

# (TRAINING SCHEDULE)

Jan 19 – Mar 6 <u>Beginning Mountaineering School</u> as follows:

Jan 19 <u>Class Sign-up</u> At the general meeting.

#### 20, 22, 23 Winter Camping

7:00 P.M. on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup>, location TBA. 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> in the field. \$15.00 for room rental, camping fees, supplies and equipment replacement. Coordinator: Carl Battreall.

#### 27 Navigation

7:00 P.M. on Thursday, location TBA. Coordinator: Carl Battreall.

Feb 8, 10, 12, 13 <u>Avalanche Awareness</u> 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup>, location TBA. 7:00 P.M. on Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup>, location TBA.

> 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> in the field. \$15.00 for room rental, camping fees, supplies and equipment replacement. Coordinator: Carl Battreall.

#### 17 Knots

7:00 P.M. on Thursday, location TBA. Coordinator: Carl Battreall.

#### 24, 26 Snow Travel

7:00 P.M. on Thursday, location TBA. 26<sup>th</sup> in the field. \$10.00 for room rental, camping fees, supplies and equipment replacement. Coordinator: Carl Battreall.

Mar 1, 3, 5, 6 <u>Beginning Glacier Travel and Crevasse</u> Rescue

> 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, the 1<sup>st</sup>, location TBA. 7:00 P.M. on Thursday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> location TBA. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in the field, overnight. \$20.00 for room rental, camping fees, supplies and equipment replacement. Coordinator: Carl Battreall.

# TRIP REPORTS

## Mt. Palmer

by Carrie Wang



ay eight of a ten-day trip, June 2004. Lots of firsts for me, but it's all starting to seem more familiar and today should be a quick climb. Mt. Palmer isn't even one of the '21.' East of camp the summit peeks over the

close ridgeline, with two rocky eyes spying down on the glacier.

Our route choice is simple and direct, straight up the near west face, turn north onto the ridgeline and then continue to the domed summit. We'll descend by a different face with less afternoon sun and avalanche potential. We aim to be back with plenty of time to break camp and travel down glacier. Tomorrow we'd like to get an early start up Devil's Club.

It is early morning and the snow is firm, the snowshoes stay in camp. Helmeted, cramponed, and roped, we set off. The base of the climb is a little further than thought, an omen for the coming climb? Approaching the bergschrund, we hope the abundant avalanche activity has filled it. A quick inspection and we cross easily. Moving up the face, I follow. Looking down gives me a bit of the willies so I concentrate on moving upwards and managing the rope. It is the first time I've climbed a snow face roped and cramponed, sometimes the steps give out, but so far I'm enjoying myself.

As the base of the slope begins to look distant we encounter more rock. The snow becomes unconsolidated and we move towards a bare gully. First a picket, followed by two slung rocks, finally a nut, and we stand on bare rock. Somehow, this isn't very reassuring. The rock may be bare, but it is wet, steep, slippery 'Chugach crud' at its finest. I watch as Wayne maneuvers himself up into this small gully. Sooner than later, but slower than normal, he's a little ways up and I call for him to wait while I de-glove and decrampon, after all we are still roped and he has little other choice. With crampons hanging from one side, gloves from another, and picket slung from my neck I feel a little bit like a carnival show. Climbing up the rock about two or three feet, I am



suddenly stuck. There doesn't seem to be anything positive to hold onto, panic looms near. There is no point in standing here forever, but I can't seem to get up the gumption to go for it. Chastising myself under my breath, I search around for something better to pull up on, no luck. Visions of disaster whirl about like little demons. I see both of us plummeting to the base of the mountain as I fall, pulling Wayne from his perch above me. Desperately wishing we were not roped I grit my teeth and heave myself up. Nothing slips or slides and I stand up sheepishly on shaking legs, it was nothing too difficult. Difficult or not, I'd still like to be magic-ed to the top of the ridgeline. But alas, no flying carpet arrives. Above me, Wayne moves on, placing each foot and hand with the utmost care to avoid dropping rocks. Glad to follow, I shamelessly push rocks and debris from their resting places, ever searching for a better hand or foothold.

At the top of the gully is a resting spot. We gratefully unrope, sit and eat lunch. So much for a quick climb, it's already noon. Fed and watered we continue. Soon we re-crampon and then again decrampon, moving from rock to snow and back again. I keep reminding myself not to stare down between my legs as I climb, the distance to the bottom un-nerves me. Wayne waits patiently as I think and re-think every step. Nearing the ridgeline we slow, moving from safe spot to safe spot, avoiding rock fall. The mountain goat, with whom I travel, scrambles up through a crack I cannot see, and emerges on the ridge above. I wait while he sets up a quick belay. To crash and burn now, trying to be macho would be embarrassing, and I am glad of the added bit of safety. Wayne describes the route, and soon I too am atop the ridge.

Standing on dry flattish rock I feel like dancing. We stroll along a wide flat ridge towards the pile of rocks above. Scrambling up these rocks is refreshing, they're solid and stay put when you pull on them. Continuing on, I look around enjoying beautiful sunshine and expansive views, relishing walking and looking at the same time. Wayne is reminded of the soft snow conditions when he jumps off a rock into a small snowfield and is buried to his waist. Sauntering up to the summit, I can't help but grin. What a pleasant change from the habitual scaredy-cat scramble and perch that is my normal peak experience, as Wayne is forever in search of that highest rock on the summit. We lounge on the warm rocks, boots and socks spread around us to dry.

We will not, cannot, refuse to, descend our ascent route, leaving us with two options. A little bit further south a lower angle slope lies beneath a corniced ridgeline, or a lot (by base camp climbing standards) further south we can descend to the glacier in a more round about fashion. The round about route is nixed for reasons of unknowns and soft snow. Our original plan has endured. Following the ridge we make our way to the chosen face. Once on-belay, Wayne works his way out to the edge, stomping a path for me to follow. He calls out for a tight rope and the rope goes taught. I wait in a peaceful silence, underneath a brilliant blue sky. Finally the rope goes slack, I get the right number of tugs and take him off belay. Picket back on the pack and I am ready to go. Now, I wait in strained silence, hoping to hear Wayne's "onbelay". The pile of rope at my feet slides away, I get a few firm tugs, and assume I am on-belay. I make my way forward and am rewarded as the excess rope is taken up. Five feet from the lip I turn and back down unknown steps. Pausing at the lip, I wonder aloud how to get myself down the four foot over hang. If I plant my axe for balance and jump down I will be unable to retrieve my axe from above me. I stand too long thinking, and the edge gives out. I find myself lying head downhill, below a disturbingly large cornice, almost in Wayne's lap.

Quickly unroping, I begin the descent and Wayne cleans his anchor. Down-climbing to my right, I try to put myself below a rock band for a little protection. Our sense of urgency is heightened when a small avalanche descends to our right. "Faster, faster" everything says, but I am still slow, double kicking every step, unable to make myself trust a single kick. Wayne soon passes me, carrying his axe in one hand and picket in the other, I move into the steps he's left behind. Shortly he's a fair distance ahead of me and calls up with a firm suggestion to use both my picket and my axe. Yanking the picket from my pack I proceed, this time with a little more confidence and speed. Nearing the bergschrund we rope up, I'm cranky with the effort of focusing and nerves; dealing with the rope and anchor is almost too much. Wayne moves quickly to the spot we had picked from camp, it will go, what grand relief. I remove my picket and feel the rope tug at my waist. I snap at Wayne with annoyance to stop pulling, only to realize I'm feeling rope drag. With picket stowed, I scurry across the bergschrund. Almost at a run we cross the previous days avalanche debris. Beyond the debris we take a moment to look back, our descent tracks angling clearly across the slope and up to the edge of the

cornice. Looking across to our ascent route, most evidence of our climb is wiped away by snow sloughs running down the slope.

We amble back into camp, relieved and tired, not so much from exertion, but from the effort of concentration. We agree that was more than enough excitement for one day. Our attention turns to dinner, while Mt Palmer looks benignly on.

## E.R.N.C. to Eagle Glacier by Micah McGuire

or the past week or so it hadn't snowed at all, and it had been windy and very cold, so there was little in the way of deep or powdery snow anywhere. Dick and I felt the all-too-familiar itch and decided to scratch it by hiking out to the Eagle Glacier

from the Eagle River Nature Center. On a chilly January morning, we set out hoping to reach the glacier's terminus and return by nightfall.

The conditions were perfect for fast winter hiking. Walking the trail to Echo Bend was like walking on a sidewalk because of all the petrified ski tracks. When we reached the bend, we left the trail and began to head up the river, which had long since frozen solid, and had been reduced by the cold to a shallow trickle compared to its normal depth. What snow was still on the ground had been blown into hardened drifts, so exposed gravel bars and dried streambeds made the going very quick and easy for most of the way up the valley. Between the otherworldly conditions in the valley and the Pink Floyd album I was listening to on my headphones for most of the hike, I found it very easy to become lost in the rhythm of the music and my own footsteps. Before I knew it, we were at the shores of Glacier Lake.

We stopped to eat an M.R.E. apiece; not the lightest choice for a meal, but they include that just-add-water heater which is quite a weight-saver when it saves you from having to haul out a stove and fuel. After a bit of R&R at the western shore of the lake, we set back about our quest. The sun was starting to set, and in unpacking my meal I discovered that I had forgotten my headlamp. Oops, that proved to be a mistake. The lake seemed well-frozen, and there was only a half-inch thin layer of hardened snow covering the ice. We spotted two sets of reasonably fresh moose tracks crossing the middle of the lake. One was large and one small, obviously a calf and its mother. A few hundred feet out onto the ice the tracks were joined by a massive set of bear tracks, which we found a tad unusual given the freshness of the tracks, the time of year, and how bitterly cold it had been for the past couple of weeks. That bear must have been pretty hungry or something. Anyhow, somewhere near the middle of the lake the tracks deviated south in the direction of Saghala Point, so we lost them as we stayed our course toward the glacier.

The terminus of the Eagle Glacier itself is guarded by a pretty forbidding canyon to the south and a series of hilly moraines to the north. Instead of wandering into the canyon, which for all we knew could have been a very treacherous spot, we opted to climb over the moraines. This was very tiring and time consuming, and inevitably hampered our actually reaching the glacier proper. We spent a rushed hour or so pushing ourselves hard to reach the glacier, but for every hill we crested, we discovered another hill behind it. This continued until finally one of us called for an end to the effort. It was nearly dark, and we still had a pretty long hike back to the E.R.N.C., so we took a few pictures from the crest of one of the moraines and headed reluctantly back toward the lake. This is where a bit of trouble began brewing for both of us.

If I could sum up the predominant physical weakness in myself, and in my usual hiking buddy Dick, I would say that I have bad hips and he has a bad stomach. We had just crossed the lake and were headed toward Twin Falls when I saw Dick a few hundred feet behind me, standing in tripod position with his hands on his knees and his head between his legs. His gut-worm wasn't handling that M.R.E. very well, and I think the exertion of hiking up and down all those hills on the moraine field finally caught up with him. For the next ten miles or so, his routine was to walk a few hundred yards, stop to upchuck, take a swig of water, walk a few hundred more yards, and repeat the process. Poor guy.

In the meantime, one of my hips started to act up. I am not sure what the problem with them is, but every now and again one or both of my hips will become very painful and stiff on long hikes, especially if it's good and cold out. It was a very cold day, and this was the mother of all hip aches.

# 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 all who wish to become members.

**Participate and 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 eight mountain huts in the nearby Chugach and Talkeetna mountains. The MCA's Vin Hoeman Library, located upstairs in Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking at 2633 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 announcements of upcoming events, the hiking and climbing trip schedule, and trip reports written by club members. A monthly meeting and slide show are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church at 725 West Ninth Avenue (corner of Ninth & G 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. Write neatly! 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.**
- Annual dues are \$15 for an individual or \$20 for a family (includes electronic **SCREE** subscription either **delivered** to your e-mail address or **downloaded** from the MCA webpage).
- Mailed **SCREE** subscriptions are \$10 per year and are non-refundable (one **SCREE** per family).
- Annual membership is for one calendar year, through the 31st of December.
- Two-year, non-refundable, memberships are available for double the annual dues.
- Memberships paid after October 1st are good through December 31 of the following year.
- If applying by mail, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your membership card. Otherwise, you may pick it up at the next monthly meeting.
  Our address is: P.O. Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-2037 www.mcak.org

NEW RENEWAL	DATE NAME					
INDIVIDUAL (\$15) FAMILY (\$20) 2-YR MEMBERSHIP	FAMILY MEMBERS					
Note that two-year membership dues are double the annual dues and subscription fee.						
How do you want your <b>SCREE</b> delivered? (check one or both)						
ELECTRONIC (Free)	E-mail attachme	nt or notify when available for downloading (circle one).				
PAPER (\$10/yr.)	Postal Service -	please include \$15 per year if outside the U.S.				
STREET or P.O. BOX						
CITY / STATE / ZIP						
TELEPHONE						
E-MAIL ADDRESS						
I am interested in joining a committee (Circle which ones: Programs, Hiking & Climbing, Huts, Geographic Names, Parks Advisory, Equipment, Honorary, Membership, Training, or ad hoc committees) I am interested in leading a trip						

Do not write below this line:

#### **RELEASE OF LIABILITY—READ CAREFULLY**

I. (print name), am aware that mountaineering sports (including hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; and ski mountaineering) are hazardous activities. I wish to participate and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. ("MCA") I recognize that these activities involve numerous risks, which include, by way of example only, falling while hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; failure of a belay; being struck by climbing equipment or falling rock, ice or snow; avalanches; lightning; fire; hypothermia; frostbite; defective or malfunctioning equipment; and attack by insects or animals. I further recognize that the remoteness of the activities may preclude prompt medical care. I further recognize that risk of injury or death may be caused or enhanced by mistakes or negligence on the part of either my fellow participants or MCA officers, directors, guides, instructors, or trip leaders. I nevertheless agree to accept all risks of injury, death, or property damage that may occur in connection with any MCA activity, including use of MCA furnished equipment and MCA backcountry huts.

\_\_\_\_\_ (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):\_\_\_\_\_

While the bum hip didn't seem to be slowing my progress too much, it was causing me quite a bit of pain with every step. I had to adjust my stride so that I would prevent as much motion as I could in the affected joint, but this quickly took its toll on the compensatory muscles I found myself using. Before long, every foot of ground gained was an experience in suffering. To make matters much worse for myself, I had no headlamp with which to light the trail, and it had become guite dark by the time we passed Twin Falls. For the rest of the trail every root, rock, hole, or bump sent pain shooting through my hip. By the time we reached the E.R.N.C., tears were streaming down my face and I had chewed a good cut into my lip. Dick had long since run out of stomach contents to expel, so he simply hiked and retched concurrently until we reached the car. We drove back to Anchorage, feeling collectively sick and miserable, but very happy to have gone on such an awesome hike! It was definitely a trip worth repeating, next time with a headlamp and some Advil.

## Huts Update

The club huts seem to be in good order thanks to the fine work of many MCA volunteers. If anyone is headed to any of the huts, please contact Hans Neidig, the Huts Committee Chair, at hansn@mtaonline.net or 357-2026. When visiting the huts, please take a moment to note their condition and then report the news to Hans - good or bad news welcomed. It can be very helpful to the Club and the Huts if you contact Hans prior to heading out, as he may have a specific task to request.

Watch the webpage and MCA Yahoo Groups for information concerning the huts and the Huts Committee. It is the intent of the committee to have meetings in January and February. These meetings will take place at 6: P.M. (before the regularly scheduled MCA meetings) at the Church - likely in a smaller room. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss the addition of a new hut. Please send any comments about hut placement criteria or a suggested new hut location (with specific location details) to Hans so that those comments can be added to the discussion. All comments submitted last year are still on the record, so please do not resubmit if done previously unless there is new information to add. All MCA members are encouraged and very welcome to attend Huts Committee meetings. The committee has an objective of providing the board with hopefully no more than five potential new huts locations by April. The potential locations approved by the board will be reviewed over the summer with recon trips to determine suitability of proposed locations.



# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

#### Officers

#### Board

President	Steve Parry	248-8710	Eric Teela	240-9693
Vice-President	Steve Gruhn	344-1219	Annette Iverson	222-0581
Secretary	y Carlene VanTol	748-5270 301-4039	Sean Bolender	333-0213
Treasurer			Randy Howell	346-4608
			Jayme Mack	694-1500

Annual membership dues: Single \$15.00 Family \$20.00 (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 Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage, AK 99510, or e-mailed to mcak@gci.net. Articles should be received by January 28th to be included in the February 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, 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, 355-3244 CALENDAR: stuart grenier, 337-5127 WEB: mcak.org (go here to change your address) MAILING LIST SERVICE: mcak@yahoogroups.com

Mountaineering Club of Alaska Box 102037 Anchorage, Alaska 99510