Carolyn and I as we traversed the exposed final ridge. I hoped they were on the top, but feared Paul was simply regrouping and retrieving pickets from me as we had done for the last 12 hours to continue leading out along some nasty knife edge. But, karma was with us for once, and as I approached them squinting through my goggles into the sun setting over their shoulders, I could see that beyond, the knife edge dropped out of sight below. This was it! After three prior attempts we had finally made it. We each felt a sense of relief and satisfaction, yet also apprehension, knowing

that the descent would be just as challenging and hazardous, perhaps even more so due to fatigue and lack of daylight. Before heading down we took a final look around. The summer sun was just setting, casting the long dark pyramid shadow of King Peak across the glaciers two miles below us. All the surrounding St. Elias Range peaks were glowing pink with alpenglow. Perhaps most importantly, the wind had died down to almost nothing.

Down we started about 11:30 PM, carefully down-climbing and reverse leading our route. We avoided the five off-route traverse pitches in exchange for an overhanging rappel over the bergschrund into the darkness to the easier traveling below. Fortunately, the old fixed line we had encountered all the way from our camp to about 16000 aided our descent. We un-rope from each other and arm-wrapped our way down the fixed sections. This saved us considerable time on our nocturnal descent. Still, we had to rappel many times where the fixed line was either buried or missing, spending hours in these transitions, again using existing anchors where possible, and supplementing our own pickets, vee-threads and pitons where necessary. Our two quarts of fluid each was gone soon after reaching the summit. As dehydration and fatigue set in, we became slower, though I think no less safe, just more careful in our down-climbing and rappels, fully aware of the consequences of a slip.

Through the “night” we continued down, still wearing all our gear, but fortunately the wind stayed at bay. There was barely enough light to keep moving and avoid a bivy. At 2:00 AM we got out our two miniature LED headlamps for the two end climbers to ensure proper rope work and knots. During these darkest few hours, our two headlamps bobbed along the snow and ice, with the faint shadows of three climbers in tow. At 5am we finally got hit with direct sunlight again, instantly warming us up, yet our lingering chill made us keep on every single bit of clothing for several more hours. We descended until we were able to unrope for the lower section of the ridge, before the final steep pitches above camp. At this time, we saw a group of Logan climbers on King Col wake up, come out of their tents, and watch our final few rappels from their vantage one mile away and 1000 feet below us.

Our last three rappels were finally finished and we pulled our rope through the last anchor, trailing it behind us for the 300-yard walk to our camp. Finally at noon of the second day, Sunday May 23, we arrived in camp totally exhausted and



mentally spent. We collapsed on the snow, the first real rest we'd had in 24 hours of non-stop climbing. Paul and I agreed that this had been one of the most physically challenging two or three summits days in our careers. What a relief to be back. We brewed up and went straight to bed, too tired to really sleep, though I'm sure we each dozed off for a couple hours.

By 4:00 PM, the predicted fast approaching storm had set in, with snow and gale winds for the next 36 hours. Our 28-hour weather window had slammed shut; we had fortunately found the only possible summit day in at least a 10-day period, and possibly more. We slept all afternoon and night and awoke the next morning to a howling snowstorm. As much as we were ready to abandon our camp of the last 8 days, we were even more excited to rest for a day after our summit day marathon. The continued sleep and rest was divine.

The next day we woke to less stormy conditions with minimal visibility through the thick clouds. It was our ninth day at our high camp; we were rested and ready to leave even if it meant travel by GPS and compass. We packed camp, struggled with our sleds back down a few steeper sections to the now empty 13500-foot King Col, and GPS'ed our way back to the Logan base camp in 8 hours. Here we had tea with an Aussie trio who had come close to summitting Logan, but turned back due to the constant lenticulars of the past week. We then finished our 9-mile ski back to the Alaska border that night, arriving at 11:00 PM. We had called Paul Claus of Ultima Thule for a pickup while on our descent. At 8:00 AM the next morning May 26, his orange Otter swooped in and picked us up. We were home in Anchorage by 6:00 PM that night.

The fact that this was our fourth attempt on King Peak and that it was such a challenge made it that much more special. I returned to work, while Paul and Carolyn rested for a couple days before flying into the Alaska Range where they climbed Denali's West Rib in seven days round trip from Talkeetna, before heading off for a successful seven-week expedition to Mt. Nun (7100 meters) in the Kashmir region of northern India. They certainly had an envious summer climbing season.

So, King Peak's East Ridge isn't a new route, or anything unique in the mountaineering sense. Our ridge had been climbed a handful of times from the dozen or so ascents of the mountain. In fact, Reudi Homberger soloed it in 8 hours round trip in 1992. Still, we had a very rewarding

experience. One other item of interest is the Kluane National Park Ranger Rick Staley commented that he was unaware of a woman having summited King Peak before. It's fitting, I suppose, that Carolyn may have been the first woman to climb Canada's 4<sup>th</sup> tallest peak, since she is a Canadian citizen. Even more exciting for her was that it was her first expedition.

Beautiful scenery, great friends and challenging peaks made our 2-1/2 week adventure a success. Good weather helped, too. But, mostly, we're just happy that we won't have to go back to King Peak a fifth time next spring!

## MINUTES

### MARCH MEETING

#### TREASURER

Not available.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### *Hiking and Climbing*

Trip leaders wanted. Submit trip ideas to Matt Nedom or Richard Baranow. Upcoming trips listed on the web [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org). Steve Gruhn offering after work hikes starting this spring.

##### *Training*

Mountaineering School went well with good participation. Contact Steve Parry with other questions.

##### *Huts*

A new hut brainstorming committee will be formed. Contact Huts chairperson Hans Neidig or President Jayme Mack to participate. Call Hans if you're planning a trip to any of the huts. Mike Meekins of Meekins Air in Palmer has best information on who's going into the Scandinavian Peaks Hut. Pichlers Perch will be busy this April; be prepared to share the hut or sleep outside.

##### *Library*

Vin Hoeman collection moved to Bill Romberg's house. Contact Bill or board member to gain access.

##### *Parks Advisory*

Eagle River Valley Nature Center has some positions available. Contact them directly if interested. Eagle River Nature Trail design under comment; contact Scott Bailey to provide input or find out more. Contact Cory Hinds for all other Parks Advisory questions..





### *Equipment*

New equipment has been purchased for the upcoming mountaineering school. Ropes, helmets, alpine axes, crampons. Available for class use only. Other equipment available for membership use – snowshoes, beacons. Contact Steve Parry Training Chair for access. The Gear Deposit policy is being revised by the Board to reduce stolen and lost gear. MCA will purchase a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) with integrated GPS this April for use on club trips.

### OLD BUSINESS

The Board is considering the purchase of a **digital projector** for slide shows.

Club discussed and approved increasing **2005 dues** from individual \$10 / family \$15 by \$5 to individual \$15 / family \$20. Paper Scree delivery fees still \$10 annually, electronic version is free.

### NEW BUSINESS

None.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 13 **American Alpine Club meeting** at BP Energy Center 6:30pm. Rod Hancock will show Tordrillo Range Climbs, across Cook Inlet. Will be a great show.

Hans Neidig showed “the 2003 Alaska Mountain Wilderness Classic Race slideshow”. It was a great show.

## APRIL MEETING

### TREASURER

\$21,000

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### *Hiking and Climbing*

Trip leaders wanted. Submit trip ideas to Matt Nedom or Richard Baranow. Upcoming trips listed on the web [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org). Steve Gruhn offering ongoing after work hikes. Tom Choate “the Goat” offering his annual Solstice Weekend overnight to Crescent Lake.

Stu Grenier’s Eklutna Traverse in March went very well. They hit all 3 club huts and Serenity Falls Hut en route.

### *Training*

Steve Parry is offering a summer rock climbing course. Contact him if you want to participate as a student or instructor. A new leader orientation course may be offered immediately before the May MCA meeting. Stay tuned to the web site for details, or call Steve Parry.

### *Huts*

A new hut brainstorming committee has been formed. Initial planning has identified 9 potential locations for a new hut. Further scoping work required. Contact Huts chairperson Hans Neidig or President Jayme Mack to participate.

Call Hans if you’re planning a trip to any of the huts for current conditions or to see if he needs anything brought in. Mike Meekins of Meekins Air in Palmer has best information on who’s going into the Scandinavian Peaks Hut.

### *Library*

MCA is looking for volunteers to help catalog the entire collection and create better tracking of checked out materials.

### *Parks Advisory*

Denali National Park user fees increasing to \$10 per person, including climbers. Chugach State Park is expanding trailhead parking fee areas to include Bird, McHugh, Potter, Indian at \$5 per day. Better yet, buy an annual pass for \$40 and save dollars. Eagle River Greenbelt project in progress. Contact Cory Hinds for further information on these and all other Parks Advisory questions.

### *Equipment*

Loan equipment is available for membership use – snowshoes, beacons, helmets, axes. Contact Steve Parry Training Chair for access. MCA will purchase a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) with integrated GPS this April for use on club trips.

### OLD BUSINESS

The Board is considering the purchase of a **digital projector** for slide shows.

The Board will purchase a Personal Locator Beacon soon for club trip use.

### NEW BUSINESS

None.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chugach National Forest (CNF) Heli-skiing comments extended to May 17. Contact CNF via the web for details.



Boot and gaiter sale. New and used hiking, climbing, skiing, tele boots and gaiters, overboots and supergaiters were donated to the MCA by the 210<sup>th</sup> Air National Guard. We will sell these items at a gear swap, proceeds to benefit the MCA Wednesday May 17, at the next general MCA meeting.

Tom Choate “the Goat” presented “Reflections of Denali – 40 years of ascents.” Tom first climbed Denali in the early 1960’s via the Muldrow Glacier, and has been back every decade since. Last year he climbed it with three other MCA members and presented slides and video from both trips. It was a great show.

## JUNE MEETING

### TREASURER

Unavailable.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### *Hiking and Climbing*

Trip leaders wanted. Submit trip ideas to Matt Nedom or Richard Baranow. Upcoming trips listed on the web [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org). Steve Gruhn offering ongoing after work hikes. Tom Choate “the Goat” offering his annual Solstice Weekend overnight to Crescent Lake. Annual Flattop sleepout Saturday night solstice weekend (no leader n the trip).

#### *Training*

Steve Parry may offer a summer rock climbing course. Contact him if you want to participate as a student or instructor. Training will pick up after the summer.

#### *Huts*

A new hut brainstorming committee has been formed. Initial planning has identified 9 potential locations for a new hut. Further scoping work required. Contact Huts chairperson Hans Neidig or President Jayme Mack to participate. Hans’ Hut work party will occur July 1-5. Contact Stu Grenier to participate.

Call Hans if you’re planning a trip to any of the huts for current conditions or to see if he needs anything brought in. Mike Meekins of Meekins Air in Palmer has best information on who’s going into the Scandinavian Peaks Hut.

#### *Library*

MCA is looking for volunteers to help catalog the entire collection and create better tracking of checked out materials. Contact Elena Hinds if you would like to help out.

### *Parks Advisory*

Gold Mint Trail in Hatcher Pass closed for upgrades until Aug 1. Chugach State Park Access Coalition hopes to preserve access to CSP in spite of increased subdivision development encroaching on CSP boundaries by providing input to Municipal Title 21 revision. Contact Corey Hinds or Tom McDermott to assist, donate or comment. Fort Richardson Army Base fence project is seeking comments prior to locking up the base. Contact Stu Grenier for more information or make comments on how to keep this east Anchorage historical base access alive.

### *Equipment*

Loan equipment is available for membership use – snow-shoes, beacons, helmets, axes. Contact Steve Parry Training Chair for access. MCA will purchase a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) with integrated GPS this summer for use on club trips.

### OLD BUSINESS

The Board is considering the purchase of a **digital projector** for slide shows.

The Board will purchase a Personal Locator Beacon soon for club trip use.

### NEW BUSINESS

Scree Editor being solicited. Amsl had to resign. Looking for dedicated computer literate volunteer to pull together monthly newsletter. Contact Jayme Mack for details.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

MCA board meetings will resume in July after the summer climbing season break.

Boot and gaiter sale. New and used hiking, climbing, skiing, tele boots and gaiters, overboots and supergaiters were donated to the MCA by the 210<sup>th</sup> Air National Guard. We will sell these items at a gear swap, proceeds to benefit the MCA Wednesday July 21, at the next general MCA meeting.

Gerard McDonnell – the MCA’s only true Guinness drinking, instrument playing Irishman – presented “2003 Irish Everest Expedition.” This show depicted Gerard’s successful climb of Mt. Everest in Spring 2003. It was a great show, by a great presenter.



## JULY MEETING

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska July 2004 monthly meeting was held at Valley of the Moon Park. The traditional meeting was replaced by the annual summer picnic. No business meeting occurred. Join us August 18, 2004 for our next scheduled monthly meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dave Hart

## CALENDAR



November 2003						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

The MCA Alaskan Mountain Culture Calendar Photo Contest is a horizontal calendar again this year and you should bring your photo entries to the September meeting with your name, phone number, and category written or taped on to the back. Please also have all your photos in an envelope with your name and phone number on it. Please submit only horizontal pictures taken in or around Alaska, that have not previously been published. No pictures of the Himalayas or Alps like somebody did last time! The categories are climbing, hiking, people, and scenery. Only one entry in each category per person. They will be on the wall for everyone to vote on at the October meeting, but please get them to me before that. For more details you can contact me at oinkmenow@hotmail.com or 337-5127. We are also looking for folks to help out with this demanding but fun project. **Stuart Grenier.**

## WEB CHAT



rec.climbing:

August 17, Colorado

An 8-year-old dog was back with his owner Tuesday following a mountain rescue by Summit County animal control. The dog, a golden retriever-chow mix, had been stuck on 12,777-foot Mount Buffalo since Aug. 9, when it followed its owner to the top, according to the Summit Daily News.

The dog's owner, who wasn't identified, said the animal refused to come down and he tried, but failed, to get the dog down on his own. The owner contacted the Summit Rescue Group, which said it wasn't prepared to rescue animals. Animal control officer Scott Wanke climbed the mountain and found the dog, taking six hours to bring it down safely with ropes and slings.

An examination revealed the dog had blistered and cut paws from the sharp rocks on the peak. "Every summer we have this happen, and sometimes it's not visitors, but people who live here. People shouldn't take their dogs up there," Lesley Craig, the lead animal control officer for Summit County, told the Daily News.

followup:

Two friends and I hiked a peak a few years ago, bringing 4 dogs between us. (On a weekday, no one was bothered.) 3 of the dogs thought the long, scrambly hike was fun, but the 4th, just as big and healthy as the rest, developed sore feet and finally, half way down, refused to stand up. After exhausting our powers of persuasion, we improvised a dog-litter by suspending the poor mutt in several fleece vests under a couple of poles lashed together, and carried all 80 pounds of him down the mountain that way. This was really hard work, and it looked ridiculous. The demoralized dog's feet hung straight down, with his toenails sometimes scraping the trail. Fortunately, we got a picture, which long outlived the dog's injuries.

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

## *Officers*

President	Jayme Mack	694-1500
Vice-President	Carl Battreall	258-0075
Secretary	Dave Hart	263-7672
Treasurer	Steve Gruhn	344-1219

## *Board*

Randy Howell	346-4608
Sean Bolender	333-0213
Hans Neidig	357-2026
Matt Nedom	278-3648
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 not 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 Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage, AK 99510, or e-mailed to jaymack@alaska.net. Articles should be received by October 1st to be included in the October issue. Sorry, no exceptions.

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, Temp. Editor.

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 LIST/DATABASE ENTRY: don smith

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

HUTS: hans neidig, 357-2026

WEB: [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) (go here to change your address)

MAILING LIST SERVICE: [mcak@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mcak@yahoogroups.com)