

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

September 2006

Volume 49 Number 9

**Mt Wood and Mt Walsh  
St. Elias Range  
Peak 4650 Kenai Mountains  
Mt Susitna by Kayak  
Ice Festival Time!**

**'When the pursuit of natural harmony is a  
shared journey, great heights can be achieved.'**  
Lynn Hill

**Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, September 20th @ 7:30 PM  
Program: Natalia Aulenbaucher  
will present slides on the first ascent  
of Sunray Peak**

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

***"To maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering"***

Join us for our club meetings the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at the First United Methodist Church, 9<sup>th</sup> and G Streets next to the Philips Building (you may use marked parking after hours)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org)

**Cover photo:** Paul Barry on Mt Wood, St Elias Range.

**Article Submission:** Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. To get on the cover a photo should convey the feeling of mountaineering and show human endeavor.

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## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

August 26 - End of month traverse

Circumnavigation of the Twins. Class C. 13 miles. Walk around East and West Twin Peaks, above Eklutna Lake. Elevation gain 4000'. Mostly sheep trails with some exposure.

Leader: Willy Hersman, [mcak@gci.net](mailto:mcak@gci.net)

September 13 – The Dome

This is a Class B hike, about 8 miles long with 2,000' elevation gain, up to the Dome, near Knoya Peak. We'll try to be back at the trailhead before dark, but bring a headlamp just in case. To sign up, contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979 or via e-mail:

[hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

September 23 - End-of-Month Traverse:

Mile High to Glen Highway Class C. 11 miles. From Mile High Pass above Eagle River to the Little Peters Creek trailhead on the Glen Highway. Elevation gain 3000'. We'll need to spot vehicle(s) prior to departure. Bring appropriate clothing and sturdy boots.

Leader: Willy Hersman, [mcak@gci.net](mailto:mcak@gci.net)

September 27 – The Ballfield

This is a Class B hike up to the Ballfield area, located below O'Malley Peak. We may hike up Little O'Malley or go over to the far ridgeline that overlooks the Middle Fork trail and Williwaw Lakes. The trip will be about 8 miles with up to 2,000' elevation gain. We'll try to be back at the trailhead before dark, but bring a headlamp just in case. To sign up, contact trip leader Amy Murphy at 338-3979 or via e-mail:

[hayduchesslives@yahoo.com](mailto:hayduchesslives@yahoo.com).

October 10-15 - Peter's Creek .

Hike/Bike the length of Peter's Creek to the Raisin glacier and back. 42 miles round trip. Class D Leader Greg Bragiel Contact at 569-3008

Oct 15 - End-of-Month Traverse:

Turnagain Arm Trail Class C. 9 miles. Hike the trail from Potter House to Windy Point. Requires spotting vehicle(s) prior to departure. Not exactly end of month, but schedule doesn't permit later.

Leader: Willy Hersman, [mcak@gci.net](mailto:mcak@gci.net)



# Bittersweet Reflections from the St Elias Range

Mt. Wood (15,875') & Mt. Walsh (14,787')

by Dave Hart



**Paul Barry at 11,000' on Mt. Wood's north ridge**

"It's snowing like you want it to at Christmas!" laughed Paul Barry as he and I endured our seventh straight storm day at our 8,500' base camp on Mt. Wood's north ridge. We'd witnessed three feet of wet snow this third week of May 2005. And this was the "dry" side of the Canadian St. Elias Range; I could only imagine what the nearby coastal peaks were experiencing. The next morning dawned clear and we warily set out for an alpine style ascent of the classic north ridge. Ten hours later we were wasted, having managed to wallow only one mile and 2,500' higher, the equivalent of less than one Bird Ridge hike we reminded ourselves.

Worse yet, the avalanche-prone corniced ridge began to increasingly whoompf and settle as we approached our proposed camp site. That's it; we're heading down, we both agreed. We spent the night before retreating to base camp with our tails between our legs and called for our helicopter flight home.

Fast-forward one year. May 2006 had been even more stifling, with some climbers stuck at Kluane Lake's Destruction Bay airstrip for 13 days waiting for Andy Williams to fly into Mt. Logan. As Paul and I drove the Alcan Highway through pouring rain into Canada, we wondered how long we'd have to wait for our flight into Mt. Wood. As fortune would have it, thirty-six hours later we were standing at an 11,300' pass between Mts. Strickland and Wood overlooking our base camp.

That May 29 morning, Doug Makkonen of TransNorth Helicopters had flown us from Haines Junction to 10,700' on the Anderson glacier below the west face of Mt. Wood. I popped a couple Advil to battle my headache from our rapid ascent from sea level, and kept a lookout for signs of worse. On day two we carried a load to our 13,400' high camp less than two miles from the summit. The terrain was completely skiable to our high camp, including the wind scoured ridge above the Strickland/Wood col.



**13,400' high camp with clouds obscuring Anderson Glacier base camp**

Day three found us moving up to high camp with 10 days of supplies. We were committed to staying for the duration, fully respecting the lenticular clouds kissing each of the neighboring peaks as a sea of clouds obscured everything below 10,000'.

Paul and I must have been living right the past year. What appeared to be an ominous storm approaching dissipated overnight. By 8am, it was 0° F as we skied up glacier on our summit day. Our only scary moment occurred at 11am as we neared 15,000'. We were skiing switchbacks up a 30-degree slope below a prominent ice cliff when the ground began to rumble. Not the crisp whoompf of a settling snow pack. Rather, a continuous deep 5-second groan of the glacier reestablishing equilibrium. Though we knew the snow pack was stable, our hearts skipped a beat nonetheless, only calming once we managed to crest the next rise onto less steep terrain above. We gladly ditched our skis and continued with crampons up the remaining 500 feet of 45-degree neve snow and then along the mellow summit ridge to the top. Even in our unacclimatized state, we managed to reach the top by 12:30pm.

The views were, of course, spectacular. The Vancouver-Good Neighbor and Kennedy-Alverstone-Hubbard massifs were visible 60 miles to the south, moving north to Logan, Lucania-Steele, Macauley-Slaggard, Bona-Churchill-University, Bear and finally Natazhat at the northern edge of the Wrangell/St.

Elias range. Our view was especially rewarding for Paul and I as we'd shared 20 expeditions together in the range over the prior 13 years and had climbed literally the 15 tallest peaks we could see in all directions. Our second goal, Mt. Walsh, was visible 25 miles to the south, just left of Mt. Steele. Little could we imagine that a short seven hours later we would be setting up our next base camp at the foot of Mt. Walsh's west ridge. As is frequently the case, we lingered only momentarily, not wanting to overstay our welcome, trespassing on the roof of the St. Elias range.

Ninety minutes later we were munching on a snack at our high camp as we packed up our tiny single-wall tent. What had been a relatively easy double-carry ski up was now a cumbersome load down, especially in light of the fact we consumed a pittance of our 10 days of supplies. Powder snow conditions helped our novice skiing abilities descend to base camp without incident in time for an early dinner. A quick satellite phone call to our pilot was rewarded with the welcome surprise that he'd be in to get us within an hour. Approaching clouds forced an hour detour east before eventually reaching Mt. Walsh, but by 7:30pm Paul and I were shoveling out our new 10,700' base camp platform literally 20 feet from Mt. Walsh's classic west ridge. It is amazing what one can accomplish with an Iridium satellite phone, Visa card and Bell 206 helicopter.

**Mt. Wood summit smiles. Mt. Lucania (17,150') behind**







**Mt. Walsh (14,787'), West Ridge descending towards camera**

We'd managed a surprisingly quick 3-day ascent of Mt. Wood, and our bodies felt the impact. My secret hopes for marginal weather the next day came true. After resting all day we were once again on step and ready to climb. The next morning we cursed our decision for our prior rest day when 3am brought increasing clouds. Anxiety found us brewing up breakfast at 4am, with plans to climb as high as possible until weather forced us back down. The mind games and uncertainty that climbing introduces certainly adds to its attraction for me. By 6am we were kicking steps above camp. Intermittent snow and clouds threatened to white out our progress, but our 100 wands, GPS and well defined ridge crest gave us no excuse to turn back just yet.



**Dave Hart at 12,000' on Walsh's west ridge**

By 9am we reached the ½-mile technical knife-edge as the morning sun started to burn off the lingering clouds.



**Dave Hart at 13,000' on Walsh's crux knife-edge**

By 10am we had passed the crux knife-edge after placing only a handful of pickets and screws. Thoughts of success ebbed and flowed all morning. Only 1,500' of 45-degree neve snow and alpine ice now barred access to the 14,787' summit; our optimism flickered back to life.

Two hours later we crested the final rise together, six hours after leaving base camp. The hulking Mt. Logan massif filled well more than its share of the horizon, 35 miles west. Our view to the north was surreal as we saw the mirror image of our Mt. Wood summit view from only 48 hours prior.

After 13 seasons and 20 mountaineering expeditions together, plus another 10+ independent expeditions each, this trip marked the end of a chapter for Paul and I. Mt. Walsh completed our long-term goal of climbing the highest 22 peaks in the combined Alaska / Canada region together, including the highest 13 peaks in both Canada and Alaska (4 are border peaks appearing on both lists). Standing on top, I was completely humbled reflecting on our shared cumulative nine months of physical and mental exertion, storm days, post-holing, fear, risk, jubilation, uncertainty, trust and friendship required to reach our goal. We recognized that this moment would complete a

transition we'd begun several years prior as we each wed, had children and honed professional careers. These competing priorities of wives, children, jobs and other commitments had already and would increasingly take precedence over weekend training climbs and spring expeditions. As excited as we were to share in this unique summit together, it was equally sobering facing the reality that our shared and individual mountain experiences would continue to become less frequent, replaced with other equally important family and domestic responsibilities. We wouldn't have it any other way, yet it was certainly one of life's bittersweet moments.

As much as we fought it, feelings of trespassing again overcame our desire to sit down and savor the moment. Afternoon clouds were building, and we didn't want to get caught this side of the knife-edge ridge in any sort of winds. After 15 minutes of reminiscing, daydreaming and photos, we headed down hyper-vigilant that most accidents occur on the descent. Wind, clouds and flurries gathered strength.

As we reached our tent less than three hours later, the summit window slammed shut. A 2½-day storm kept us tent bound until our helicopter pilot could sneak back in June 6, bringing our 9-day St. Elias range adventure to a successful and monumental close.



**Dave Hart at 11,500' descending Mt. Walsh, base camp visible below**

Luck, planning and solid partnerships each play a critical role in successful climbing in the St. Elias range. Hopefully Paul and I will each find a way to return to our playground in coming years and continue our good fortune together.



## **Peak 4650, Kenai Mountains Big Indian Creek**

**The Quest to Find the Highest Point on the Map  
By Steve Gruhn**

On September 5, 2005, I left the Resurrection Pass trailhead near Hope and hiked south along the trail for about 5 miles to Wolf Creek. The Resurrection Pass Trail sees quite a bit of traffic and there were plenty of resulting mudholes after the fall rains. Bicycles, horses, and four-wheelers driven by trail maintenance crews had all left their marks.

Shortly after crossing Wolf Creek I turned to the west and followed game trails up the creek,

alternating from the south side to the north side, and back and forth again and again. These critters certainly weren't trying to get anywhere in a hurry. But the game trail seemed faster than battling the brush.

About two miles after leaving the trail, all sign of game trails was lost. I had begun to feel cheated in my search for a wilderness experience. But now I found myself bushwhacking through alder, willow,

devil's club, and deep mud. Finally, all was right with the world! And after I lost my shoe for the second time in the midst of the muddy bushwhack, I was beginning to feel like I would be getting all the wilderness I could handle.

Wolf Creek forks near its head. I bushwhacked up the southern fork for about a mile. I fell down on several occasions while trying to battle the muddy willow patches. If the uneven ground and semi-rigid branches were foot soldiers trying to repel me from my conquest of the mountain fortress, the creek that I fell in twice must have been the moat.

Eventually I moved from the willows to the tall grasses and from the tall grasses to the hemlock and from the hemlock to the open tundra. I headed toward the 3,150-foot pass between Wolf Creek and Big Indian Creek. Once at the pass, I headed northeast along the ridge separating the Big Indian Creek drainage from the Wolf Creek drainage. At about 4,200 feet I saw three mountain goats that didn't seem to be bothered by my presence. As I got to within 80 feet, though, they got up and ambled around the corner into the Gold Gulch drainage. I ran up to the point where I had last seen them in hopes of being able to get some close-up pictures. But they had vanished. I could see their tracks for a short bit, and then it was as if they had sprouted wings and flown away. I was amazed at how well three large white animals could hide on a gray rocky slope.

The mountain goats gone, I regained my focus and continued ascending the ridge that divides the Big Indian Creek drainage and the Gold Gulch drainage. I reached Point 4560 and found a cairn, probably left in 1998 by Tim Kelley and Wiley Bland (see January 1999 Scree). When reading Tim's article six years earlier, I had noticed that he didn't climb the 4,650-foot point a half-mile to the northwest and the highest point indicated on the Seward (D-8) quadrangle (NW1/4, Sec. 35, T9N, R3W, S.M.). This was to be my destination, but I couldn't yet see it. By now I was in swirling clouds; a storm was coming in from the east, causing my hand-held altimeter to behave erratically.

I continued northwest up the ridge, traversing several gendarmes until reaching Peak 4650. I did not see a cairn or observe any sign of previous human visits. The clouds were too thick for me to view any of the surrounding peaks to the east, but the view to the west was awesome.

I tried to descend below the clouds to the valley so that I could speed my return and avoid the oncoming storm. Once below the clouds, though, I could see a sow black bear with a cub in the valley below. Not wishing to disturb them, I remained higher on the slope and tried to sidehill beyond them and then drop into the valley above the bears. Unfortunately, the bears decided to travel upstream, essentially parallel to my route. And they were moving faster than I was. So, I stayed high up on the slope and quickened my pace. After about 2/3 of a mile, the sow and cub bolted southwest across the stream. It was amazing to see just how fast a bear could run. I was still crosswind (and a bit downwind), so I didn't think I had disturbed them. Across the valley, though, a large boar black bear was traveling north high on the slope upwind of the sow and cub. Evidently, that was the threat that the sow sensed.

So, I had gone from two bears blocking my path to one. At least things were improving. I decided to beat feet down to the pass so that I would be below the bear and he would have a better chance of seeing me. It seemed to work. The bear changed his course to the northwest and I didn't have any more bruin conflicts.

The rain had begun to fall so I slowly retraced my steps through muck and mire back to the trailhead.

Back in Anchorage I contacted Tim and asked about his 1998 trip. He remembered reaching Point 4560, looking west, and being convinced that it was higher than Peak 4650. He didn't continue on to Peak 4650 or carry either a level or an altimeter, though.

So, here's a challenge for those of you interested in such trivial mountain details: Take a hand level and climb both Point 4560 and Peak 4650, sight back to each summit, and report your findings in a Scree article. A fondness of bushwhacking may be desirable, depending upon your route.



# Mt. Susitna by Kayak

by Stu Grenier



I got the itch to head on over to Sleeping Lady again and so ran a recruitment call out for like minded sea kayaking paddle climbers on the MCA list serve and the Eddyline which is the list serve for the KCK (Knik Canoers and Kayakers). It was short notice and I billed it as a pilgrimage to the sacred mountain Deghelishla, which is the Native name for Mt. Susitna. I got one taker but my wife put her foot down on me heading over there again with only a single female so I put in alone on the Big Su where it crosses the Parks Hwy on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

One reason I wanted to climb this mountain again, the third time in six years, was I wanted to get a suitable summit register on the true summit. Sarah Quimby and I had left just a photo can register in 03 (Scree July 2005). When I asked the MCA for a suitable register, I was asked why put a register on a mountain nobody climbs? Well, I pointed out that it is the most conspicuous mountain from Anchorage and at least some people do bother to make the trip over to bag it. In the end, it was suggested that I make my own register and take it up.

After toying with glucosamine bottles and the likes, I think I may have found the perfect summit registers. It is no secret that the best buys in town can be found at Value Village and the Salvation Army. Well these stores have a special shelf just for thermos bottles. These containers come in various sizes and colors and are made of good plastic with double walls. They are also cheap. I chose a bright orange one for Mt. Susitna.

My route up was the same as the 03 route with a few improvements. After using the Pierce Creek game trail up to the benches half way up the mountain I cut climbers left to Granite Creek. I got into the Granite Creek gully much lower than in 03 and climbed up this gully until it became a bit too steep for a solo attempt and then got out climbers left to find a series of light brush and open fields along the lip of the gully. This brought me to the base of the ridge that leads directly to the true summit. It is the one with the lake at its base. This was far easier than the climber's right side of the Granite Creek gully.





**Stu on the Summit**

Once again as in 2003, I had a visitor in camp on the mountain. My first night on the mountain I chose to pitch my tarp in the alders. I am more comfortable in the alders than the grass because anything moving in the alders makes a lot of noise. If you camp in the grass, on the other hand things can come right up to where you are sleeping with hardly a sound.

In the morning when I was about to get up I heard something coming up my trail from the night before. I was in my bug net which was pitched under my tarp and the tarp was high enough to give me 360-degree visibility. I listened to the animal come up the trail but I could not see anything because of the alders. I was about 80 feet off my trail. The animal came to where I made my 90-degree turn to come to my camp spot and stopped. I still could not see it.



After waiting a bit I decided to cough and to speak to let it know it was near me and to confirm that it was not human. It froze and listened to me and then moved slowly continuing up hill. I listened as it kept moving off until I could no longer hear it.

With my 44 strapped to my chest I put my boots on when once again I could hear it moving in the alders up hill from my camp. I listened and could tell it was coming straight for my camp in a very slow almost stealthful manner. Even with its efforts, the alders were making all kinds of sounds. In the distance, I could even see the tops of the alders shake but could not see anything under them. I began to talk harshly and shout at it and it stopped. We both waited and listened for each other. I thought about just packing up and leaving as I have done in the past in similar situations but this animal was close, too close. Maybe 70 feet away and just sitting there observing me. The more I thought about it the more I realized the situation was unacceptable. If I tolerated its presence this close, it may decide to close the distance at anytime cutting my reaction time down. I seemed to know instinctively what had to be done. I had to go right at it and confront it.

With the pistol in my right hand, I regretted that my camera was right handed. I would have very much liked to have had my camera in my left hand but it was a right-handed camera so I just let it dangle from my neck. I started talking very loudly and shaking alders as I began to close the distance on this peeping tom. I went about ten feet and stopped and listened. It was not budging. So I moved a little closer now shouting and shaking alders and it still did not move. Giving it every chance to pull back I would stop and listen but it was holding its ground. At about 30 feet I stopped and began rubber necking to see if I could at least get a glimpse of what it was. Sure enough behind a thick alder trunk, I could see the left side of a small black bears shoulder. His head and body completely concealed from my view. I thought to myself, does this bear really think that I don't know it is there? I have been shouting at it for 10 minutes. I wanted to throw something at it but there was not much to throw, so I kept shouting at it. Finally, the bear made that hissing blowing sound that blackies make and he got on his feet and turned sideways to me. I kept shouting and he slowly turned tail and went on his way. I went back to camp, packed things up, and summited.

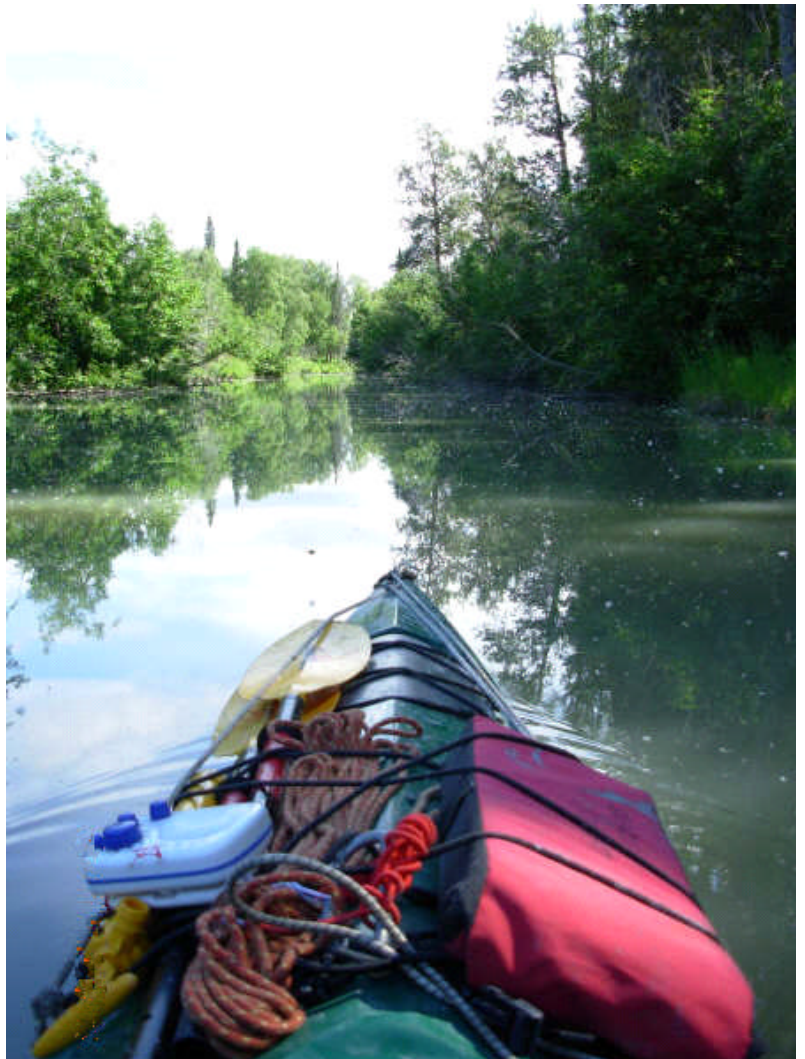
This experience made me wonder how often these curious animals move in close to our camps and just observe us without us knowing it.

On the way down I walked down much of Pierce Creek to see new country. I found that the waterfall that I reported in the July 05 article was not a waterfall but just a small noisy two-foot drop that sounded like a waterfall from the trail above the canyon.

Crossing Alexander Creek proved difficult on the way back because three boats refused to stop when I tried to flag them down. This was actually a good thing because it got me swimming. I placed my gear in the one waterproof bag I had a little at a time and began swimming it across. After six crossings, I had just about everything across except for my pack and my sleeping bag, which were too big to fit in the waterproof bag. Just when I was about to try wading up to my chin with the bag and pack held over my head a boat stopped and gave me a ride across. That night back at base camp I felt great after the swim and climb. Also, my clothes were now fairly clean from the crossing.

On the way out I paddled about a half mile up river to a fish and game fish tech team running fish wheels. I hung out, ate with them, and then headed down towards Flat Horn Lake. I got turned around in the maze of canal like channels on the way to Flat Horn and ended up a mile and a half farther up the Big Su from where I went in. I am sure to try paddling there again. The entire area is uniquely suited for sea kayaks. I may even try to climb Mt. Susitna from Anchorage next time rather than driving all the way up the Parks Hwy. to put in.

I split the crossing back to Anchorage from the mouth of the Big Su over three tides. This gave me a chance to explore the Susitna Flats and the Little Su estuary. It was necessary because there were 30-knot winds coming out of Turnagain Arm that



**On the way to Flat Horn Lake or is this Georgia?**

constantly shot waves over my deck as I headed East back to Anchorage making progress slow and tiresome. I tied into a pod of beluga in the mouth of the Big Su and found them a bit too close for comfort so just kept moving. When they come in close, the kayak seemed to rapidly shrink in size. On the flats even with strong winds, the brown "marsh" flies were biting. I spent much of the time sleeping under my bug net as the tarp crazily flapped in the wind. Only after getting in the lee of Point Woronzof did the gray water stop throwing white waves at me and allowed me to cross to Anchorage in peace on July 12th.





# Ice Festival Time!

MCA 2006 Ice Climbing Festival 9/29 - 10/1

The ice climbing festival is a 3-day instructional weekend in which participants will learn the techniques for ice climbing. Instruction will be provided both Saturday and Sunday on the Matanuska Glacier (2 hours North of Anchorage). All ages and abilities are welcome. Minimal gear is required. COST:\$45.

September 27 Mandatory Meeting for Ice Climbing Festival Participants The mandatory meeting and gear check for the Ice Climbing Festival on the

Matanuska Glacier will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church at Ninth and G in Anchorage. The instructors' meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m.

September 29 - October 01 Ice Climbing Festival The Ice Climbing Festival will be held on the Matanuska Glacier. MCA membership and attendance at the mandatory meeting on September 27 are required.

Contact Jayme Dixon ([jaymelmack@hotmail.com](mailto:jaymelmack@hotmail.com)) for more information or call (907)382-0212.



## A Big Hut Help Thank You

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska wishes to express gratitude to the following:

The **212<sup>th</sup> Alaska Air Guard** for delivering supplies to and removing refuse from the Eklutna Traverse huts; **Hans Neidig** for coordinating the ANG airlift; **Tom Harrison** (CSP Chief Ranger) for permitting aircraft delivery of personnel to Hans' and Rosie's Huts; **Keith at Alpine Air** for picking up refuse from Rosie's Roost; and a **BIG THANK YOU** to **Ray Nabinger, Jenny Magee and Sam Pepper** for dedicating four days of their time to maintenance of our huts August 5-8, 2006

Your hard work and dedication is sincerely appreciated!

Greg Bragiel (maintenance team leader)

## Harness Recall

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2006

Release #06-234

Firm's Recall Hotline: (801) 278-5533

CPSC Recall Hotline: (800) 638-2772

CPSC Media Contact: (301) 504-7908

Speed Buckle Harnesses Used During Mountain and Rock Climbing Recalled for Fall Hazard

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of Product: Speed Buckle Harnesses

Units: About 18,000

Distributor: Black Diamond Equipment Ltd., of Salt Lake City, Utah

Hazard: The harness could be threaded incorrectly. If threaded incorrectly, the webbing will easily slip when loaded. Incorrectly threaded buckles can loosen, which could cause climbers to slip out of the harness and fall.

Incidents/Injuries: None reported

Description and Models: These Speed Buckle Harnesses were sold under the following model names: Gym Speed, Focus Speed, Momentum Speed, Vario Speed and Wiz Kid. The names can be found on a tag sewn inside the waist belt of the harnesses. The harnesses are various colors and were sold individually. Only Black Diamond Equipment Speed Buckle Harnesses with incorrectly threaded buckles are included in this recall.



Sold at: Rock climbing and mountaineering specialty shops nationwide from December 2005 through July 2006 for between \$40 and \$75.

Manufactured In: Philippines

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop using recalled harnesses and contact the firm for a free replacement harness. Consumer Contact: For more information, call Black Diamond Equipment collect at (801) 278-5533 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. MT Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's Web site at

[www.blackdiamondequipment.com/about/speed\\_harness\\_bulletin.php](http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/about/speed_harness_bulletin.php) or

[www.blackdiamondequipment.com/](http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/)

To view this release online, please go to our web site at:

<https://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml06/06234.html>

<<https://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml06/06234.html>>

[http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/about/speed\\_harness\\_bulletin.php](http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/about/speed_harness_bulletin.php)

## Lead trips, Win stuff

Trip Leaders Needed!

By Amy Murphy

As you all know, MCA is run entirely by volunteers; dedicated people who care enough about the club and its members to donate their personal time and effort to help the organization run smoothly, remain financially stable, and fulfill its many missions. One of the important goals of the club is to organize a variety of trips to get people out into the mountains exploring new trails, developing new skills and competence in the backcountry and meeting new friends.

Every year, especially during club elections, we hear numerous requests for more club-sponsored trips to be held. Unfortunately, this past year only a few dedicated people have been leading a majority of the trips. I would like to encourage more of MCA's members to take the time to organize and lead at least one or two trips, after meeting the trip leader qualifications, of course. It doesn't take a lot of time – just a little extra motivation.

Believe it or not, there actually are benefits to leading trips for MCA. For one thing, how many

other opportunities do you have to tell people “where to go?” I am not able to tell my boss where to go, but I can sure tell trip participants where I think they should go!

One of the biggest benefits is the opportunity to meet friendly folks who also enjoy the outdoors. You can learn new jokes, swap stories and develop friendships and sometimes life-long relationships.

Another benefit is the opportunity to vigorously battle and challenge a variety of inclement weather conditions, particularly on some of those trips led by one individual who has undeservedly earned a reputation of being a “weather magnet.” I won't provide the trip leader's name, but one MCA member training to climb Denali in June enjoyed going on her trips this past winter because they usually entailed struggling against lots of strong to very strong winds and, of course, horizontally blowing snow. Luckily this helped the club member prepare for conditions he would encounter on Denali. I'm glad this particular trip leader could provide assistance with his training – and that is yet another benefit involved with leading trips. You can help your fellow club members work on their training goals!

And, another outstanding benefit is the opportunity to win a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate at Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking. I just won one of the gift certificates and can't wait to go shopping at one of my favorite stores (basically any store that sells outdoor equipment).

Hopefully mentioning some of the bountiful benefits associated with being a trip leader made you excited about organizing your own trips. If so, contact Randy Howell or Steve Gruhn and they can help you become a trip leader or help you organize trips and get them announced at meetings and posted on the Website and in the Scree.

Just think, if more people don't step forward to lead trips, that means some of MCA's members will be doomed to hiking with the renowned (albeit highly personable) Weather Magnet and possibly, occasionally, enduring invigorating (cruddy) weather conditions. Consider this a plea to devote a few extra hours to help out your fellow club members and lead a trip!

## **MCA Board Meeting Minutes**

MCA Board Meeting Minutes August 9th, 2006  
0600 PM Snow Goose Restaurant

1. Present: Board Members: Steve Gruhn, Sean Bolender, Debbie Arens, Eric Teela, Rebecca Bissette, Annette Iverson, Committee Chairman: Greg Bragiel General Members: Garry Green
2. Old Business-minutes from last meeting-none were discussed
3. Hiking and Climbing Committee support- the board discussed a proposed list of future hikes for MCAK to lead. Steve Gruhn has total compiled list from all members. Each board member proposed a minimum of three hikes for the club to lead. Hikes will be planned for later dates with the hope to establish a trip leader nearer to the trip date allowing for better long term planning of hike and more flexibility in who leads them.
4. Huts discussion-Steve Gruhn announced that for the Powder House, Heritage landbank would be sending a structural engineer to the hut to establish safety. They have invited MCAK to provide a member to accompany the engineer. Note: MCAK has not officially assumed ownership.
5. Huts Committee Chairman- Greg Bragiel has stepped forward to volunteer as Huts Committee Chairman if someone is willing to take his place as Membership Committee Chairman.
6. Membership Committee Chairman- with Greg Bragiel volunteering to be the new Huts committee chairman a new membership committee chairman is needed. This position requires someone with knowledge of excel programming, computer, and Internet access. Greg says commitment is 2 hours weekly and you work closely with the Treasurer.
7. Steve Gruhn introduced proposal from the municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department about opening a climbing wall Sept 13<sup>th</sup> 0530-0800PM and inviting the MCAK to provide basic certified belayers. Board discussed opportunities for a community partnership and potential for signing up new members at this event. We would need volunteers for the event, but could solicit MCAK events for free during. Refreshments for over 21 will be offered free of charge.
8. Ice Climbing Festival- Steve said that Jayme notified him all was on schedule. Mandatory meeting Sept 27<sup>th</sup>. All board members need to be in attendance to help with registration and gear check.
9. Opening a separate bank account for PayPal receipts. New account was needed to add another layer of security for online purchases through the MCAK WebPages. Suggestion brought forth by Steve. Proposal for vote of opening second account was made by Annette Iverson and seconded by Eric Teela, was approved by all board members present.

10. Officer Handbooks were initially planned to be turned in at the board meeting but was postponed because the secretary was not present. Will return officer binders at the general meeting 16Aug.

11. Library-Sean Bolender announced that there is a new bookshelf at the library and will be organizing a volunteer group to help organize and catalog books. Meeting was scheduled for evening of 17Aug06.

12. T-shirts-no new information was provided

13. Calendars-no new information was provided

14. New Business-

Rebecca Bissette updated board on recognition program pin. Contacted Stellar Designs in the local area and should receive quote for pin by the end of the week. Brought prototype pin picture and pin to meeting to give example.

Debbie Arens posted mail received from the MCAK mailbox to include a postcard from a former member and another letter requesting the identification of an unknown peak

Greg Bragiel discussed vision for huts committee and huts that the clubs takes care of as bright clean places. He wants to get a complete inventory of all items in each of the huts so the committee can decide what the huts need. He also provided an update on Rosie's and Han's, both were supplied with fuel and food. He did note that there has been a bear problem at Rosie's and there are most likely bear problems at both of the huts. He brought two cards of appreciation for the aircrews that helped maintenance huts and also mentioned he was approached by a student at UAA in the outdoor studies program that has offered to work on the Mint hut.

Mike Meekin has notified the board that he can fly individuals in to work on the Scandinavian. Annette and Sean volunteered. Debbie said that hut fund has \$600 left to work with for supplies.

Rebecca notified everyone that due to unforeseen circumstances surrounding her employment that she is forced to step down from the board for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, and submitted letter of resignation.

15. Schedule for the next board meetings were approved as follows. Wed Sept 13<sup>th</sup>, Wed Oct 4<sup>th</sup>, Wed Oct 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **General Membership Meeting Minutes**

August 16th, 2006, 7:30 pm

Meeting called to order at 7:40pm.

Many new visitor introductions tonight.

Treasurer's Report – Debbie Arens reported that our total revenue for 2006 is \$3925.00. Our total expenses have been \$6428.97. And our total balance for all accounts is \$23,285.04, which is a \$2503.97 decrease from last years balance.

Equipment – Steve Parry announced that the equipment committee will be purchasing ropes and crampons for use at the festival. If you want to use the crampons you must give him a check for the full amount of the crampons, that you will get back upon returning them to him.

Hiking/Climbing Committee – Randy Howell announced 2 trips for the month of August. Details on these trips can be found in the scree and on the website. He also mentioned that we are looking for more trip ideas and leaders. If you know of a trip you would like led, talk to Randy.

-- Amy Murphy was the winner of the drawing for the January thru June trip leader award. She will receive a gift certificate from AMH. Amy led 17 trips so far this year.

-- Rebecca Bissette announced the trip leader recognition program. The board along with Rebecca has developed a program to recognize leaders when they get to the Bronze (30 trips), Silver(50) and Gold(100) levels. Leaders will have their names printed in the Scree and receive a lapel pin each time they reach a new level. The design for the lapel pin is in the works.

Huts Committee/Membership – Greg Bragiel has volunteered to be the chairperson for the Huts Committee, if someone else volunteers to take over the membership database for him. This involves data entry of the member information as well as keeping track of who has paid their dues. If you are interested, please see Greg or one of the board members.

Huts – anyone visiting the MCA huts in the near future, please contact Greg. He needs to start taking an inventory of the available tools, nails, fuel and supplies in each hut. If you visit one of the huts, write down what you see and report it to Greg. Always pack out what you pack in. Greg also announced that the Rosies and Hans huts have been painted and look great.

Training – Ice Climbing Festival. Jayme Dixon talked about the Festival. Sign up sheets for students, volunteers and leaders were up front. September 27<sup>th</sup> is a mandatory meeting at the church for every student, leader and volunteer. 6:30 for leaders, 7:30 for students. Instructors are needed. In order to be an instructor it is preferred that you have instructed at a previous festival. If you haven't, see Jayme and the board will have to approve you as a leader. You should know your basic ice techniques, setting up anchors, rope techniques, and be able to lead Grade 2+ ice. Leaders should be able to volunteer both days. Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 that weekend.

Calender – Stu Grenier – should be out the beginning of November. Initially they will be making 300-350.

Library – Sean Bolender is hosting a work party 8/17 to get the library in order.

Scree – Hans Neidig won the Scree Author Award Drawing for his article "Hans Bad Swim"

Announcements:

-- Steve Gruhn read a letter from Greg Higgins thanking the MCA for his award. Steve presented him with a plaque.

-- Congrats to Wayne Todd for becoming the 9<sup>th</sup> person to climb all 21 7,000-foot peaks in the Western Chugach Mountains. Good job Wayne!

--Patches are for sale at \$5.

--Amy Murphy should be taking orders for t-shirts by the October meeting.

--There is an opportunity to assist the Parks and Recreation with a climbing wall at Kincaid Outdoor Center's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration the evening of Sept. 13 – see Steve Gruhn if you are interested.

--Paypal membership renewal – Willy should have it up by the September meeting.

--Moment of silence for the deceased former member Hans Gmoser. He made the first ascent of Mount Blackburn in 1958.

--Rebecca Bissette has resigned from the board

Presentation – Barry Weiss gave a slide show presentation on Eastern Greenland

## Adze

For Sale

Koflach Degre (the orange ones) Mountaineering Boots. Size: US 10, EU 9.5. The boots are in excellent condition. \$150. Call if you are interested. Mark--360-5935

For Rent

Iridium Satellite Phone, Rent my satellite phone, solar charger and waterproof pelican case. Perfect for rafting, paddling, hunting, expeditions. \$2/min + \$10/day field time only. Discount for extended trips. Best rates in Alaska.

Dave Hart, 244-1722, david.hart@pxd.com

For Sale

La Sportiva Makalu Mountain Boots Men's size 9 1/2. Excellent condition. Used one season. Crampon compatible. Tough enough for any season in the mountains.

Matt, 278-3648 or [antigravity@acsalaska.net](mailto:antigravity@acsalaska.net)



## MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips. **NON-TECHNICAL:** Following are a few standards used to classify nontechnical trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

**CLASS A:** Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

**CLASS B:** Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

**CLASS C:** Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

**CLASS D:** Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

**CLASS E:** Hazardous climbing conditions or stream-crossing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

**TECHNICAL:** Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.

**GLACIER TRAVEL:** Trips requiring roped travel over glaciers. Knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. Basic understanding of ice and snow anchors also required.

**FIFTH CLASS:** Trips which involve fifth class climbing. A Basic Mountaineering course or equivalent is required. Knowledge of belay and rappel techniques and placing anchors is required. Climbing difficulty varies widely with each trip.

**TRIP PARTICIPANTS** have the obligation to acquaint themselves with the nature of the trip and to verify that it is within their capability and experience. Anyone wishing to participate in any trip above CLASS A must have completed one or more trips of the next lower classification, or the equivalent.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

## General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment is available from the trip leader.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. The trip leader can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-prepared (e.g. inappropriate clothing/gear).
4. The leader's suggestions are to be followed. Do not go off alone, return or rush ahead without his (her) permission, and don't ford a stream before the leader assesses the situation. Remember, this is a club trip and the leader must know where all participants are. Anyone separating from the group without the leader's approval is no longer considered a participant the MCA Sanctioned trip.
5. The trip leader has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), dependent upon current conditions. However, he/she must appoint a qualified co-leader to lead the second group using the guidelines specified in the current Trip Leader Responsibilities.
6. Trip participants who, in the leader's opinion, put themselves or other members of the group in danger by disregarding the leader's suggestions, shall be subject to sanction by the club. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand at general meeting, exclusion from future trips, termination of annual membership, or lifetime exclusion from the club.
7. You must sign up on a trip roster (club meetings) or contact the leader, and you must have signed the club waiver to be on a club trip.
8. If you find you cannot participate after signing up on the roster, please let the leader know, both for transportation and gear-planning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.
9. Total number of people on club trips:  
Minimum: 4 (for safety reasons)  
Maximum: Leader option, depends upon the trail and campsite conditions, but generally limited to 12 in trail-less areas or State/ National Parks
10. Firearms are not encouraged, and please let the leader know if you want to carry one - it will be leader's option. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred.

Approved: MCA Board, February 15, 2000

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Steve Gruhn	344-1219
Vice-President	Sean Bolender	333-0213
Secretary	Julie Perilla	222-6939
Treasurer	Debbie Arens	688-4606

Board member	Eric Teela	240-9693
Board member	Annette Iverson	222-0581
Board member	Randy Howell	346-4608
Board member	Steve Parry	248-8710
Board member	your name could be here	

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

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 submitted on the web at [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) or mailed to Scree Editor Box 102037 Anchorage Alaska 99510. Articles should be received by September 20th (the club meeting) to be in the October 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.

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 - 569-3008  
Hiking and Climbing Committee: Randy Howell – 346-4608, Greg Bragiel – 569-3008  
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008  
Calendar: Stuart Grenier 337-5127  
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald 346-2589  
Web: [www.mcak.org](http://www.mcak.org) (change your address here)  
Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoogroups.com)

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