the **SCREE**

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

July 2010 Volume 53 Number 7



"I get by with a little help from my friends." ~John Lennon/ Paul McCartney

High Point, Skagway Borough Lost on the East POM – Peak 10220, Wrangell Mountains Approved MCA Bylaw Changes

Monthly Meeting Wed., July 21st @ 6:30 PM Program: Annual picnic, see inside for details.

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

www.mcak.org

"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 3rd Wednesday of the month. In July the meeting is a picnic. See page 3 for details.

Cover Photo: Edward Earl, Dave Covill, and Greg Slayden atop the Skagway Borough High Point; photo by Drake Olson.

Article Submission:

Text/video/photography submissions for the Scree can be sent as attachments to <u>mcascree@gmail.com</u>. Do not submit material in the body of the email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog or website, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors.

For best viewing of the Scree on a monitor using Adobe Reader, click on 'View' and 'Full Screen.'

Contents

Skagway Borough High Point (Nourse Peak)

Lost on the East (Twin Peaks)

POM – Peak 10220, Wrangell Mountains

Approved MCA Bylaw Changes

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

July 16 – July 30 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Class B/C. The trip may include elevation gains over 2,000 feet on day hikes. The destination will be drop off and pickup at an airstrip on the Sheenjek River on the south side of the Brooks Range in ANWR. Set up food cache at the airstrip from there do two one-week trips along the Sheenjek and tributaries (climbers are welcome if you include a reliable partner). Leader: Don Hansen, <u>donjoehansen@msn.com</u>.

October 15-17 Paria Canyon - Utah/Arizona

Tired of rain? Meet me for a trip down the most beautiful slot canyon in the world, where it rarely rains, and if it does, we'll skedaddle to safety while it rushes by. I have a limited number of permits for this mellow, 38-mile, three-day hike from White House trailhead to Lee's Ferry. Plan on wet boots (or sneakers) as you cross the warm, ankle-to-knee-deep Paria every 15 minutes, making your way toward the Colorado River. Dates cannot be changed. We will meet in Page, Arizona, on the 14th and spot a vehicle. Mileages from airports: Las Vegas - 277, Phoenix - 279, Salt Lake City - 386. Leader: Willy Hersman, mcak@gci.net



Rock Climbing Training

The Training Committee is putting together a schedule of rock climbing training for this summer. We are planning several evening clinics and also a weekend in Hatcher Pass to cover different climbing skills. Climbing Safety Basics was covered on 6/29. Based on popular demand, future clinics may cover the following topics: climbing techniques and movement on rock, rappelling, basic anchors,

advanced anchors, sport climbing, and self rescue. Currently scheduled classes are listed below. If you are interested in a certain skills topic not yet scheduled, contact Tim Silvers. Check the MCA website for updated training schedule of future clinics.

July 13 Climbing Anchors Clinic

This clinic covers rock climbing anchors and is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, 7/13. Location TBA at one of the Seward Highway rock crags. Students will learn how to build safe anchors using bolts, natural anchors and also artificial protection as time permits. Building safe, efficient anchors is a skill that all climbers should review and

practice. Cost of the clinic is \$15. To register, contact Tim Silvers at MountaineeringClubofAlaska@gmail.com.

July 24 - 25 Rock Climbing Skills Weekend

There is a rock climbing class scheduled for the weekend of 7/24-25 in Hatcher Pass. Training topics will likely cover: climbing safety basics, climbing techniques and movement on rock, rappelling, basic anchors, sport climbing, and techniques related to traditional and multi-pitch climbing. Cost of the class will be \$60. Cory Hinds and Tim Silvers will be instructing along with other experienced MCA climbers. To register, contact Tim at MountaineeringClubofAlaska@gmail.com.

July Club Meeting Annual Club Potluck at Bayshore Clubhouse

Where? 3131 Amber Bay Loop. Wednesday July 21, 6:30 PM.

Exit Minnesota @ 100th, head west. Left @ Bayshore Drive. Rt @ Admiralty Bay Drive. Left @ either Amber Bay Loop or Perenosa. Blue "Bayshore Clubhouse" signs also point the way.

What? Hotdogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, fixings and drinks are provided. Please bring your own utensils, cup and plate (this is an environmental move-again). **No** alcohol is allowed at the MCA picnic.

Please bring something to share as indicated below:

A-H: Dessert I-R: Salad S-Z: Side dish

Skagway Borough High Point (Nourse Peak) by Greg Slayden

June 17, 2008 Dave Covill, Edward Earl, Drake Olson, and Greg Slayden



Dave, Edward, and I came to Haines with the primary goal of climbing Mount Fairweather. We had all gotten to know each other through a loosely-organized group of hard-core peakbaggers that are interested in attaining county high points. There are over 3,000 counties in the United States, and their summits range from the icy peaks of the Alaska Range to swampy hummocks in Florida. In Alaska, there are now 29 boroughs and Census Areas that are treated as county equivalents, and their high points are a daunting challenge that no one has completed.

While planning our Fairweather trip, we researched other nearby Borough and Census Area high points that might make for alternate destinations in case of bad weather or extra time. We discovered that the Borough of Skagway had recently been incorporated, and its highest point was an officially unnamed 8,239 peak (WGS84 coordinates 59.6702, -135.5379) [Bivouac.com calls this Nourse Peak after the nearby Nourse River, Ed.] We mentioned this obscure summit to our glacier pilot, Drake, and he did an aerial reconnaissance a few weeks before we arrived, finding a nice landing area just below the peak.

We were off on Mount Fairweather for five days, from June 11th to the 16th, and we had to turn back 2,300 feet below the summit due to poor route conditions. We returned to a motel in Haines on the night of June 16th and regrouped, and we started thinking about a day-trip to the Skagway high point if the weather was cooperative. We still had several days before we had to fly home. The next day, June 17th, the skies looked clear in the morning. We called our pilot Drake and he was up for the Skagway trip, so we agreed to meet at his hangar by mid-morning. I went and rented some alpine-touring skis to replace the snowshoes I had lost in a crevasse on Fairweather, and soon we were back at Drake's hangar, sorting though gear once again. Peak 8,239' was a hike of about 1.500 vertical feet that was likely to take only a few hours, so we took just what we needed for a day trip. Drake was planning on climbing with us, and as he loaded up his skis alongside my rentals he muttered about the inefficacy of snowshoes in his usual profane style.

By noon or so the four of us were airborne, heading north up the bed of the Ferebee Glacier. After flying over some icefalls and awesome jagged pinnacles, Drake found Peak 8,239' easily, a relatively easy-looking snow peak that appeared to be the highest in the area. He circled the area a couple of times, did a test landing run, and then he made a perfect landing on the flat floor of a basin just north of the peak, elevation about 6,800 feet (WGS84 coordinates 59.6789, -135.5442).

We jumped out of the plane and got ready for our climb. I had to put my too-

small ski boots on there and get my skis all set up, and Dave and Edward were roping up for their snowshoe trudge. It was a bright, sunny day with just a few clouds here and there, so we all lathered up with sunscreen, too. Drake got impatient with our preparation, and he just took off alone on his AT skis, heading for the peak. I was ready next, and Dave urged me to take off, too, while he and Edward got their rope arranged. On snowshoes, they were much more likely to punch through a crevasse than Drake and I on skis, even though it didn't look like there were any nearby.



I followed Drake's ski tracks across the flat basin and then up a broad snowy ridge, skinning along easily on my rented gear. Drake was far ahead, and Edward and Dave way behind, so I got to enjoy a bit of solitude—it felt funny to feel so alone in a remote Alaskan wilderness of snowy, unclimbed peaks. Drake's tracks led me up to a notch north of the summit of Peak 8,239', and near the notch I had almost caught up to him, but I waited a bit to make sure that Dave and Edward were coming along OK before taking off.

Past the notch Drake had made a rising traverse across the snowy northwest face of the peak, aiming for the southwest ridge. I was slightly concerned about some cornices above the face, but the

> risk seemed minimal. The final steep slopes to the ridge tested the holding ability of my skins to the limit-somehow Drake, a very thin, wiry guy, was getting better traction due to his gear or skinning technique. Drake was waiting for me near the crest of the ridge, where a miniature bergschrund was bridged by wide а snowbridge. He wondered if I had a rope, in case he punched through, but when I told him it was with the others, visible way down below, he decided it was

not worth the wait and skied across the snowbridge anyway and headed up the ridge towards the summit. I decided to wait for my companions, more for the sake of party solidarity than rope insurance, so I took a seat in the snow just below the bergschrund and waited 15 minutes for my snowshoeing companions to arrive. When they did, I let them cross the snowbridge first, and then I followed—it was pretty trivial, clearly not a glacial crevasse. Once on the ridge, the snow was south-facing and very mushy, with bands of rock showing through. It was also pretty steep-I tried to follow Drake's skin track, but once again I didn't have the traction and was forced to switchback, which was sometimes impossible given the nearby rock fields. I had to take my skis off at one point to get over some rocks. Still, overall this was an extremely easy ascent-definitely Class 1/Grade I snow, and in May the bergschrund and summit ridge rocks are probably not even a factor.

Eventually I reached the snowy summit crest, where Drake had been waiting a while, and Dave and Edward were not far behind me. It was a great moment—we were ecstatic about summiting a fairly major Alaskan peak, especially one that for all we knew was previously unclimbed. The random clouds in the area were on the increase, but it was still a bright sunny day and the views of endless mountains in all directions were awesome. The actual summit snow was an overhanging cornice, so we got as close as we dared, and spent some time taking pictures, eating summit snacks, and otherwise resting. Dave even took out the satellite phone and tried calling office-bound friends to let them know where he was and stoke some jealousy.

Suddenly, though, Drake saw some clouds approaching the landing zone below, and he cut short our summit sojourn by announcing we had to get back to the plane pronto, or else face being trapped overnight on the mountain. It was back to fire-drill mode as we hurriedly packed up. Drake took off on his skis and was down at his plane in about 5 minutes, and I could have been there in 10 if I had taken off and tried to keep up, but I thought it best to try to stay with Dave and Edward.

So I waited for them to get roped up, and I then skied down on a mushy snowfield away from our ascent route that avoided more rocks-but I still managed to ski over at least one partly covered rock and gouge the P-Tex on my rental ski base. After making a bunch of nice, wide turns, I had to take my skis off and make an annoying postholing hike across a rockfield/mush mixture in order to regain our upward route near the bergschrund. I got there at the same time as Dave and Edward, skied carefully across the snowbridge, and then ripped some nice turns across the face to the notch. I had a two-way radio on me, and while I waited for the snowshoers I hailed Drake, who told me to, "get your asses down to the

plane". I told him we were going as fast as we could—Dave and Edward were actually jogging down across the face, and they had removed their snowshoes to gain speed.

When they reached me at the notch area, I took Dave's big pack with both pairs of snowshoes lashed to it, and gave him my smaller one, allowing them to move faster with less weight. I then skied down to the plane as fast as I dared, the big pack a minor nuisance. For the last stretch I checked my speed a little and then schussed down to the long run-out of the flat area, and then unlocked my heels to stride over to the plane. As I approached, Drake told me the clouds were holding back, we were OK, and there was no longer a need for urgency. Better safe than sorry seems to be the motto of Alaskan bush pilots, and I can't argue with that.

So I threw Dave's pack in the plane, exchanged my tourniquet ski boots for my sneakers, and waited a few minutes for Dave and Edward to arrive, jogging along. They had come down in about a half-hour, an amazing time without skis. Soon we were all back in the plane, with Edward in the front passenger seat, and Drake started up, made a U-turn in

the snow, and headed down the snowfield for takeoff.

To me, it seemed like we were cruising along on the snow a bit longer than usual as Drake fidgeted with his fuel mixture, and when it seemed like we had finally taken off, we almost instantly were back on the snow for a second or two before finally becoming airborne. Once in the sky Edward looked back at Dave and me, his face white as a sheet—as a pilot himself, Edward knew what had just happened and he had been really scared.

Drake started monologuing shortly— "Man, that was interesting—very interesting—oh, man—that was a close one—let's see what happened there." He circled back to get a view of our landing zone, and we could see his takeoff track



in the snow, including the short gap corresponding to our brief airborne stint. That gap was clearly over a depression in the snow that was the continuation of a large crevasse. Seems as if our takeoff had nasty tailwinds and he was having trouble getting the mixture right, and we were lucky that we had enough lift to get over the crevasse depression and then shortly get off the ground.

It took half the flight back to Haines for Drake to settle down and stop replaying that takeoff over and over—"you never know what will get you," he kept saying. We flew back via Skagway and Taiya Inlet, and saw an eagle in flight nearby before the now-familiar Haines Airport came into view. Today's lark of a climb had been a fantastic little adventure that had given us a prominent Alaskan summit, an Alaskan county equivalent high point, a possibly-unclimbed peak, and, for me, my first Alaskan skiing. We ended our trip on a high note that helped dull the memory of our failure on Fairweather.



Lost on the East (Twin Peaks) by Marcin Ksok

Like two bits of Cheerios in a bowl of milk. Greg Encelewski and I were floating through the intricate maze of gendarmes and scree slopes of East Twin Peak. Although we knew the general direction of our heading there were no reference points. 'Up' sounded good so we scrambled on some wet rocks into a chimney and ended up on a high point, which we concluded to be the summit. Curiously strange was the absence of a register, but oh well, it was difficult enough to get up here so it must be it. Descending from the summit and navigating through the maze of gullies and ridges brought us to a large scree slope, which Greg decided to take to the bottom. Somehow the idea was not convincing to me; I had a feeling that we were on the north side of the mountain, not the Eklutna Lake side, where we should have been. So I regained

the most prominent ridge and talked Greg into following. The ridge deposited us on some snow fields that ended on a summit with a register. After all, we reached the top, but on our way back instead. This small fact made completely no sense, so I crossed the mental boundary to the dark side of instrument-aided navigation and broke out the compass. Of course, the clueless, overpriced piece of junk disagreed with what I knew to be our path of return. To my disbelief Greg agreed with the magnetic needle, not realizing that it pointed us in the direction from which we had just come. We were heading back to the trail when we stumbled upon the summit. Why would we retrace our steps? Our ignorance got a break and a clearing in the clouds revealed the Old Glenn to our left, thousands of feet below,

reaffirming the validity of the compass. Just in case we would get ourselves lost again I made a phone call, relaying our position and intended direction of travel and unfortunately spreading the seed of doubt and fear over our well-being. Retracing our path the clouds revealed glimpses of the east ridgeline that we missed while scrambling around on the mountain's northern slopes. The rest of the descent progressed without any obstacles, allowing for a quick return to the Eklutna Lake parking lot. We are still guessing about the point on which we topped out; it seemed quite prominent, although visibility was down to a hundred meters. Maybe it was West Twin Peak, maybe not; we will have to go back to find out, but in clearer weather.

Peak of the Month: Peak 10220

by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Wrangell Mountains Borough: Unorganized Borough Drainages: Nabesna Glacier and Whiskey Hill Glacier Latitude/Longitude: 61° 51' 5" North, 142° 47' 59" West Elevation: 10220 feet Prominence: 670 feet from Peak 10340 in the Nabesna Glacier and Whiskey Hill Glacier drainages Adjacent Peaks: Peak 10340 and Presidents Chair (10372) Distinctness: 670 feet from Peak 10340 USGS Map: McCarthy (D-5) First Recorded Ascent: There are no known records of an ascent; this peak might be unclimbed.

Access Point: 7600-foot level of the unnamed glacier northwest of Presidents Chair.

On April 21, 1993, Gary Green of McCarthy Air flew Harry Hunt and Danny Kost to the 7600-foot level of an unnamed glacier on the northwest side of Presidents Chair where they established a base camp. From there the two climbed both Presidents Chair and Peak 10004 west of Chisana Pass.

On April 25, following their ascent two days earlier of Peak 10004, the pair set out to attempt the narrow north ridge of Peak

10220. However, they aborted their attempt at 8600 feet after a snow bridge across the bergschrund collapsed, pummeling Kost with snow blocks.



 Map created with TOPO!® @2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

 Iter a snow
 By my count, Peak 10220 is the 323rd highest peak in Alaska. I know of no complete ascents of Peak 10220; yours could be the first.

Kost's trip report appeared on page 124 of the 1994 American Alpine Journal.



Northeast Face of Peak 10220 Photos by Danny Kost



Peak 10220 from the North

Club Bylaws Amended – Updated Club Documents

At the June 16 general meeting, the proposed amendments to the club bylaws were approved by unanimous member vote. The updated bylaws have been loaded to the website and are available with this link: <u>http://www.mcak.org/MCABylaws.pdf</u>

The new club-sanctioned trip policy, which classifies trips based on YDS technical rating and physical difficulty (mileage and elevation gain) is located on the Upcoming Events page and also at this link: <u>http://www.mcak.org/MCATripsPolicy.pdf</u>. A new trip signup sheet was also posted on that page and at this link: <u>http://www.mcak.org/MCATripSignup.pdf</u>

The club membership application has also been updated: <u>http://www.mcak.org/MCAApp.pdf</u> but the liability waiver remains the same. The club Secretary is reviewing the standing policies for needed changes, and plans to get those updated for board review and approval in the near future.

SIGN AND INITIAL THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY- READ IT CAREFULLY

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage is provided by automobile insurance policies) and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct of others. I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until I provide a signed, dated, written notice of its revocation to the MCA.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE I will not sue or otherwise make a claim against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except as noted above for automobile accidents); and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, for **injury, death, or property damage** which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or this release shall only be filed in Anchorage, Alaska. The provisions of this release are severable and if any part is found unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY I agree to release and discharge the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, 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 and wilderness activities.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY I will pay all expenses, including attorney fees and court costs, that the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of **injury, death, or property damage** suffered by me in connection with any MCA activity or the use of any MCA backcountry hut.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT I consent to any hospital or medical care that may be necessary as a result of my participation in MCA activities. I understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue costs.

____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT, AND RECOGNIZE IT IS A BINDING LEGAL AGREEMENT

Dated:_____Signature:_____

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 18):_____

General Rules for Participation on MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Participants shall familiarize themselves with the *physical demands*, *anticipated terrain* and *potential hazards* associated with the proposed trip. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Physical Demands: Estimated elevation gain, distance and duration. **Anticipated Terrain:** Trail hiking; bushwhacking; off-trail hiking on tundra, snow, ice, scree, talus or boulders; exposed hiking on steep slopes

covered with snow, ice, slick vegetation, scree, talus or boulders; scrambling on loose rock; exposed scrambling on loose rock; technical snow, ice, rock and/or mixed climbing; stream crossing; glacier travel on snow, ice and/or scree.

Potential Hazards: Avalanche; falling while skiing, hiking or climbing; falling into a crevasse; being struck by falling rock, snow or ice; attack by a bear, moose or insects (bees, wasps, mosquitoes, biting flies, etc); lightning; fire; carbon monoxide poisoning; suffocation; frostbite; hypothermia; drowning from falling through snow, crossing a stream, packrafting or kayaking; injury from use/ misuse of equipment. Note that it is impossible to predict all potential hazards that may be encountered while participating on MCA sanctioned trips.

2. Participants may be required to demonstrate the skills and experience necessary to participate on any given trip.

3. Participants shall sign-up on the club sanctioned trip sign-up sheet.

4. Participants shall read, initial and sign the Release of Liability Agreement prior to departing on the trip.

5. The trip leader may refuse participation to any member for any reason. If someone feels that they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly, they may present their case to the Hiking and Climbing Committee and/or the Executive Committee.

6. Proper clothing and equipment is required to participate on club sanctioned trips. The trip leader can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-prepared (e.g. inappropriate clothing, footwear or gear). See recommended equipment list at the end of this policy.

7. Participants shall follow the leader's instructions. Participants shall not go off alone, return or rush ahead without permission from the leader. Participants shall not 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 intentionally separating from the group without the leader's approval shall no longer be considered a participant on the club sanctioned trip. 8. The trip leader has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), dependent upon current conditions and experience level of the participants. The leader must appoint a qualified co-leader to lead the second group using the guidelines specified under Trip Leader Responsibilities.

9. **Glacier Travel:** For trips requiring roped travel over glaciers, knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. A basic understanding of ice and snow anchors is also required.

10. Participants who in the leader's opinion, put themselves or other members of the group in danger, shall be subject to sanction by the club. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand at the general meeting, exclusion from future trips, termination of annual membership, or lifetime exclusion from the club. The Executive Committee, and only the Executive Committee, shall have the authority to issue sanctions.

11. Number of people on club trips:

Minimum: For safety reasons, three people minimum. Trips undertaken with fewer than the minimum required participants shall not be considered club sanctioned trips.

Maximum: Registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of members. The Leader and/or Hiking and Climbing Committee shall determine the maximum number of participants. In trail-less areas or State and National Parks the maximum number depends upon the trail and campsite conditions, but will generally be limited to 12 people.

12. In general dogs are not allowed. Among the reasons are bear problems. Well behaved, bear savvy dogs may be approved at the discretion of the trip leader and all trip participants. Approval must be unanimous and must occur prior to meeting for the trip.

13. Firearms are not allowed on club sanctioned trips, unless approved by the trip leader and all participants. Approval must be unanimous. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred in lieu of firearms.

14. If you find you cannot participate after signing up on the roster, please let the leader know as soon as possible, for transportation and gearplanning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.

Revised 6/18/10

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

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

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address at right. 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 e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles can be submitted anytime.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid.

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

Mailing list/database entry: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant - 243-1438 Hiking and Climbing Committee: MountaineeringClubofAlaska@gmail.com Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127 Scree Editor: John Recktenwald - 346-2589 Web: www.mcak.org (change your address here)

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