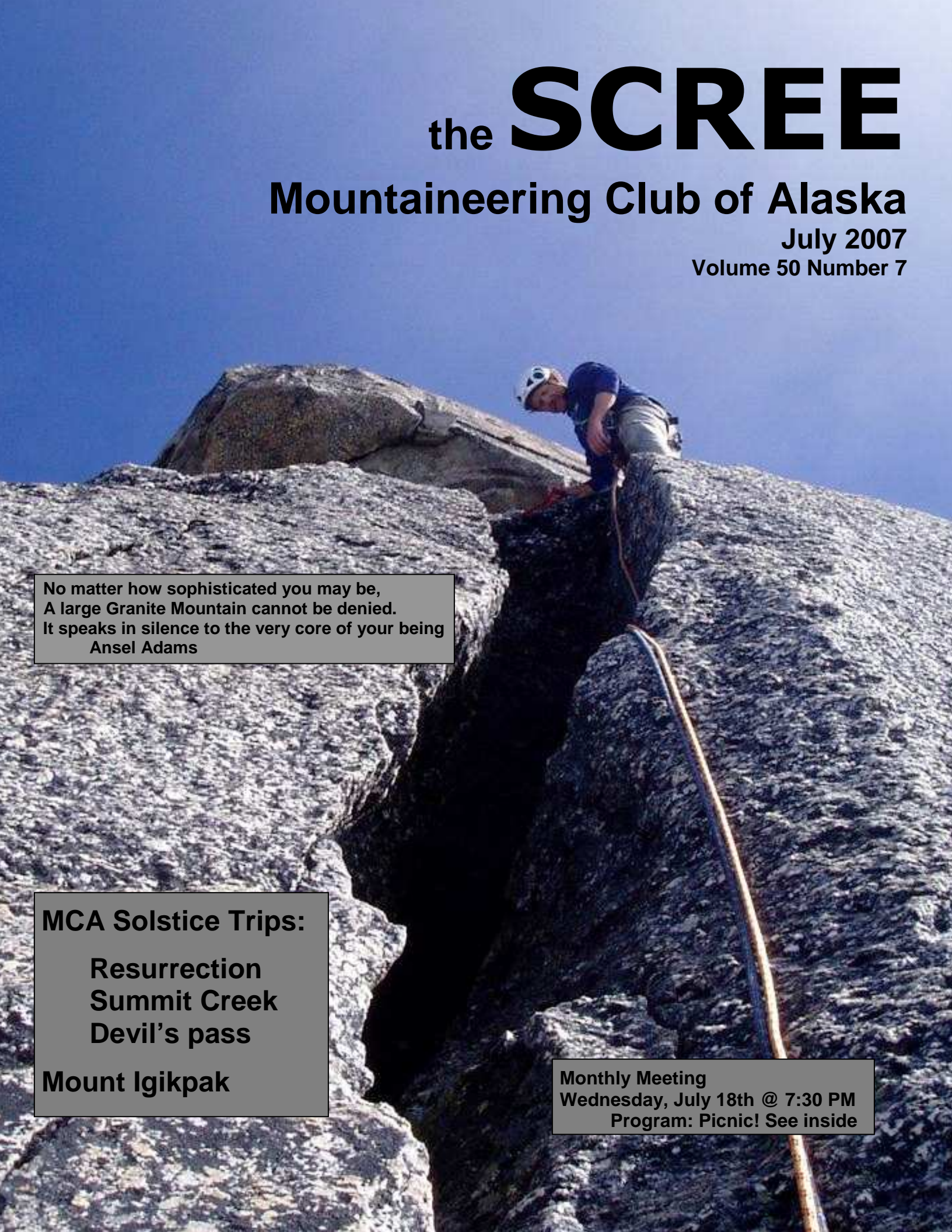


the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

July 2007
Volume 50 Number 7

A full-page photograph of a climber in a blue shirt and white helmet ascending a steep, craggy granite mountain face. A thick rope is visible running down the rock. The sky is clear blue.

No matter how sophisticated you may be,
A large Granite Mountain cannot be denied.
It speaks in silence to the very core of your being
Ansel Adams

MCA Solstice Trips:

Resurrection
Summit Creek
Devil's pass

Mount Igikpak

Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, July 18th @ 7:30 PM
Program: Picnic! See inside

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"

For the Club meeting info this month see Annette's corner in this issue (Picnic!)

Contact information is provided on the back page or visit us on the web at www.mcak.org

Cover photo: Matt Kendall photo of Mount Igikpak. with climber Chris Haaland See Peak of the Month column in this issue

Article Submission: Articles and photos are best submitted on the web at MCAK.org. You can also attach a word processing document to an email. Due to formatting problems please do not submit material in the body of an email. 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

July 4-8, Brittle Peak

Located in the East Fork of the Eklutna River. 40 miles round trip with a gain of 5,000 ft. Time permitting, we can climb other peaks in the area. Leader Tim Harper, 240-1506

July 14 – 15, Hut recon to Elbow Pass (Eska Basin)

Class C, 12 miles round trip, 3000 feet of elevation gain, overnight gear, tents, etc; we will be field-testing a hut site. Leader: Willy Hersman, mcak@gci.net

July 20 – August 3, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Class B/C. The trip may include elevation gains over 2,000 feet on day hikes. Destination will be Lake Peters to Canning River with possible climb up Mt Chamberlin or set up base camp at Red Sheep airstrip along the Chandalar River and do 2 one week loop trips in the area. Leader: Don Hansen, donjoehansen@msn.com

July 24, 5:30 p.m. South Suicide Peak (5005)

Class D, 5,000 feet of elevation gain, 9 miles round trip. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn, steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

July 26, 6:00 p.m. Vista Peak (5026)

Class D, 3,900 feet of elevation gain, 11 miles round trip. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn, steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

July 28 – 29, Annual Couples Trip, Powder Hut

(Girdwood area) class B, 9 miles round trip, elevation gain 2,100 feet, Contact Greg or Mary Beth Bragiel 569-3008 or unknownhiker@ak.net

July 28 Pioneer Peak (6398)

Class D, 6,700 feet of elevation gain, 15 miles round trip. Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn. steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

July 31, 5:30 p.m. Penguin Peak (4334)

Class D, 4,100 feet of elevation gain, 7 miles round trip, Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn, steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

August 2, 6:00 p.m. Peak 4009

(Four Mile Creek and Thunder Bird Creek) Class D, 3,800 feet of elevation gain, 9 miles round trip, Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

August 4 – 8 Mint Hut maintenance trip

Class D. elevation gain 2400 feet, 17 miles round trip, Contact Greg Bragiel 569-3008 or unknownhiker@ak.net

August 9, 6:00 p.m. West Ptarmigan Peak (4911)

Class C, 3,000 feet of elevation gain, 7 miles round trip, Contact leader at least 24 hours in advance of trip. Leader: Steve Gruhn steven.gruhn@hartcrowser.com, 868-9118 (w), 344-1219 (h)

MCA Solstice Trips

by Tom Choate



Dwight and Tom on the summit ridge
Photo by Michael Funke
All pictures from 2007

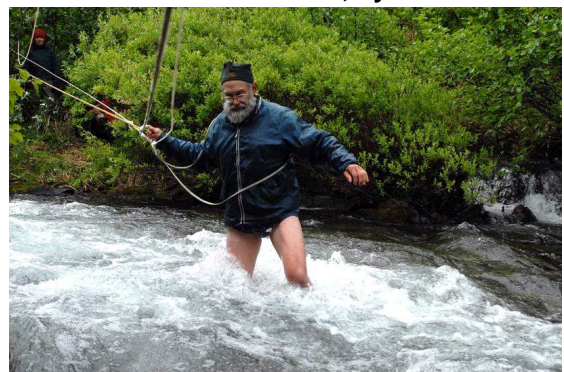
After four successful MCA Solstice trips to the Crescent/Carter Lakes area, when every peak and some points were climbed, a reconnaissance of the next area was required. Charlu and I camped in a beautiful heather meadow below Summit Creek Pass in early July 2004. Recording over a 100 flowers in bloom, we climbed both North (4824) and South (4990) Gilpatrick Mountain and water bottle leveled a 3rd summit (4836?) at the NW end of the massif. A cairn was found and a summit register was left on both summits, then a descent made of upper Devil's Creek Lake basin and a circle through the 3650 col to a cirque lake in East Creek on the way back.

The 2005 'Solstice' (June 24-26) trip was sunny and very successful. Ten people enjoyed the meadow and most climbed three peaks in a long wonderful Saturday. We followed the ridge between East and Colorado Creeks northward from near Summit Lake Pass. The peaks showed no trace of humans, although in a long mined and hunted area like this, they no doubt had earlier climbs. The first Peak, 4450, was enjoyed by all. We continued down 700 feet to a small tarn that actually flows into Colorado Creek (contrary to the map) and then up steeply to peak 4350, shedding less ambitious climbers on the way. Dropping down 600 feet to the

next notch, even fewer climbers ascended peak 4528 (which continues as a series of points for miles to the north). Sitting here enjoying the afternoon sun and views over Colorado country, it seemed logical to name the three peaks after states adjacent to Colorado: Utah (44) Nebraska (43) and Wyoming (45) and I wondered what the view would be like from the two 4450 points on Wyoming Ridge. To check out the notch into Fox Creek, I turned left into Colorado Creek Valley, while others turned right on their way back toward camp. It's an easy pass, suited to some future wilderness trip.

Sunday was a fine day for getting a little sleep and still climbing the high peak to the NE summit (triangulation point) 4982. Plenty of old survey stuff scattered up there with great views of the mining country and highway to the east. No cairn or register however, so we left one as before. What miners and surveyors trod this high place? Through binoculars I scanned the Colorado peak group to the north, and I thought I saw markers on both 4325 and 4539 points. In 2006 I climbed these and found triangulation stuff on both, not just one as the map shows.

Tom crosses Devil's Creek, by Michael Funke



The 2006 trip didn't attract many folks, even though we camped at the same beautiful place. Saturday involved a nice hike over the pass and down East Creek to the lake. (the trail on the map is too high) and then SW to the 3350 pass ('East Creek Pass'). The small trail leads down and NE to Resurrection pass. I saw Dall Sheep to the East and chased two young and curious caribou up to 3500 feet as I turned right onto the large peak to the north. Eventually at the northern end I found a cairn at about 4350 feet and some strange ritualized stone marking nearby. Who has had nature ceremonies here? Did it bear any relationship to Resurrection Pass not far away? The large somewhat barren top had a rather New Mexico character if one were to give it another next-to-Colorado state name. Back down to the trail pass and south up the ridge to point 4450 with good views of Juneau Creek and then a long mile eastward to the top of 4550. Time for a 6 PM snack and study of the view SE to the Devil's cirque lakes where I had visited 2 years earlier. Could the twin 4550 points of west Gilpatrick be real peaks? It seemed so from here. No cairn or sign. It seemed too close to trails to be unclimbed. Nevertheless, I hoped it could be called Arizona, as yet another Colorado neighbor. Descending to the 3650 notch, I displaced Sheep as I glissaded down to the cirque lake in East Creek. Sunday saw clouds and wind, but Deb elected to climb the NW Gilpatrick summit with me, scrambling directly from camp onto the north ridge. From the 4850 summit, I waterbottle leveled on the 4824 north summit as I had done two years earlier and again came to the conclusion that the NW was some 15 feet higher and the highest legitimate summit. We left a cairn and information for future climbers and surveyors to decide. Just for interest, we toured around the cirque edge to the 4824 summit and leveled back with the same result, before dropping down the north ridge to camp.



Tom the Mountain Biker
Michael Funke photo

The 2007 solstice trip was to check out the peaks to the south of the above summits, just across Devil's Creek from the 5.3 mile camp on the Devil's Pass trail. A reconnaissance two weeks earlier had shown it better to camp there and forge a river crossing direct to the highest peak (4810).



Ascending, camp is near creek and trail
Michael Funke photo

The weather was overcast and windy as Mike, Sharman and I left about 6:30 PM Friday. I chose to bike, as it had taken almost 3 hours on the reccy (including checking flowers) so I caught them before the Beaver Pond Camp. I didn't know I would have to push up many hills (blame it on carrying the rivercrossing ropes etc, not age!). So, what with leaving 'MCA' signs, I got to camp only 20 minutes before them. Later John and Marcy, and Dwight and Annette arrived and it wasn't raining (yet).

In the Morning no others had arrived by 9:15 so we set off to establish a rope-supported crossing point on Devil's Creek, which is fast moving for miles. After several cold-leg wadings and 2 ladies declining to use the rope and sling system, John (faithful) re-crossed and 4 of us started up the long



Sharman Haley takes a break
Michael Funke photo

and mostly grassy slope. Soon we saw three others coming across, and after a break half-way up, Mike waited while 3 of us scrambled into the cloud above. Later, near the top he caught up stating that Donna, Raymond and Madeline had gotten to the wet-lichen talus part and retreated.

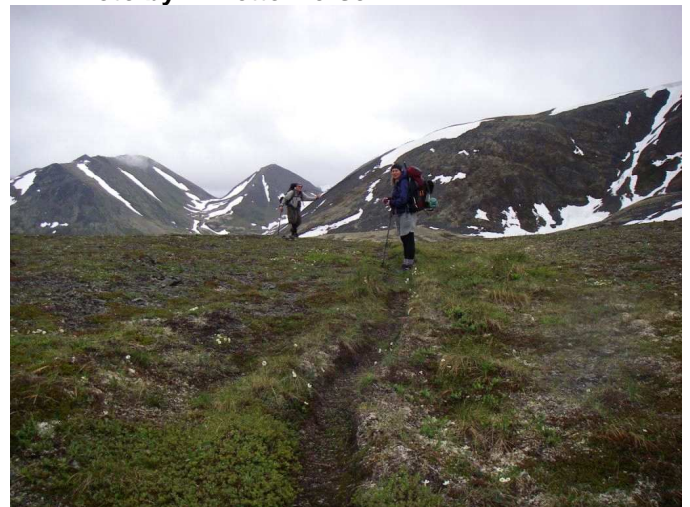
The wind increased greatly as we approached the false Summit (4450) where we found old cans (including a 50's coke can) and the mist became drizzle. Sharman remained here, but the 3 stubborn guys headed a mile south to investigate the true summit, weather-be-darned. A wall (for hunting?) was found on a lower point but there was nothing on the 4810 summit itself. In fact, in the blasting wind and splattering rain we walked too far just to be sure we had crossed the top. My altimeter said

4900 at the highest rocks. No cairn, just a bit of a trail (sheep?). It seemed a lot like the famous Mount Washington weather there. So for a state name, how about Washington? Who hunted there? What prospectors came so high 70 years ago or more.

Mike and I checked on plants flowering along the way as we descended out of the cloud. Soon we foot-glissaded down remaining snowbanks to the much quieter slopes near the river. Another splash of cold, a coiling of ropes and soon we were back up at the trail, where our other 3 team members met us with tales of the fancy new hut where Devil's Pass and Resurrection Pass trails meet. They also mentioned that the older hut was locked. This is a useful shelter so we *suggest all of you readers write the Chugach National Forest and ask them to keep it open and not remove it (if you agree with us).*

It rained during the night and no climbs were done Sunday. Five members wanted to make the crossing from Resurrection Pass to East and then Summit Creeks, so two of us went through Devil's Pass to Resurrection Pass to find the very faint start of that trail and help with that traverse. All completed that trip by evening, though some exploring was needed, especially where the trail was under snow. The trip out was rocky at first, but below our campsite my bike was at last a big advantage, 3.2 miles to the Beaver Pond camp taking only 20 minutes (but I had to push the last part to the car). Next year we'll explore more new ground in this area, so plan to come!

Raymond and Madeline on Summit Creek Trail
Photo by Annette Iverson



Peak of the Month, Mount Igikpak

by Steve Gruhn



Igikpak by Matt Kendall

Mountain Range: Brooks Range; Schwatka Mountains

Borough: Northwest Arctic Borough

Drainage: Noatak River and Reed River

Latitude/Longitude: 67° 24' 48" North, 154° 57' 45" West

Elevation: 8276 feet

Prominence: 6126 feet from either Peak 8250 in the Franklin Mountains near the Canning River and the Hulahula River or Peak 8320 in the Franklin Mountains near West Patuk Creek and the Canning River

Adjacent Peak(s): Tupik Tower (7771), Peak 6423 near the Noatak River and the Reed River, Peak 6215 near Tupik Creek and the Reed River, and Peak 5986 near the Noatak River

Distinctness: 1426 feet from Tupik Tower

USGS Map: Survey Pass (B-4)

First Recorded Ascent: August 9, 1968, by David Roberts, Alvin De Maria, and Charles Loucks

Route of First Recorded Ascent: South face to the east face

Access Point: A gravel bar at about 1850 feet on the southwest side of the Noatak River

Mount Igikpak (occasionally referred to merely as Iggy) is the highest point in the Schwatka Mountains of the western Brooks Range, the highest point in the Northwest Arctic Borough, and

the highest point in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Its name means "two big peaks" in Inupiat, referring to the double summit of the peak.

The first recorded ascent was from a base camp at about 2950 feet east of the Reed River in a one-day push after a failed attempt on the west ridge. The climb was a scramble with three pitches of a technical rock climb at the summit block with reported slope angles of up to 120 degrees (overhanging). Grace and Vin Hoeman followed the route three days later. Roberts' trip report appears on pages 295 to 303 (with photographs appearing between pages 288 and 289) of the 1969 American Alpine Journal.

Steve Hackett's September 2, 1976, solo climb of the northeast face and upper east ridge is reported on page 166 of the 1977 AAJ.

Chris Haaland on Igikpak

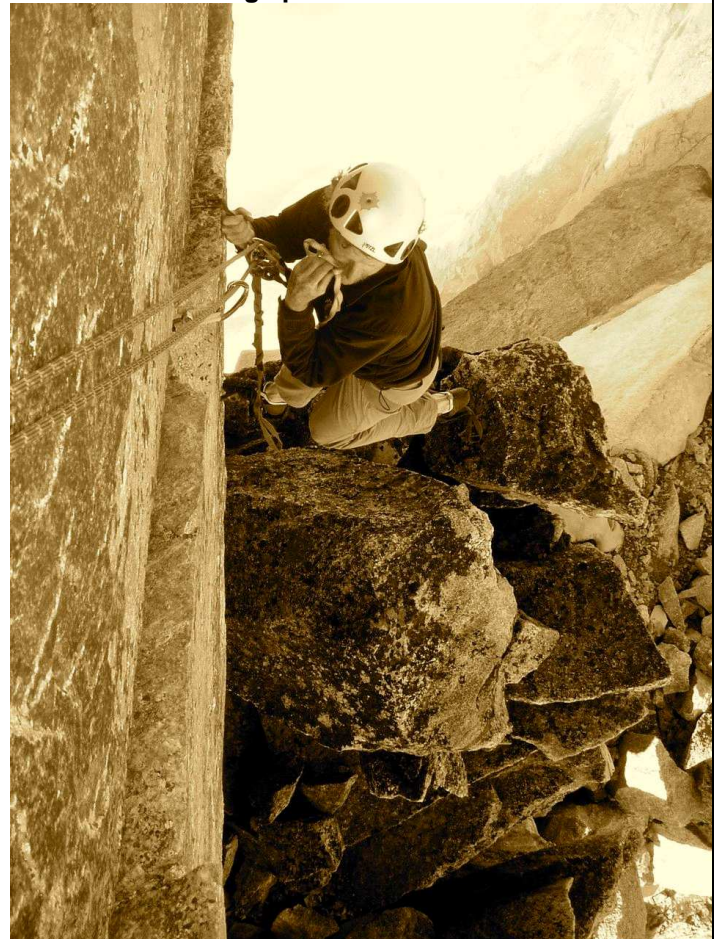
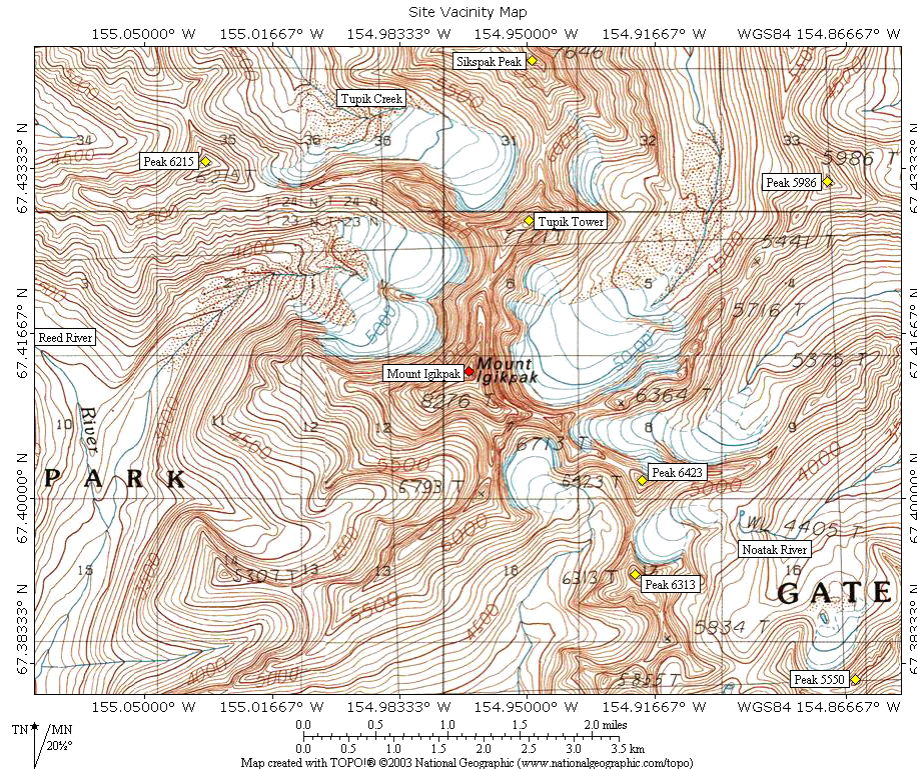


Photo by Matt Kendall

After their August 23, 2004, climb (for the fourth ascent) of the original ascent route Max Kendall, Chris Haaland, and Greg Griffith rated the three

summit block pitches with the first pitch at 5.9, the second pitch at 5.8, and the third pitch at 5.10 A2



Annette's Corner

Thank you to Matt Szundy for sharing his slideshow of Antarctica at the June meeting.

July Meeting:

The annual club picnic takes the place of the July meeting and will be held rain or shine at Valley of the Moon Park's picnic shelter at 7:30 P.M. on Wednesday, July 18. The park is located along Arctic Blvd. in the Chester Creek Valley, alongside the creek and trail. Bring something to share: salad, side dish, or desert. Hamburgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, condiments, drinks, eating and drinking apparatuses and grills will be provided. See you there!

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

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Treasurer	Travis Taylor	382-4823

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Board member	Randy Howell	346-4608
Board member	Andy Rembert	688-3230
Board member	Sara Ellen Hutchison	382-7097

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, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be submitted on the web at www.mcak.org or e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles should be received by the monthly club meeting (third Wednesday of the month) to be in the next month's Scree.

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.

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