

August 2005

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska
Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Volume 48 Issue 8

Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, August 17 @ 7:30 PM

First United Methodist Church
9th & G Streets

Downtown Anchorage

Next to the Phillips Building (you may use reserved parking after hours)
Program: TBA

'Being on the tightrope is living. The rest is just waiting.' -- Karl Wallenda

Trip reports In This Issue

Lingon Mountain & Highbush Peak 2

Mt. Naqazhegi, Chisik Island, West Cook Inlet

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

August 06

Little O'Malley, ballpark, Williwaw Lakes and Middle Fork Loop My favorite hike. Limited to 8 people, unless another leader joins us! The distance is 8 miles, and the elevation gain is 1800 feet. Class B Contact Leader, Allison Sayer, for more details. 334.9288, or hineini2000@yahoo.com

August 11 – 15

Hut Maintenance trip to Rosie's and Hans' huts Class: D, Glacier Travel, Elevation Gain: 6000+ Distance: 30 miles round trip. This trip is geared for those members that have recently completed the MCA glacier travel classes and want more glacier experience. We will be painting the huts. Leader: Greg Bragiel 569-3008

August 19 - 21

First Annual Couples Trip, Climb and Barbecue Class: B (to Upper Snowhawk Hut) D (to Temptation Peak) Elevation Gain: 2100 to Upper Snowhawk, 5000 to Temptation Peak. Distance: 12 miles round trip Upper Snowhawk, 16 miles round trip to Temptation Peak. This trip is for COUPLES ONLY. We will camp near the Upper Snowhawk Hut. For anyone wanting to climb, there is good access to Temptation Peak from the hut. Bring your grille, burgers, hot dogs and ribs to share with participants.
Leader: Greg Bragiel 569-3008

August 30

Hike up a well worn track up and over the Dome, then west of Knoya and Kamchee. Round trip is about 9miles. A gain of 2000ft, a loss of 1000, then a gain of 1200ft. Class B Trip will either be 30 or 31 August. Contact Leader, Allison Sayer, for more details. 334.9288, or hineini2000@yahoo.com

Training

August 04 - 07

Have you ever wanted to try dangling from a rope on the side of a cliff? Or are you just interested in how to set an anchor correctly? Well, then come to the first ever MCA Beginning Rock course. The course will consist of a 1-2

hour evening session on August 4th, followed by two days on the rock the following weekend, August 6th and 7th, (weather permitting). If you're interested in learning or instructing Call: Steve Parry 248-8710

September 24 – 25

Annual Ice Climbing Festival. Woo hooo. Circle these dates on your calendar; details to follow.

Trip Reports

Lingon Mountain & Highbush Peak 2 July 2005 By Carrie Wang

Five of us stroll by the tourists milling in front of the Alyeska Prince Hotel, feeling somewhat superior with our ice axes and crampons strapped to our packs. Yes, we are 'real' Alaskans, heading out to do what 'real' Alaskans do. Two minutes later, I (and maybe others) feel a little bit sheepish asking for directions to the trailhead.

I am surprised by the condition of the Winner Creek Trail. Far from the standard Forest Service footpath, the first half-mile is a veritable road of crushed gravel and 4"x6" bombproof boardwalk. At the junction of Winner Creek and Upper Winner Creek trails major construction is underway. A swath of trees, at least three feet wide, is being cleared for a new trail. What for, I'm not sure. Beyond the cabin ruins the trail returns to a more natural state, winding through the woods. But soon a divergence. Where the old trail heads down to follow the creek, the new trail brashly fights its way through alders and bees nests. Yes, ouch. I never knew Ross and Randy were so agile, sprinting through the alders without mishap.

Side-hilling over roots and deadfall, the new trail breaks out into the rock rubble below the Winner Glacier. We hear a jackhammer in the not-so-far distance. A mining claim perhaps. But no, a trail crew has been air dropped, with their 800-pound air compressor, and they are smashing their way through the boulder field. The trail, they say, is due to be finished by the end of August. By then it should be a highway into the backcountry.

Following the survey taped path, we make our way to a lesser ridge that runs towards Lingon

Mountain. Tree-whacking up through the spruce and bugs, we reach the tundra. Disappointingly, 'above tree line' and 'no mosquitoes' are not synonymous. Pig Pen like swarms still follow our every step. Higher, the human touch prevails; a pair of skis (one broken) lies scattered in the rocks, a ski strap bearing 'Chugach Powder Guides' rests beneath a rock, and the fluorescent boards used to mark helicopter landing sights are strewn here and there.



Carrie Wang Photo

Sitting on a knob below the summit, contemplations of lunch and dry feet are interrupted by a helicopter flying through the saddle below, to shortly return by the same route. Not, a normal flight-see trip. Climbing up the western ridge of Lingon Mtn, Punchbowl Glacier comes into view, and smack in the middle is a dog sledding outfit. Helicopter flight plan explained. And soon enough, the helicopter returns to land in the camp. From our summit vantage, we watch a dog team make its circular tour of the glacier.

It is early in the day, and the five of us quickly descend to the saddle between Lingon Mtn and Highbush Peak. More fluorescent markers allude to previous season's activities. Climbing Highbush Peak, by way of a snow gully, our lovely views are lost to increasing clouds. We snack on the summit

amidst dogs' conversations and intermittent helicopter noise. Descending a south slope to the Punchbowl Glacier we return to the saddle, identified not only by our own melting tracks, but also by the fluorescent markers lying about.

The descent continues along a boulder field, giving way to a stream. A few wet leaps and short bushwhack later, the ever-improving trail is found. At an appropriate juncture, the new trail is forsaken for the old (and undeniably better) trail, where traveling is easier and bee free. Soon enough the parking lot lies before us and we are quickly enroute to Chair 5, only minutes before they stop serving food.



Carrie Wang Photo

This trip was my first venture up Winner Creek. I was astounded by the amount of non-hiking human activity. We saw only a squirrel, although there was other scat about. The further into the backcountry we got, the more machine noise there was. I very much felt like I was climbing in the lower 48. It is difficult to deny our ever-increasing reliance on the tourist dollar and I do not know the sustainable solution. I only hope Alaska will designate very few portions of its wilderness for this kind of use, otherwise it may lose some of its soul.

But to end on a good note, we all had great fun, only 3 out of 5 were stung (and only once apiece), we climbed two peaks, and all in good company. This trip report is dedicated to Ross Noffsinger, Dave Stchyrba, Wayne Todd, and Randy Howell, who volunteered me as author.

Mt. Naqazhegi, Chisik Island, West Cook Inlet

By Stu Grenier

There is a place called Tuxedni Bay in West Cook Inlet. It is about 8 good weather days kayak from Anchorage. On the 2003 MCA paddle climb (Scree July 05) Sarah Quimby and I spent about five days exploring this fascinating area by kayak and foot. Here is the account of the second summit we took on our 5-week trip.

When I told Don Bailey at Redoubt Bay Fish Camp Lodge near Harriet Point that we planned to paddle to Tuxedni Bay he said that you probably would want to stay there and check the place out. He was right.

If you look at a map of West Cook Inlet you can see there is a bay that cuts like a knife into the Chigmit Mountains. It is called Tuxedni Bay which is Dena'ina for "fish stranded in tide river". The place has a lot in common with Turnagain Arm with respect to mud flats and tides, though I did not see a bore tide while I was there. It does have two 10,000 foot volcanoes, one on each side, Mt. Iliamna to the south and Mt. Redoubt a bit farther north. Most conspicuous of all is a 2674 foot island peak on Chisik Island with about a 1000 foot cliff face. It towers over the outer bay demanding the attention of anyone looking east from up the bay. Many of the locals call it Mt. Chisik. The name Chisik first appeared on D.H. Sleems map of Central Alaska dated 1910. In Russian the word has a couple of meanings. One is the name for a sparrow like bird that is sometimes kept as a pet inside Russian farm homes for their song. The other is the name of a traditional Russian outdoor game played with a bat and a uniquely shaped piece of wood that is struck by the bat. The wood "ball" is shaped like a piece of candy with wing like appendages that give the "ball" a fluttering like motion when struck by the bat. This uniquely shaped wood ball is also called a chisik. Whether the game was played in Russian America or even on Chisik Island is a question for further research. Natives living on Chisik Island pointed out to me that the islands original Dena'ina name was Naqazhegi, which means "carved around it". Since Chisik is the island's name I think Mt. Naqazhegi is a suitable name for the peak. On the USGS maps the peak is unnamed.

Chisik Island has two main populated areas. Snug Harbor on the southwest corner faces the Tuxedni Channel and has a wonderful historic clamery owned by the Porter Family. A clamery is a cannery that cans clams. The other is the north west tip of the island which has some houses, one of which is fish camp to Michelle Haynes. We first landed on Chisik at Snug Harbor on our way back north to take a shot at Mt. Redoubt. A setnetter had told us that there was to be a Fourth of July celebration at the clamery and that we should attend. I looked forward to a real West Cook Inlet shindig. We fought a stiff breeze across Tuxedni Channel and pitched camp just south of the clamery which looks a lot like the Independence Mine complex in design and scale. After meeting the locals and signing liability waivers we were given the run of the place. We elected to stay in our tent rather than take a room which proved to be a serendipitous choice. One morning I got out of the tent and was making tea when I noticed a cabin cruiser drifting out to sea. I tried to raise it on the radio but there was no answer so I ran to the clamery and told them. People came flying out of that house like it was on fire, quickly pushed a skiff across the gravel beach and jumped in to race off and save the cruiser before who knows what would have happened. Boy did we eat well that morning. I guess we were heroes or something.

Now about Mt. Naqazhegi. We had about a day before the celebration so I took an interest in a trail leading up into the alders behind the clamery. It would be very convenient for us to be able to climb the peak from the clamery. The winter caretaker had told us that he had summited on snowshoes one spring. Sarah and I departed in the morning with daypacks expecting to summit and return by evening. I had figured that there was a chance that the cliff face above the beach would produce a reasonable game trail because as animals hit it they would walk along it since it was an impenetrable boundary, thus creating a trail. You can often locate game trails by finding the impenetrable boundaries. The human trail followed it for a few hundred yards then petered out. We found ourselves without a trail at the opposite end of the island from the peak that we wanted to climb with a lot of severe bush whacking required to get to the peak. Naively we continued on. I reasoned that surely there must be some game trails on this island. Unfortunately for us we never found anything that looked like a game trail in the five mile alder bash (as the crow flies) and by the time we

summited at 11 at night I had concluded that there were few if any moose or bear on the island. We were lucky to have found a small creek running down the middle of the island. If it were not for this water we would have had to turn back.

On the way up through the alders Sarah and I debated if we should turn back or not. We sometimes would find flower-studded fields that ran in the direction we were going in. Most of the time it was thick brush. With perfect weather we accepted that it would take a bivy to get back. At one point Sarah "lost the feel of the mountain" and was not a happy camper. We managed to push on and then as we broke out of the alders she "got the feel back" and led the push for the summit. It was all worth it as we sat on the windy summit with Iliamna bathed in alpenglow and Redoubt silhouetted. Tuxedni Bay stretched into the Chigmit Mountains. Standing on the summit with cliff faces dropping to the sea on three sides I could see where the Dena'ina got the idea of the island being "carved out". It was a place worth visiting. I wondered what it would be like to be sitting there when one of the volcanoes blew.

Mt Redoubt from Naqazhegi



We spent a good deal of time looking for the coffee can summit register that the locals told us about but it was not to be found so we left a photo can register. There was a nice indentation that we sat in to get out of the wind near the summit. We thought about a bivy there to stay above the bugs but being sweat drenched it soon became cold so we moved down the ridge towards Tuxedni Channel. Here we found enough dead wood to make a good pile of firewood and alders to break the wind. Taking turns sleeping and tending the fire I learned one of the truths of a bivouac with fire; the person with the least amount of clothing tends the

fire the most. As the flames danced we talked of how to get down.

Around 5:30 AM we became active and started scouting the face for an exit route. Trying to descend towards Tuxedni Channel to increase our chances of being able to walk back to the clamery put us in line for a potentially challenging route. In most places it was shear cliff and darn near vertical. I should also point out that neither one of us wanted to do the grueling 12 hour trip back through the alders but getting pined on a face like that with limited water was a major concern. To add to my worries Sarah is an excellent rock climber. On the face with the exposure and no rope I would have been way out classed. I didn't want to test the limits of my abilities on a down climb with that exposure. We looked and scouted and there was only one possibility. An alder covered arete that appeared to go all the way down to the beach. Everything else was shear cliff or eventually clifffed out. We gave it a go and after coming to the edge where the alders hang into infinity, we hit the route right on and held it to the beach with near zero exposure. We hit the beach just south of the house on pilings.

Mt. Naqazhegi from the North side

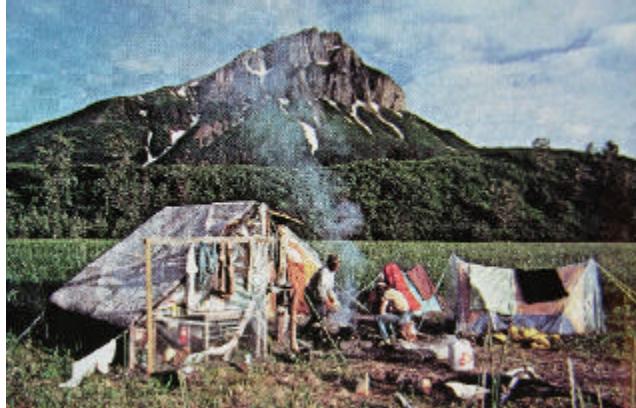


Photo by Bruce Dunn. AK. Mag. Nov. 1980

Walking back to the clamery along the beach required for us to wait for the tide to go out so we could slip by a few cliffs. I remember cat napping on the beach while waiting for a passage to open. We were lucky that this section had a beach at low tide or we would have had to crawl through the alders above the cliff or radio for a pick up.

I consider this account a good example of how not to climb Mt. Naqazhegi. Our descent route would be a reasonable day trip to the summit with a little thick brush beating in the first half of the climb. Our

descent route was the only way to get down without a rope in that vicinity. I've dubbed it Channel Ridge. It should also be noted that not using the kayak to scout for the best route was a mistake. As for the Snug Harbor Fourth of July Celebration, it was a blast with all the smoked salmon you could eat. I couldn't stay awake for the fireworks though.

Just a few observations about the Tuxedni area that maybe relative to the climbing community. Michelle Haynes, who lives at the north tip of the island and has summited Mt. Naqazhegi, said there is another reasonable route, probably the easiest, up from the Northwest face. On Chisik and in the bay area there are a number of faces that may be suitable for wall climbs depending on the rock, which appears to be good. There is also a mountain to the south of about 3500 feet, depending on what you consider the summit, called Slope Mountain that has been climbed by local setnetters from the Tuxedni Bay side. The route was reported to be awful due to alders. From what we could see, it looks like Slope Mt. would be best done from just south of Iliamna Point. Locals at the Silver Salmon Lodge south of Tuxedni Bay told us of a structure high above tree line that I think we could see from near the first large beach south of Iliamna Point. Slope Mountain is also a very conspicuous peak and I would love to climb it and explore the general area with a team of paddle climbers that can appreciate a good alderfest. Of course the same goes for Redoubt and Iliamna.

If you could imagine Turnagain Arm before the railroad, with two 10,000 foot volcanoes and a magical island thrown in, you might see why the Tuxedni Bay area could stand some more exploring by those who are willing to embrace the mud and alders, and whatever dwells within.

Anyone heading for the area should take a look at "Sockeye Sunday and other fish tales" by Dorothy B. Fribrook. And an excellent photo of Mt. Naqazhegi can be found in a short write up about Chisik Island in the Nov. 1980 Alaska Magazine P. 46.

Letters to the Editor

Mt Doolittle?

In Sunday's Voice of the Times, William J. Tobin touts a decision to name a 7,538-foot mountain in the Valdez area after Jimmy Doolittle, the famous World War II pilot. While we have nothing against this American hero, a mountain named for him should be in California or other state where he served our country.

The guidelines for commemorative names of geographical features in Alaska (Alaska Historical Commission), rules we agree with, specify that the person should have made a significant contribution in Alaska and in the area of the geographic feature to be named. Jimmy Doolittle, born in December 1896 in Alameda, California, did spend some of his youth in Nome, but returned to California, and eventually attended the University of California School of Mines for the 1916-1917 year. Then he enlisted as a Signal Corps Flying Cadet and trained at Rockwell Field, California, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1918. He never contributed anything specific to Alaska or the Valdez-Cordova district.

William J. Tobin made a long comparison with the older air hero Billy Mitchell, for whom a 7,216-foot peak is appropriately named near Thompson Pass. Mitchell did make a real contribution to Alaska and the Valdez area, as Tobin described, unlike Doolittle. Readers should be aware that, because the naming did not meet the guidelines, the Geographic Names Committee of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska and the land manager, the U.S. Forest Service, did not support this name. Based on this opposition, the Alaska Historical Commission, the agency tasked with approving geographic names at the state level, did not approve of the proposed name of Mount Jimmy Doolittle when this issue was brought before the commission in December 2003.

That the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, agreed to this name despite objections by all these Alaskans suggests substantial political pressure by Sue Cogswell and her allies to override normal procedures. Would readers want others to force an

inappropriate name on a geographic feature despite the objections of the landowner and the state governing body? We hope you join us in objecting to this bad process. If mountains in the Thompson Pass and Chugach National Forest area are to be named after aviators, they should instead appropriately honor the many great Alaskan aviators local to the area, such as Bob Reeve and Merle K. "Mudhole" Smith.

Tom Choate

Chairman of the Geographic Names Committee,
Mountaineering Club of Alaska

Announcements

We need someone to place a register on South Suicide Peak. Interested people should contact Steve Gruhn to obtain a register container at steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com or 344-1219 (h) or 868-9118 (w).

MCA Board Meeting Minutes July 13, 2005 7:00 p.m., Home of Annette Iverson

Due to Harry's restaurant being closed, we initially met outside the church where our monthly membership meetings are held, and then proceeded to board member Annette Iverson's home, located across from the park strip downtown. We had good weather so held the meeting outside around the picnic table, where we could enjoy the sunshine and food folks brought to share.

Items discussed included:

- ☛ Picnic planning. We have our permit for Sunset Park and need to buy hot dogs, burgers, buns, condiments, drinks, napkins, paper plates, forks, etc. Charcoal, too. (Desserts and salads are potluck). Annette and Eric will do the shopping. Annette, Randy, Steve, and Matt will bring BBQs.
- ☛ Joe may be leaving Alaska. Plans aren't certain yet, but he may not be able to finish out his term as treasurer. Steve Gruhn would fill in until the election of a new treasurer.

- ↳ We haven't had anyone volunteer to handle refreshments at the membership meetings.
- ↳ Records keeping: Matt brought info he had on qualified leaders for the hiking committee, which gives us a start for moving forward on this project.

There really wasn't much on the agenda for this month. Even after a late start, the meeting was adjourned about 8:30 p.m.

MCA Membership Meeting Annual Picnic Sunset Park July 20, 2005 7:30 p.m. May 18, 2005

Picnic time! No official meeting, but the annual "meeting of the grills", with good food, fun folks, and loads of enthusiasm as we meet and greet one

another and share our past and future plans of another great Alaskan summer!

This personally has been my favorite meeting this year, as there were no minutes to take—just good food to eat and great conversations to be had!

Submitted by: Carlene Van Tol, Club Secretary

Adze

For Sale

Gregory Whitney This pack has only been used on a few over nighters and it has worked great for me. This is a large pack with combination top/front-loading, twin side-access and a separate sleeping bag compartment with detachable divider. The twin "barn door" side pockets allow sideways access with interior mesh stretch pockets and zippered mesh dividers. There are two zippered front pockets and side mesh pocket and canted side water bottle pocket. The top lid pocket converts to a waist pack and features a sleeve underneath designed to carry a hydration bladder and has a mesh-lined back panel. Also includes dual ice axe/tool loops, daisy chain and lash tabs for strapping on extra gear, a V-pull side compression straps and sleeping pad straps. It is a Large: 6,000 cubic inches / 98 liters and weighs 8lbs. 0 oz./3.62kg.
Dano, 694-3724

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

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

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20 (one Scree to a 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 will not forward the newsletter.

The '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 emailed to Scree@yahoogroups.com or submitted on the web at MCAK.org or mailed to Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage Alaska 99510. Articles should be received by August 17th (the club meeting) to be in the September Issue.

Paid Ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be 'camera ready' and prepaid.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by our monthly meeting to pick it up or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Greg Bragiel

Hiking Committee: Matt Nedom - 278-3648, Carlene Van Tol – 748-5270

Climbing Committee: Richard Baranow - 694-1500, Randy Howell – 346-4608

Huts: Hans Neidig 355-3244

Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127

Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 770-1636

Web: MCAK.org (change your address here)

Mailing list service: MCAK@yahoogroups.com

Alaska 99510
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Box 102037
Mountaineering Club of Alaska