

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

December 2011  
Volume 54 Number 12



"Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success."

--Napoleon Hill

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Peak of the Month: Peak 5048

### Monthly Meeting:

**\*\*Changed to Wednesday, December 7 at 6:30 p.m.**

Program: Holiday Potluck Dinner. Bring a side dish/dessert (see page 2) and 12-15 digital photos.



# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

[www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.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 third Wednesday of the month at the BP Energy Center, 900 East Benson Boulevard, Anchorage, Alaska  
[www.akpeac.org/conference/BPEC\\_map\\_06-04-03.pdf](http://www.akpeac.org/conference/BPEC_map_06-04-03.pdf)

**Cover Photo: Ben Still heading up to the pass above Upper Dewey Lake. Peak 5252 is the left peak in the foreground.  
Photo by Kathy Still.**

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## Article Submission:

Text and photography submissions for the *Scree* can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month to appear in the *Scree*. Do not submit material in the

body of the email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors.

## December Holiday Potluck

**Remember! It's on the FIRST Wednesday of the month this year, December 7th at 6:30pm at the BP Energy Center. The MCA will provide Moose's Tooth pizza and non-alcoholic beverages.**



Members may bring the following based on the first initial of their last name:

A-I side dish

J-S dessert

T-Z salad

Members may also bring 10 to 15 digital photos or short video clips to share.

## Membership Renewal

Annual memberships expire at the end of December. You can renew your membership at an MCA meeting or go online to download a membership application.

<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=members.form>

## Hiking and Climbing Schedule

November 25-27: Ski tour and telemark turns at Crescent Saddle or Grant Lake. Distance 12-18 miles roundtrip. Cabin fees to be shared by team. Contact Greg Bragiel at [unknownhiker@alaska.net](mailto:unknownhiker@alaska.net).

December 17-18. Working weekend. Help us clear the first five miles of the Arctic to Indian ski traverse. This will be an overnight camping trip. Participants should bring saws or loppers. Snowshoes are best for this trip. Sign up at the MCA monthly meeting and interested members are welcome to email Stu or Greg for more details. Stuart Grenier's email:

[oinkmenow@hotmail.com](mailto:oinkmenow@hotmail.com). Greg Bragiel's email: [unknownhiker@alaska.net](mailto:unknownhiker@alaska.net).

December 23: Annual MCA Winter Solstice Flattop Sleepout. This unofficial, leaderless trip is a club tradition.

December 27- January 1: Hope to Resurrection Pass ski tour. Telemark skiing in Abernathy, American and East Creek areas. Contact Greg at [unknownhiker@alaska.net](mailto:unknownhiker@alaska.net).

January 14-16: Ice Climbing at Caribou Creek. Set up camp about 3.5 miles in and climb, climb, climb. Winter camping experience required. Beginning to more advanced ice climbers welcome. Contact Dave Lynch for more information, or sign up at the December meeting.

The following trips are being led by Greg Bragiel. For more information, contact Greg at [unknownhiker@alaska.net](mailto:unknownhiker@alaska.net).

February 18-19: Resurrection River reconnaissance ski tour.

February 25-March 4 or 5: Seward to Hope ski tour.

March 24- April 1: Lane to Dnigi Huts tour.

April 15-22: Eklutna Traverse (mandatory training session on April 7).

Don't forget to check the Meetup site and the Facebook page for last minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.

## On-line? – click me



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





Mantok II's southeast face with the line of the Ladies' Couloir. Chris Wright photo.

## Mantok II

By Chris Wright

In mid-April of 2010, my good buddy Joey McBrayer, resident of Talkeetna and partner of mine on umpteen climbs over the years, and I flew out to the Northeast Fork of the Yentna Glacier in the western Alaska Range to do some climbing. Without any specific objectives, we were headed to the area looking for some new terrain and from the research we'd done, the Yentna seemed like a fine spot.

We flew in on a bluebird Thursday, the first nice day in a handful of grey ones. With a warning from our friend, pilot and guru Paul Roderick at Talkeetna Air Taxi, that weather would be due in for the weekend, we knew we'd better pull the trigger quickly and try to get something done before the weather arrived.

Picking a line that looked nice from the air, we went to bed quickly and woke early. An hour and a half of skiing brought us to the 'schrund at the base of the 3,000-foot northwest face of an unclimbed 10,020-foot peak to the south of Bat's Ears Peak. Our hopes were to start in what appeared to be a broad ice gully, transition to the face moving quickly on mixed terrain, gain the summit ridge, and continue on up to the summit from there.

As it so often turns out, things did not quite go according to plan. The climbing started out well, with the opening pitches being an engaging mix of steep neve and ice. Belays and gear were sparse, but the steep climbing in the goulotte gave way to lower-angled snow after only about four rope lengths. Shortly though, the climbing turned to infuriating step-kicking on steep, loose snow. Trying my hand at steeper terrain hoping it might yield better climbing, I led a few of the worst pitches of my life up thoroughly horrible climbing on steep granite overlaid by rotten ice and snow. Moving laterally to try to get away from the sugar/rock trap, I would find myself continually following brilliant runnels of ice or neve only to have them dead-end over and over in a snowy hell. I would then find myself zigging and zagging back the other way, tunneling overhead

through massive flutings, not so much compacting, but excavating huge amounts of snow to make any sort of upward progress. Eventually, after what seemed like an eternity, I was able to crest a dull rib that eventually took me to the summit ridge. Soaked, worked, freezing, and grumpy, I pulled out my belay jacket, plopped onto my pack and hip belayed Joey up as I sat, shivering and glowering in equal measure.

By the time Joey was up, we had resigned ourselves to the fact that the summit, though relatively close, was in fact far, far away and without bivy gear, we were not going to make it. Two uneventful rappels, some downclimbing, and a little jump landed us across the bergschrund and on the glacier the map led us to believe would wrap back around to the side of the peak we started on.



Joey McBrayer gets moving above the bergschrund in the Ladies' Couloir. Chris Wright photo.

A few thousand feet of uneventful side-hilling led to our skis and true to our standard Alaskan formula, the first light of a new morning tinged the slopes to our east as we pulled headlamps and crampons off and wove back down the maze of crevasses to our base camp. While I coiled the rope and packed my gear in anticipation of the coming storm, Joey was already busy crawling inside the tent where he would promptly fall asleep on top of his sleeping bag, his helmet still on his head.

Storm engulfed the Yentna by lunchtime and we, asleep, didn't much care. Finally on day seven of our trip, after four entirely tent-bound days, we saw some improvement in the weather. Packing a light pack with a bivy tent and three or four days of food, we skied up the western fork of the glacier to install a camp near the toe of the icefall below Mantok II, a handsome and virgin peak at the end of a dramatic ridge of summits labeled by previous expeditions as the Mantok Group due to their looking "so damn manly." Planning an attempt at the peak via a mixed couloir on the left side of the face, we woke at three and were off. Though the weather improved somewhat, after an opening bout of moderate, but snowy, mixed climbing and a thousand feet of snow, ice, and more

mixed in the couloir, it seemed we had climbed into something of a storm. Citing a crowd of lenticulars rolling in from the east, though within sight of the pitches that would take us to the ridge, Joey said he thought we should head



**Joey McBrayer descends the south ridge of Mantok II after the first ascent of the peak via the Ladies' Couloir (2,700 feet AI3+). Chris Wright photo.**

down. Not buying that the weather was doing anything it hadn't been doing already, but not wanting to lead us into an epic should I be wrong, I acquiesced and reluctantly rigged the rappel. A few raps and some downclimbing deposited us back in the entrance to the couloir as the sun shining through a blue sky warmed

our descent to the skis. High winds remained aloft and the sky was a mix of blue and blowing white for the rest of the day, but I couldn't shake the feeling that we had blown our chance and had not made the best of the meager window we'd been offered.

By evening it was clear that the weather was not going to start doing us any favors. Dropping pressure and increased wind gave way through the night to snow, and poking my head out the tent door once more at three, it was clear it was time to go back to bed. After a night of bizarre dreams and jet engine winds, we awakened, packed, and headed back to base camp. Day nine brought much of the same. Feeling antsy to do something though, we decided that a mission, however futile, would be better than another day inside our nylon palace, my page count and chocolate consumption having already reached near critical levels. Our mission for the afternoon was skiing over to the base of a cliff near camp and scratching around. The

climbing turned out to be fantastically enjoyable, on my end at least. What I failed to realize while climbing, apparently, was that my 50 meters of M6/7-ish scratching had taken the better part of two and a half hours. This Joey was ready to remind me of as he congratulated me on my efforts and encouraged me to quickly build a belay and rap off.





**The northwest face of Peak 10020 with the line to the author's high point. Chris Wright photo.**

Morning on day 10 came late and found us arguing lightheartedly over who would cave and have to leave the tent first to use the bathroom, and thus have to re-excavate said "bathroom." I broke first and nearly broke all over again when moments later I stuck my head out into a bright bluebird day. Our pressure reading still on the floor, I was confused, flabbergasted, and immediately anxious. By lunchtime we were again skiing westward toward Mantok II's southeast face, hoping for one more chance. What we didn't find out until later was that we were apparently locked into a cycle of weather produced by the

conflict of a low off the Bering Sea to our northwest, and a high off the Yukon to our southeast. Whether one or the other would win the tug of war on any given day was anyone's guess.

When I woke an hour ahead of my three o'clock alarm, my stomach dropped as I was certain I was hearing snow falling on the tent. When the alarm rang, I already knew it was still snowing. We cursed the Yentna, we cursed the weather, and we cursed some more before setting the alarm for four and lying back down. Four o'clock brought no change. I think the sound of the snow stopping must have

awakened me about an hour later. I poked my head outside the tent and saw a mostly clear sky just starting to lighten over the ridgelines. Excited, thankful, a little in disbelief and anxious as hell, we brewed up, ate breakfast and got to it. We decided to forgo the line of our previous attempt and try what looked like the most direct and easiest way to the summit, a wide-open couloir that snaked all the way up to the summit ridge. Our strategy this time was to take as light of a rack as we could get away with and to pull the rope off after we left the glacier, intending to simul-solo until we were forced to rope up again.

The plan worked out well as we made our way quickly up mostly 50° to 60° snow and neve with the occasional 70° to 80° ice step. Only on the final pitch to the ridge did we even think about belaying, but decided not to as it looked reasonable enough. Most of it was a thunker pitch of AI3 with a few mixed moves, with only the last 30 feet of 80° rimed snow making us wish we had the security of a belay. That surmounted, we were pumped to be on the ridge and were rewarded with amazing views out the north side of the range, with snowy peaks giving way to bright blue glaciers flowing northward until they turned to distant rivers shining as they snaked their way through red tundra. After a quick stop to eat and drink, and aware of the fragility of the weather, we roped up for glacier travel, stowed a tool, and made our way on up the broad, but corniced and crevassed, ridge. More 50° to 60° slopes mixed with lower-angled walking took us up a series of steps and ridges, sometimes knife-edged, sometimes dull, and sometimes meandering around cracks up the final 700 vertical feet to the summit. The summit resembled closely several that I experienced on a trip to Canada a few years ago: lines of grey on grey. Pumped but in no mood to dally, we took a few pictures, hugged, and turned around. It had



taken us three hours to cover the 2,700 feet from camp to summit. It took us another three hours to get back to camp.

Excited by the prospect of getting out before the weather got worse, we packed our advanced camp quickly and headed back down the glacier towards basecamp. We packed up at a fever pace, rigged the sleds, and left behind our abode of the last two weeks. Excited by thoughts of the Kettle Chips and High Life we'd stashed in our emergency cache, we headed toward the landing strip. Typically enough, the weather held off precisely until we started digging out the cache, at which point it promptly started dumping heavy, wet snow. We lazily set up our already soaked bivy tent and crawled in for one more night.

The snow fell and the wind blew all night, but luckily morning dawned clear and blue and though it had half buried our gear and ourselves, the wind had done us the favor of keeping new snow on the strip area to about ten inches. Not wasting time brewing coffee or eating breakfast, we got to work stomping out a

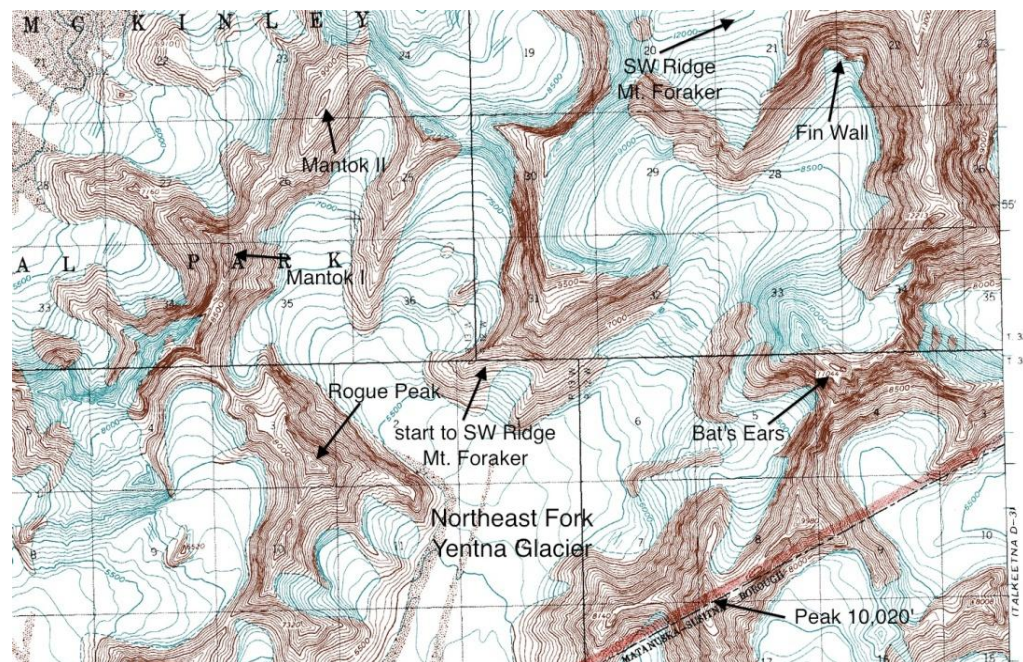


On the summit of Mantok II after the first ascent. Joey McBrayer photo.

runway for Paul to land on. As we flew back home past the immensity of the range, Paul pointed out other objectives he thought we might be interested in, and we chatted about cameras, climbing, other activity in the range and a host of other topics, including the weather I no longer gave a shit about.

Area: Northeast Fork of the Yentna Glacier, western Alaska Range.

Ascents: First ascent of Mantok II (ca. 9,850 feet) via the southeast face, the Ladies' Couloir (2,700 feet, AI3+), Peak 10,020, northwest face to summit ridge (3,000 feet, AI4, M5), various attempts. April 8<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Joseph McBrayer and Christopher Wright.



The Northeast Fork of the Yentna Glacier, showing climbs reported to date.



Chris Wright topping out the Ladies' Couloir's final pitch of steep rimed snow. Joey McBrayer photo.





**Ben Still on the summit of Peak 5252 with Peak 5951 above his helmet. Ben Still photo.**

## Peaks around Dewey Lakes, Skagway

**By Ben Still**

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, my sister, Kathy Still, and I hopped on the ferry leaving Juneau heading north for Skagway. Our original plans of climbing peaks around Juneau quickly dissolved when the usual wet weather continued and a better forecast of scattered showers for Skagway seemed positive. A nice ride up Lynn Canal brought us to Haines, then Skagway.

A 9:30 p.m. arrival has us thinking about just setting up camp in town, but we start hiking up the Dewey Lakes Trail looking for a camping spot. Entering the dense forest is beautiful, but the forest quickly darkens, as does the chance of finding a flat camping area. We continue hiking up the trail, making quick time in the darkening forest. Around midnight we arrive at Upper Dewey Lake and the dilapidated cabin appears to

be brand new. Luckily the door is unlocked and we peer in only to find somebody already sleeping inside. We quickly start to shut the door only to hear, "wait, you are welcome to come in." A local from Skagway is staying in the cabin and welcomes us in for the night.

We wake up to mostly cloudy skies with our objective Peak 5951 obscured in the clouds. The cabin we slept in sits adjacent to Upper Dewey Lake (3,097 feet) at the head of a hanging basin. Peak 5951 sits at the northeast end of the basin. We hang around the cabin, slowly getting ready for a day of potentially wet weather. We learn this cabin is brand new and is usually locked, but the old cabin is just across the

way. We stash our overnight gear in the old cabin, which looks a bit drafty and leaky, but easier than a tent.

Luckily the clouds begin to break before we leave and by the time we start hiking up the valley the sun is shining. The long gendarmed west-northwest ridge dominates the skyline as we approach the base of Peak 5951. Several snow patches and gully systems look like they might go up the face of the peak, but Kathy and I opt to have a look at the back of the peak, which looks less steep on the topo map. We ascend some steep snow to gain the ridge near the top of Point 5330 south of our objective and have a look over the back at the eastern slopes of the peak. An easy scramble, and then scree, took us to snow, which wrapped around to the hidden eastern slopes of Peak 5951. The eastern side of the peak proved to be a great easy scramble to the summit via some steep

snow and about 100 feet of fun rock climbing – easy enough to not use a rope.

The views from the top are breathtaking, but looking south dark clouds linger and obscure the summits of many peaks. We do not find any evidence of a previous ascent, but the summit is pointy and a cairn is hard to construct. I would be very surprised if this summit so close to Skagway had not been previously climbed.

We quickly retrace our steps back down the mountain. We decide to have a look at the low point between Peak 5951 and Point 5330 to see if we can scramble down. The cliffs appear to be a little sketchy for us to scramble down and we find an old piece of webbing around a large rock. I guess another group decided this was a bit steep as well. We scramble back up toward Point 5330 and descend back down to the cabin.

We make ourselves comfortable in the old cabin. The weather looks like it may be taking a turn for the worse, but we remain optimistic and decide that if it looks reasonable in the morning, we will hike



**Kathy Still climbing up Peak 5252 with Devils Punch Bowl below. Ben Still photo.**



over to Devils Punch Bowl and try Point 5252. To our surprise we awake to partly cloudy conditions with the sun shining down on our little cabin.

Kathy and I stroll up the trail, taking in the views of the surrounding mountains and look down on Skagway with four large cruise ships. We find Devils Punch Bowl to be covered mostly with ice. Point 5252 looks easy enough and we begin the scramble up the west side of the peak. Loose rock seems to be the norm on this peak. We are very happy to reach the steep upper snowfields and get off the rock. The snow is hard and crunchy beneath our feet. We kick steps upward, plunging our ice axes every few steps. We climb up onto the ridge just short of the summit. I scramble up ahead as the final 100 feet of ridge narrows and becomes very exposed. I end up traversing around the right side of the ridge making some committing moves over some serious air and climbing through a small snow tunnel to get to the top. On the summit is a very large cairn. Because we left the rope back in the cabin, Kathy decides to wait along the ridge down below. The dark ominous clouds to the south are

being held at bay by the interior high-pressure system. Reversing the moves proves to be quite scary and I secretly wish I was rappelling back down. Once back down to Kathy, we scramble back down the mountain to Devils Punch Bowl and hike back to the cabin. The sun is shining brightly and feels very hot as we don our heavy packs for the hike back down to Skagway. The hike down is nice and shaded.

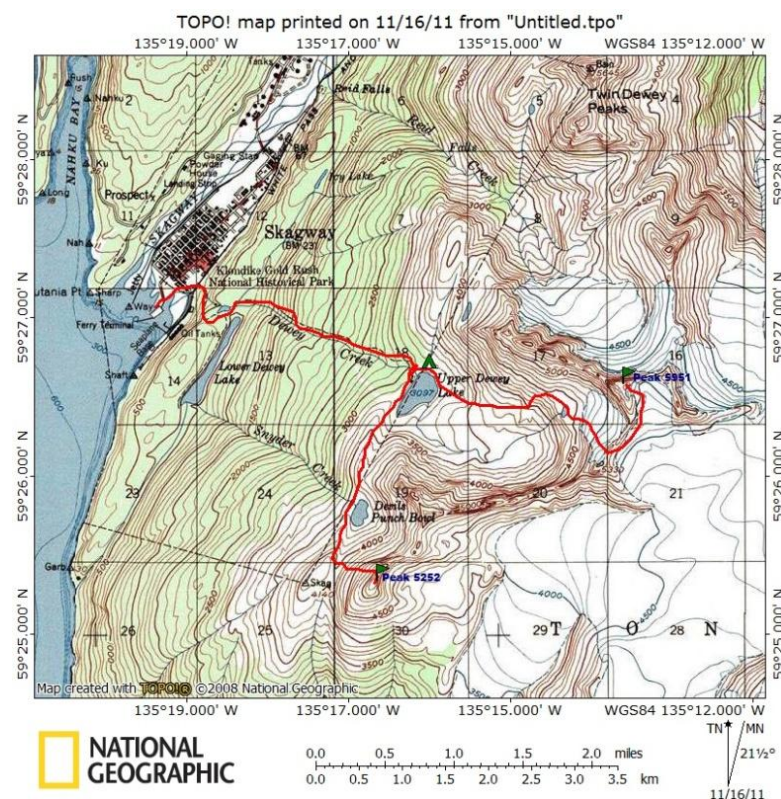
Once back in Skagway, we find our friend from the cabin and set up camp next to his place and plan on catching the next ferry out early the next morning. We wake up to heavy pitter-patter of rain and the howling of wind with a fresh blanket of snow over the peaks we just climbed. We are glad to be heading back to Juneau for Fourth of July festivities and fireworks. The weather held for us just long enough in Skagway while it rained the whole time in Juneau.

*(Ed. note: Peak 5951 is known as No Name Peak on summitpost.org.)*

**BenStill scoping the route back down from Peak 5951. Kathy Still photo.**



**Peak 5951 as seen from Peak 5252. Ben Still photo.**







A cairn marks the route as Cathy Flanagan and Miles Goritzky descend from the Wosnesenski crags near Homer

## To Cairn or Not to Cairn

By Joe Stock

We mountaineers love Alaska for its wild places. Many of Alaska's mountains have no signs or history of human presence. This opportunity to explore an otherwise tapped-out planet is the essence of mountaineering.

One reminder that you're not the first to visit a new place is finding a cairn.

A cairn is a man-made pile of stones—from a single balanced rock to a heap of stones—used by mountaineers to mark a route or a summit. Cairn-building has a long history. Native Americans in the arctic used cairns, called inuksuit, to mark routes. On popular mountain trails, such as in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, cairns keep thousands of

recreational hikers on route. Climbers follow cairned routes to difficult-to-find climbs.

### The Argument for Cairns in Alaska

Most agree that cairns can serve safety or environmental purposes. They can mark, for example, tricky junctions, especially those used by climbers. A cairn can mark a hidden descent gully from a climb or a hard-to-spot access trail, such as the faint access trails to climbs along the Eagle River above the Nature Center.

Cairns can help keep everyone on the same route in fragile alpine tundra or in recently deglaciated areas where plants are just emerging. This minimizes overall impact. The Football Field above Anchorage and the toe of the Spencer Glacier are places with well-applied cairns.

Some believe that cairns are an important mountaineering tradition on mountaintops. Summit cairns are often accompanied by a summit register. Advocates for summit cairns say that it's important, for historical purposes, to know if someone has been there before. In remote mountain regions of Alaska, cairns are often the only sign of humans.

Perhaps the most basic argument for cairns is that they are simply piles of stones. They are fun to make and do not pose a significant environmental issue.

### Why Do We Really Build Cairns?

It's easy to understand why humans build cairns for safety or environmental reasons. The art and Zen of balanced stones in nature is also attractive. The real reason mountaineers build cairns is less easily understood.

Bryce Courtenay observed that:

*Men feel compelled to leave their mark wherever they go. By this I don't mean castles and ramparts, ruined buildings and ancient walls. Instead, I mean the small marks that individuals make to ensure that their passing has been noted.*

Another reason some people build cairns is to feel in better control of the terrain. They may be out of their element and believe that cairns are essential for them and others after them to navigate the route. In Alaska, where few routes are clearly visible, their navigation skills with map, compass, altimeter, and GPS may not be equal to the terrain they're traversing. Such cairns are akin to chipped holds that make a rock climb more attainable.

Mountaineers in general have a strong Leave No Trace ethic. Leaving trash in the mountains ended 50 years ago, but many mountaineers do not view cairns as leaving a trace, perhaps because the cairn-building tradition is also strong among U.S. mountaineers.



A small cairn along the recently deglaciated margins of Backside Lake in the Alaska Range



The fact is, however, that if you build a cairn, you *are* leaving a trace. This concept is a part of Leave No Trace's seven principles: "Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns, or flagging."

### Keeping Alaska as Alaska

Many mountaineers live in Alaska for that feeling of exploration—a sense that we may be the first person to visit a place. In Alaska, standing on a pristine summit with no history and no sign of humans is still possible. It's a powerful feeling. Some strive to give everyone that feeling. Others strive to let people know *they've* had that feeling.

### Thoughts about Cairns

Most agree that cairns are useful to mark tricky turns and to show the way in heavy-use or ecologically fragile areas. In such cases, a smaller cairn of, say, three softball-sized stones would serve the purpose as well as a bigger cairn.

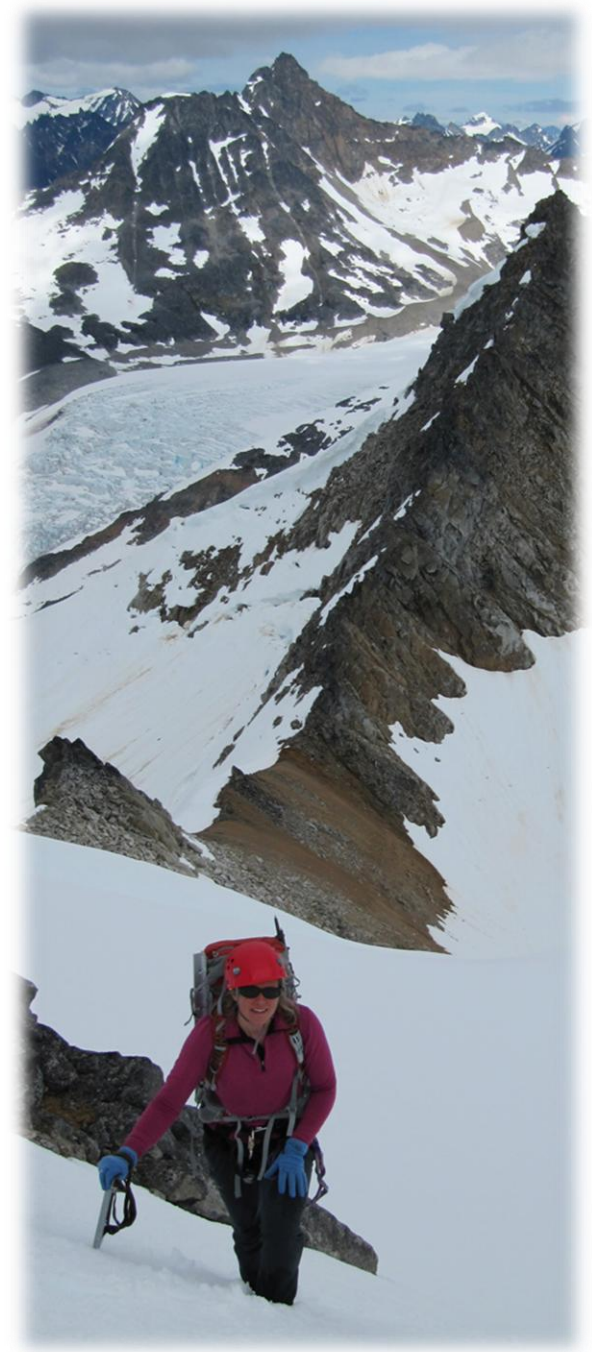
But why not apply Leave No Trace to less-frequented routes and summits? Let's stop building cairns in these places or, further, dismantle ones that serve no useful purpose. Return the stones to their natural positions, lichen-side up. If you feel you must leave your mark, do it on the internet or in publications such as the *American Alpine Journal* or *Scree*.

In *Alpinist* 35, Fairbanks climber Jeff apple Benowitz tells the story of Alaska vanity plate 10910. The car's owner first-ascended Peak 10910 in the 1970s, but didn't report it so others could enjoy the same adventure.

Let's start talking about options. I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Amy Murphy and Dwight Iverson are posing near a decorated Christmas tree. Vicky Lytle photo.



Kathy Still nearing the summit of Peak 5951 with the Denver Glacier below. Ben Still photo.





**Chris Hammond at camp on the mountain slope. Mark Fouts photo.**

## Peak of the Month: Peak 5048

**By Steve Gruhn**

Mountain Range: Chugach Mountains  
Borough: Matanuska-Susitna Borough  
Drainage: Friday Creek  
Latitude/Longitude: 61° 29' 59" North, 148° 40' 12" West  
Elevation: 5048 feet  
Prominence: 498 feet from Castle Rocks (5380)  
Adjacent Peak: Castle Rocks  
Distinctness: 498 feet from Castle Rocks  
USGS Map: Anchorage (B-5)  
First Recorded Ascent: 1950 by surveyors  
Access Point: North side of the Knik River

On August 10, 1976, teenagers Mark Fouts and Charlie Hammond set out bushwhacking up the north side of the Knik River Valley. After three days of travel, they ascended the northwest aspect of Peak 5048 and found a 1950 survey marker on the summit. They went on to climb and

name Castle Rocks that same day. They placed a camp high on the ridge west of Peak 5345. The next day they climbed Peak 5345 and Point 5705 (where they placed a register proposing the name Mount Vah). After a couple days of poor weather, the two crossed Friday Creek. Three and three-quarters hours and 4,100 vertical feet later, they stumbled onto the summit of Peak 7060 (in Section 17), where they left a register naming the peak Mount Cronus. A couple days later, they began their hike out, having discovered a trail on the east side of Friday Creek. They returned to the road on August 21.

With fond memories of the views from that trip, Mark returned to the area with Richard Baranow in August 2003. They flew in a Super Cub to an airstrip at about the 3,800-foot level of the Friday Creek drainage some five miles northeast of Peak 5048. The two hiked up to the ridge overlooking the Knik River and established a base camp at the location of Mark's 1976 campsite. Mark remained in camp to take photographs. Richard hiked to the summit of Castle Rocks and then descended to the valley to the southwest. From that valley he climbed the



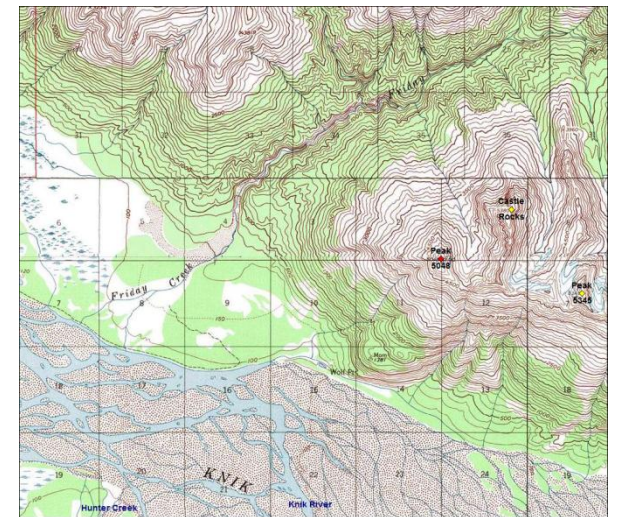
**Mark Fouts making a water crossing on day one. Charlie Hammond photo.**



**Charlie Hammond takes in the view of the Knik River from the mountain ridge. Mark Fouts photo.**

northeast slopes of Peak 5048 to the summit. On another day hike from their base camp, Richard climbed Peak 5345, Point 5705 (discovering the register left in 1976), Peak 6505, and Peak 5630 (in Section 32). And on another day hike he climbed Mount Cronus, again finding the 1976 register.

The information in this column came from Mark's article entitled "Friday Creek" in the October 1976 *Scree*, from my correspondence with Mark, and from conversations with both Mark and Richard.





## **MCA “Base Camp” Monthly Meeting**

If you haven't been to an MCA Base Camp meeting, then you are missing out on a fun social time and gear forum. It's a relaxed atmosphere where members can mix, share skills and get to know each other better. Plan to show up to chat and generally hang out with mountaineering on your mind. Feel free to bring ropes, skis, backpacks, boots, or other gear to show others or ask questions to learn how to use your gear to make your time in the mountains more enjoyable. The remaining Base Camp meeting this year is tentatively scheduled for November 29 and is usually held from 6 to 9 p.m. in the upstairs rooms of the BP Energy Center. You don't need to RSVP to attend. Just show up and have fun. Check the MCA Events Calendar <http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm/What-We-Do/Events-Calendar> every few weeks for the latest schedule on training, trips and other MCA events.

## **Share Your Story**

The Anchorage Museum is organizing a series of exhibitions for 2012 featuring Denali and mountaineering in Alaska. One of the exhibitions, titled ***The High One: Reaching the Top***, will look at climbing Denali through gear, artifacts, photos, film and interactive activities, while exploring how and why people climb. We are collecting stories for use on object labels and text panels.

- Did you summit or attempt to summit Mount McKinley?
- What was the most memorable, the best, the worst, the funniest or most upsetting moment of your climb?
- Did you experience gear malfunction or were you grateful for well-chosen equipment?
- What does it feel like to be at high altitude?
- What does Denali mean to you?

We are particularly looking for stories that could illustrate exhibit objects: backpacks, stoves, camp

food, medical kits, cameras, clothing, tools etc. Please send your story or a creative entry (poetry, sketches, high altitude cooking recipes and dinner menus etc.) to Jenya Anichenko [janichenko@anchoragemuseum.org](mailto:janichenko@anchoragemuseum.org) by January 15, 2012. For questions please call 929-9270.

By submitting your stories you are granting the Anchorage Museum to use your credited quotes in the exhibition materials and marketing.

## **The Alpine 7, Membership Benefit Sharing between Mountaineering Clubs**

In late 2008, and then again in late 2009, six of the largest mountaineering clubs in the U.S. met to discuss the goal of sharing member benefits across clubs.\* Since that time, the “Alpine 6” as they call themselves, have been working to make this goal a reality. The basic notion is that each participating club offers some combination of lodging, facilities, courses, outings, and events to their members, and from time-to-time members of one club might wish to climb, hike, or participate in events held in another's club region. Benefit sharing capitalizes on this in two ways, first by increasing the benefits available to members of any participating organization, and secondly by leveraging the collective resources of mountaineering clubs across North America.

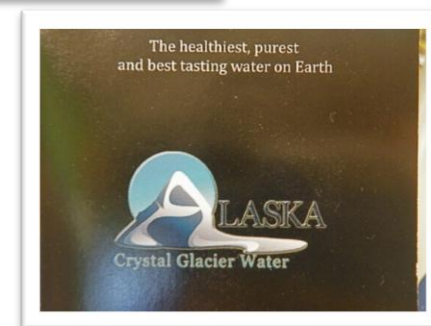
Recently, the MCA has been invited to join the other six clubs in what would be referred to as the “Alpine 7.” Participation would entail attendance at two organizational meetings per year, the primary purpose of which is to work out the specific details of how benefits sharing will actually work. Since the meetings scheduled for next year are both Outside, our attendance would require some travel expense. The Board of Directors is recommending that we fund this effort for one year and evaluate the benefits to the MCA at the end of that year. Accordingly, we have

included \$1,000 in the 2012 budget to cover travel and related expenses.

I would be happy to answer any questions (to the extent of my current understanding) about this project at either the next general meeting or by email.

\*Those six clubs are: The Mountaineers, The American Alpine Club, The Colorado Mountain Club, Mazamas, The Appalachian Mountain Club, and The Adirondack Mountain Club.

---Submitted by Jim Sellers, Director, MCA



**And yet another reason to stay on top of hut outhouse issues. Eklutna Glacier water is what comes out of our municipal water pipes. Submitted by Stu Grenier.**



## **Board Meeting Minutes, Nov 2**

**Note:** Tasks to be completed in ***bold italics***

Members Present: Tim Silvers (President), Greg Encelewski (new Director), John Recktenwald (Director), Jim Sellers (Director), Randy Plant (Treasurer), Vicky Lytle (Director, Hiking & Climbing Committee), Mark Smith (new Secretary), Galen Flint (new Vice President), Brian Aho (Director)

Also Present: Steve Gruhn (Scree Editor, Geographic Names Committee), Greg Bragiel (Huts Committee), Wayne Todd (Former President), Travis Taylor (Equipment).

1. Huts: Urine diverter discussion, experience with system installed at new AAC Snowbird hut may provide useful information. ***Greg will contact Cindi Squire.*** Mint hut: Broken lanterns will no longer be replaced. Too many problems with non-MCA users, board decided not to make hut too comfortable. Bomber hut: needs paint. Dnigi hut: door missing on toilet ***request help from snowmachine club*** (primary users at Dnigi) with supplies delivery/maintenance work/funding. ***Post hut needs in Scree, listserv, etc,*** in addition to website. Greg to research contact info for clubs, Galen also has some information. Eklutna Traverse Huts: insulate? No, less luxury to keep maintenance costs under control. Need to budget for human waste disposal (no longer free) in addition to helicopter flights and pumping. Alpine Air may be resource for providing information about fill level in barrels. Future lease renewals will probably include specific requirements (Mint, Bomber, Dnigi, Scandinavian Peaks?) that require plan for human waste management/removal. Discussion about building a new hut. Estimated cost of \$18K - \$28K plus large volunteer effort. Snowbird reported to be \$40K. Development of a hut maintenance/management plan should be undertaken before a decision is made.

2. **December Potluck: Will be on 12/07/2011 (BP Energy closed on 3rd Wednesday). *Galen and Travis will coordinate* entree (pizza from Moose's Tooth) and announcement in *Scree*.**

3. 2012 Budget: new website has proven beneficial in 2011 (ease of use, simple membership renewal), currently solid membership numbers. Discussion of

budget proposed for 2012. Current quote for Directors & Officers insurance of \$1,250/year to be included. Increase admin expense by \$1,000 and include "travel" in the description. This will cover the cost of travel to attend annual meeting about benefit sharing proposal with other clubs. ***Jim to write article in Scree*** to explain cost and benefit.

4. Anchorage Museum Denali Exhibit: ***Tim will send email*** with more information.
5. Policy Updates (Equipment, Commercial use of website, Huts): ***Tim will contact new secretary.***
6. Library: ***Mark to find out if APU is interested*** in providing space.

---Mark Smith, secretary

### **Huts Needs Update**

All Huts - MCA members are requested to adopt a hut, help out with maintenance and keep the Huts Committee informed on what is happening there. Also, please encourage any non-members at MCA huts to become MCA members.

- Pichler's Perch - No known needs at this time.
- Hans' Hut - Latches for the upper floor escape hatch need to be brought in and installed. Currently the door is closed with bent over nails.
- Rosie's Roost - Does it need any maintenance? Any issues? How full is the human waste barrel? The next visitor to Rosie's is requested to check and report to the Huts Committee. Thanks.
- Mint Hut - Human waste barrels are filling with urine. Don't urinate in them!!! New signage was placed on November 12.
- Bomber Hut - When the weather warms, the next group at the Bomber Hut is requested to paint the wood trim on the upper floor window. This window was installed about three years ago and has yet to receive a coat of paint. Additionally—most of the exterior wood trim is peeling and needs to be scraped and repainted.
- Dnigi Hut - Snowmachiner Brian Fischer has helped keep the hut in shape and has encouraged other snowmachiners in the area to police themselves and respect the place. He agreed to build and install a door for the outhouse and will try to get this done soon. He also will try to get the

window caulking and painting done in the spring. Thanks, Brian, for your help!

- Scandinavian Peaks Hut - No known needs at this time.

---Greg Bragiel, MCA Huts Chairman, November 2011

### **Peak Register Committee Announcements**

Dano Michaud is currently in the process of gathering information on summit logs for the Kenai Peninsula, with the intent of replacing old canisters with new ones and archiving old registers with the MCA. Dano has asked that anybody who has ever been on a climb on the Kenai Peninsula and remembers seeing or signing a summit register, contact him by phone at (907) 362-6623. He can also be reached by email at [dano99577@yahoo.com](mailto:dano99577@yahoo.com).

Progress has been made at replacing registers on Chugach State Park Peaks. Thanks to Dan Hirschberg, John Recktenwald, and Tami Radakovich for volunteering to place materials on summits in the past few months. If you are planning on climbing any of the peaks that are still in need of registers, contact Ben Radakovich at (208) 816-1789 or send an email to [peakregisters@mtclubak.org](mailto:peakregisters@mtclubak.org). The MCA can provide you with a register to place on the summit. Below is an updated list of peaks that currently could use registers.

Mount Eklutna  
Vista Peak  
Flaketop Peak  
Penguin Peak

Mile High Peak  
Hurdygurdy Mountain  
Indianhouse Mountain  
Cumulus Mountain

### **Geographic Names**

The MCA has been requested to comment on the proposed naming of a ridge in the Talkeetna Mountains as "Murphy Ridge" in honor of the late Pat Murphy, who served as ranger of Independence Mine State Historical Park from 1987 until his death in 2006. The ridge extends northwest from The Pinnacle to Gold Cord Peak. Those interested should contact Steve Gruhn at [geographicnames@mtclubak.org](mailto:geographicnames@mtclubak.org) to comment.



# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

## 2012 PROPOSED BUDGET

\* Last Updated 11/3/2011

		Proposed for 2012	Current for 2011	Approved for 2011	Final for 2010
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Membership Dues	<i>received during calendar year</i>	\$8,000.00	\$6,533.70	\$7,000.00	7,830.00
Scree subscriptions		\$250.00	\$219.00	\$250.00	310.00
Training	<i>ice climbing, crevasse rescue, other</i>	\$10,500.00	\$10,840.63	\$8,000.00	11,858.00
Photo Calendar		\$3,000.00	\$1,738.00	\$3,000.00	3,165.00
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	260.00
Donations		\$0.00	\$30.00	\$0.00	0.00
Other--Interest on Accounts		\$150.00	\$86.11	\$200.00	190.54
Other-MCA Products for 50th Anniversary		\$0.00	\$0.00		0.00
Other		\$0.00	\$0.00		5.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$21,900.00</b>	<b>\$19,447.44</b>	<b>\$18,450.00</b>	<b>23,618.54</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>					
Training	<i>campsite, access fees, instructors, trip leads</i>	\$7,000.00	\$7,148.64	\$6,000.00	5,800.74
Scree	<i>postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$2,300.00	\$1,991.04	\$2,300.00	2,265.98
General Meeting	<i>rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$2,000.00	\$1,312.70	\$2,000.00	1,504.00
Administrative	<i>supplies, PO box, web site, ads, travel, misc</i>	\$2,200.00	\$701.05	\$1,000.00	495.58
Hut Construction & Maint.	<i>materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fee</i>	\$4,000.00	\$3,514.35	\$4,000.00	323.93
Insurance	<i>reincorporation fees, insurance</i>	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	0.00
Club Equipment	<i>climbing gear, misc equipment</i>	\$500.00	\$409.46	\$1,000.00	34.86
Library	<i>new books, periodicals, Scree binding</i>	\$1,000.00	\$195.00	\$600.00	0.00
Other:	<i>miscellaneous expenses</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00
Photo Calendar		\$2,600.00	\$0.00	\$2,600.00	2,610.00
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.		\$0.00	\$262.26	\$0.00	0.00
Other-MCA 50th Anniversary Party, Products		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00	0.00
Other - Awards		\$400.00	\$592.00	\$0.00	1,037.99
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>		<b>\$23,500.00</b>	<b>\$16,126.50</b>	<b>\$23,100.00</b>	<b>14,073.08</b>
<b>DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE (To Balance)</b>		<b>(1,600.00)</b>	<b>3,320.94</b>	<b>(4,650.00)</b>	<b>9,545.46</b>
<b>CASH BALANCE - All Accounts</b>					
Beginning Balance - January 1, 2011			\$29,913.59		
Increase (decrease) during 2011			\$3,320.94		
Current Balance for 2011			\$33,234.53		
Checking - Credit Union 1			\$11,251.63		
Money Mkt and CDs - Credit Union 1 (.75 - 1.89%)			\$20,367.78		
Savings - Credit Union 1 (.7%)			\$413.65		
18-month CD - in trust for hut lease - Northrim Bank (1.25%)			\$1,151.47		
Petty Cash			\$50.00		
<b>TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS</b>			<b>\$33,234.53</b>		
Ending Balance - November 3, 2011					



## 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 gear-planning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.

**Revised 6/18/10**

# Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Tim Silvers	250-3374	Board member	Greg Encelewski	360-0274
Vice-President	Galen Flint	650-207-0810	Board member	Brian Aho	223-4758
Secretary	Mark Smith	868-3155	Board member	Vicky Lytle	351-8246
Treasurer	Randy Plant	243-1438	Board member	John Recktenwald	346-2589
			Board member	Jim Sellers	360-2560

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 Membership Committee at [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org).

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month to appear 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 in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to [vicepresident@mtnclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org).

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: Vicky Lytle - [hcc@mtnclubak.org](mailto:hcc@mtnclubak.org)

Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008

Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127

Scree Editor: [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com) Steve Gruhn (344-1219) assisted by Amy Murphy (338-3979)

Web: [www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org) (change your address here)

Mailing list service: [MCAK@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MCAK@yahoogroups.com)

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