

ISSUE INCLUDES

In Memory of Paul Beatty Crews
Barbeau Peak
Boisterous Peak
Sovereign Mountain
Thunder Bird Peak
Bear Mountain
Mount Thorofare
Mumtrak Hill
Hidden Peak

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club
of Alaska

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“

The struggle itself toward the heights is
enough to fill a man's heart. One must
imagine Sisyphus happy.

”

- Albert Camus

"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."

MCA Meeting: August 15, 6:30 p.m. Cory Hinds will lead a hike from the McHugh Creek parking lot. If the weather is favorable, we'll top-rope some rock climbs. Member should bring shoes, harnesses, helmets, and belay devices. If the weather is not favorable, we'll just go for a hike.

Cover Photo: Alex McCready descending Boisterous Pk. Photo: Nathan Hebda **Stand-in Scree Layout/Design:** Paxson Woelber

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA ICE CLIMBING FESTIVAL, September 22-24, 2017

Want to learn how to ice climb or improve your current techniques? Learn modern ice climbing techniques, rope management skills and socialize with other local climbers in a weekend on Matanuska Glacier. All abilities welcome! Must be 18 years old. **Cost:** \$85, MCA membership required (\$20-\$25). E-mail mcaicefest@gmail.com for more information.

CONNECT WITH THE MCA



Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities.

FROM THE EDITOR

The MCA would like to thank Steve Gruhn for his six years of service as editor of the Scree. Steve will still be involved, providing technical support, editorial guidance, and what he is most famous for – his fine attention to detail and thorough records on Alaska mountaineering history and trivia. Under Steve's leadership, the Scree has grown from a local newsletter to one that attracts contributions from climbers throughout the world as they explore mountains in Alaska, and sometimes beyond. Steve has graciously offered to continue contributing his Peak-of-the-Month articles about lesser known peaks throughout Alaska, which many of us enjoy reading.

David Hart is transitioning into the editor position, effective this August 2017 issue. David is a 27-year member of the MCA, having been very active in the 1990s - leading Club trips, writing Scree articles, serving as President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board Member.

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for the Scree can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 24th of each month to appear in the next issue of the Scree. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. 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 out-doors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

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Paul Beatty Crews, August 8, 1917–July 20, 2017

By Mary Fitzgerald

Paul Crews passed away peacefully on July 20th at the Anchorage Pioneer Home surrounded by loved ones just 18 days shy of his 100th birthday. Paul was a warm and generous man who uplifted the lives of those around him and inspired many to pursue their dreams.

Paul was born on August 8, 1917, in Portsmouth, Virginia, but moved at a very young age with his parents to a small home on the shores of Puget Sound in Bremerton, Washington. There, surrounded by the beauty of the Pacific Northwest, Paul grew up loving the great outdoors, especially the water and the mountains. An avid boy scout, he became an Eagle Scout while very young. As a teenager, Paul spent his winter months skiing and his summers climbing the Olympic Mountains. Paul was the first to climb many of the mountains on the Olympic Peninsula, experiences which he later described in his 1996 book “Early Hiking in the Olympics 1922 - 1942”.

In 1941 Paul earned a mechanical engineering degree from Washington State University. Shortly after graduation, he married Betty Jane Morgenthaler. While in college, Paul was in ROTC and earned his pilot's license. With the U.S. entry into World War II, he anticipated being made a pilot, but the military trained him as an ordnance officer and assigned him to the island of Saipan in the Pacific because of his engineering education.

After the war ended in 1945, Paul returned to Washington to reunite with his bride, Betty. The first of their four children were born in Renton, and during nights and weekends, Paul built a house for his growing family in Bellevue, Washington. In 1951, Paul traveled to St Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea to oversee the

construction of one of the original DEW line radar sites. Paul immediately realized that Alaska was where he wanted to live. In 1952 the family moved to Anchorage and lived in Rogers Park, where the second two children were born. In 1962, the family built their current home in the Turnagain area of Anchorage.

In 1957, Paul began practice as one of the earliest licensed mechanical engineers in Alaska. Later he formed a partnership with Don MacInnes, a mechanical

engineer, and Bob Hoffman, an electrical engineer. Over the years the firm, known as CMH, grew in size and provided mechanical and electrical design for many of Anchorage's larger buildings, such as the Atwood Building. Along the way Paul mentored numerous young mechanical engineers. He was also a long-time member of the Anchorage Rotary Club.

Paul was an accomplished musician who loved classical music. During his youth he played the trumpet in several bands and then enjoyed a renewed interest during his later years by playing in an Anchorage ensemble.

Throughout his life Paul displayed a passion for adventure in the outdoors. His love of the mountains, skiing, and flying continued into his later years. Paul was one of the founders of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, and he was the first to ascend several peaks seen in the Anchorage skyline. Several of his mountain climbing adventures were described in the book “Tordrillo – Pioneer Climbs and Flights in the Tordrillo Mountains of Alaska, 1957-1997”, coauthored by Paul and his friends, Rodman Wilson, Lowell Thomas, Jr., and Tony Martin. Paul owned and flew several airplanes during his Alaskan life,



Paul Beatty Crews

and he often wished that his flying days could return.

In the 1970s Paul built a 24-foot fiberglass sailboat, “The Polly Esther”, which he enjoyed sailing in Prince William Sound. Along the way, he also earned his captain’s license for small craft. Most notably, however, Paul was an avid cross-country and alpine skier into his early 90s.

After Paul retired in 1982, he and Betty enjoyed traveling to numerous countries around the world. Inspired by his love of the arctic, Paul was especially interested in traveling on icebreakers in arctic environments, including Greenland, Iceland, and the Antarctic.

Although still physically active in his later years, Paul turned to the joys of wood working. At first he created many beautiful intricately patterned wooden bowls, until he became interested in creating musical instruments, first a balalaika and then numerous violins.

Paul was preceded in death by his loving wife Betty, who passed away the day before their 60th wedding anniversary, and his son-in-law Robert Venator. He is survived by his four children, David, Paul, Catherine and Peter, their wives Mary, Barbara, and DaRae, and his seven grandchildren, Sarah, Elizabeth, Abigail, Laura, Nicholas, Katherine, and Sebastian.

A celebration of his life was held on what would have been Paul’s 100th birthday, August 8, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., at the Kincaid Park’s Chalet. Reminiscences and stories about Paul were most welcome.

Editor’s Note: *Paul served as the first President of the Club in 1958-1959, and served on the Board of Directors from 1959-1960 and again from 1966-1968. He was later bestowed with an honorary lifetime MCA membership in recognition of his service and dedication to the Club.*

Paul made the first recorded ascents of West Twin Peak in 1954, of Byron Peak in 1958, of South Suicide Peak in 1958, of Bashful Peak in 1959, of Mount Gilbert in 1961, of Mount Eccles in 1963, of Mount Gerdine in 1963, and of Mount Torbert in 1964.

Due to Paul’s importance to MCA’s founding and history, additional remembrances will be included in the September Scree. 🕒

Barbeau Peak, 8583 feet – Highest Mountain in Nunavut, Canada

Text by Eric Gilbertson

Eric Gilbertson, Len Vanderstar, Serge Massad, Brian Friedrich, and Laura Friedrich

June 13 - July 2, 2017

Barbeau Peak is the highest peak in the Canadian territory of Nunavut, and is located in far northern Canada, just 550 miles from the North Pole. It is nestled deep in the seldom-visited British Empire Range of Ellesmere Island, where existing topographic maps are unreliable, navigation-quality satellite images are virtually nonexistent, and compass needles point southwest. Google Earth and most available maps actually still have the location of Barbeau Peak marked incorrectly, if at all.

Barbeau was first climbed in 1967, and has seen only about a dozen ascents since then. The peak itself is non-technical, basically a steep snow hike on glaciers, but access is challenging. The nearest permanent human settlements with commercial air access, Resolute, Nunavut, and Qaanaaq, Greenland, are hundreds of miles



**Len Vanderstar on the summit of Barbeau Peak.
Photo by Eric Gilbertson.**

away, meaning the main access to the peak is by chartered aircraft. However, lack of competition from air carriers in the north has recently led to extremely high flight prices – \$60,000 Canadian (CAD) for a round-trip twin-otter charter from Resolute! Thus, without significant funding, the most difficult aspect of climbing Barbeau is the approach.

Len and I started planning our climb of Barbeau in the fall of 2016, looking at a range of different access options. Len was trying to be the first Canadian to climb all 13 Canadian province and territory highpoints (see the full list at <http://peakbagger.com/list.aspx?lid=12002>), and was hoping to finish on Canada's 150th anniversary.

By March, after several months of research and negotiations, and nixing ideas of an approach by boat from Greenland when Quttinirpaaq National Park denied us a permit for this option, we finally settled on a solution. The park managers at the park were kind enough to help us coordinate flights with two other groups in the area, thus significantly reducing the cost of the charter. After recruiting a few more members, we were ready for the trip.

Our team members flew in from Seattle, Smithers, British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Montreal, and converged in Resolute on June 14. After a buffer day, a one-day weather delay, and some frantic schedule shuffling at Kenn Borek Air, on June 17 we finally flew in a ski-mounted twin otter all the way to the icefield south of Barbeau Peak. We excitedly offloaded our gear and started taking pictures. Barbeau Peak looked so close! I recognized the distinctive rocky south and east ridges from a picture I'd seen before.

It was about 2 p.m., with essentially unlimited daylight left. The south ridge looked doable, but we decided to stick with our original plan to climb the north ridge, which we knew for certain was easy and non-technical. We were too far away, though, on the wrong side of the mountain to do an ascent with a camp right where we landed, so we decided to move camp closer to our route. Len, Serge, and I roped up on one team, with Brian and Laura on another, and we soon started moving.

Distances on the ice cap were very deceptive. All the peaks looked extremely close, but after an hour of walking, a pass we were aiming for looked just about as

far away as when we started.

After three hours we finally made it to a small pass just east of Barbeau, and dropped down to a flat bowl on the other side. This seemed like an excellent, sheltered place to set up camp, so we dropped our gear and started pitching tents.

A prominent hill (Peak 2258 [meters]) very close to camp was unclimbed, so after dinner Brian, Laura, Serge, and I decided to do a short hike before bedtime. We climbed up snow, then hard ice, and got an excellent view on the summit of even more enticing, unclimbed peaks.

We all returned to camp around 11 p.m., but Brian and I were still energized to do more hikes. We'd been stuck in Resolute so long in bad weather, and now it was sunny all night and we were surrounded by unclimbed mountains!

We decided to hit one more mountain before bed, an unclimbed peak on the southeast ridge from Griper Peak (the one northeast of Barbeau). The rest of the crew stayed in camp and got ready for bed, while we roped up and started climbing. We planned to be back at camp within an hour or so, so didn't bring any food, water, backpacks, or any extra gear. Just our rope, cameras, DeLorme, hiking poles, and the snowshoes on our feet.

Brian led the way, and after navigating around some crevasses, we soon crested the narrow knife-edge summit overlooking camp. We noticed the ridge continued up to Griper Peak, and it was hard to resist continuing just a little bit farther. It was so sunny out, and we were so excited to be out in the mountains that we continued climbing. An amazing view soon opened up for us to the west of innumerable snowy mountains of the British Empire Range.

To the southwest we spied Barbeau Peak, which was tantalizingly close by then. We could have turned back and retreated to camp at that point, and perhaps we should have, but the ridge continuing to the summit of Griper Peak looked more fun than anything we'd done yet. It was a knife-edge snow ridge with terrific exposure of 1,500-plus feet on both sides, with amazing rock gendarmes sticking up intermittently along the way.

We decided to continue, with me leading carefully along the ridge in my snowshoes. If either of us fell, the

other would have to jump off the opposite side of the ridge to let the rope stop the fall. We were careful enough, though, that this wasn't an issue. The ridge continued for nearly half a kilometer, requiring an interesting scramble around a set of gendarmes before a final steep climb to the summit of Griper Peak.

I led the way down to the Barbeau-Griper col, then we started gradually ascending the north ridge of Barbeau Peak. For some reason I wasn't really tired yet, even though it was 2:30 a.m. and I hadn't eaten or drunk anything since leaving camp. Undoubtedly the blazing midnight sun helped me think it was still daytime and not yet time for bed.

The gradual slope soon narrowed to another sharp snow ridge, and I carefully kicked out steps until we reached the summit. It was 3 a.m., June 18, and we were finally on the highest point in Nunavut. It was pretty

by the first ascent team in 1967. Amazingly, the 1967 paper with pencil-written sign-in looked in perfect condition, even though it wasn't in a plastic bag, just in the tobacco tin.

We took pictures of all the papers in the register and then started our descent back to camp. We dropped down to the northwest, then traversed around Griper Peak, passed through the col, and staggered back into camp at 6 a.m.

I got a few hours of sleep, but by 10 a.m., the rest of the team was itching to get moving, so we roped back up for another ascent. I roped up with Serge and Len, while Brian and Laura slept in and planned to join later.

Len led the way, following our tracks all the way up to the base of the north ridge. The weather was a little colder and windier than it had been at 3 a.m., but still sunny.

When we reached the sharp ridge 50 meters from the summit, we stopped to switch into crampons, the most appropriate footwear for this section. Len led the way, and we all reached the summit at 3 p.m. Len officially became the first Canadian to reach the highpoints of all 13 provinces and territories of Canada, ending an amazing decades-long endeavor. He followed in the footsteps of the only other two completers of the Canada highpoints, Jack and Tom Bennett.

The summit was colder and windier now, so after about 30 minutes we started descending. We soon passed Brian and Laura at the col on their way up, and continued back to camp, arriving in the evening. That night I put in a solid 12 hours of sleep, to make up for the shortfall the previous day.

We now had roughly 10 days to get back to Tanquary Fjord for our flight out, but weren't in a huge hurry because we only expected the trek to take five or six days. Brian and I were excited to climb some of the unclimbed peaks in the area, and it was decided that everyone would take a layover day.

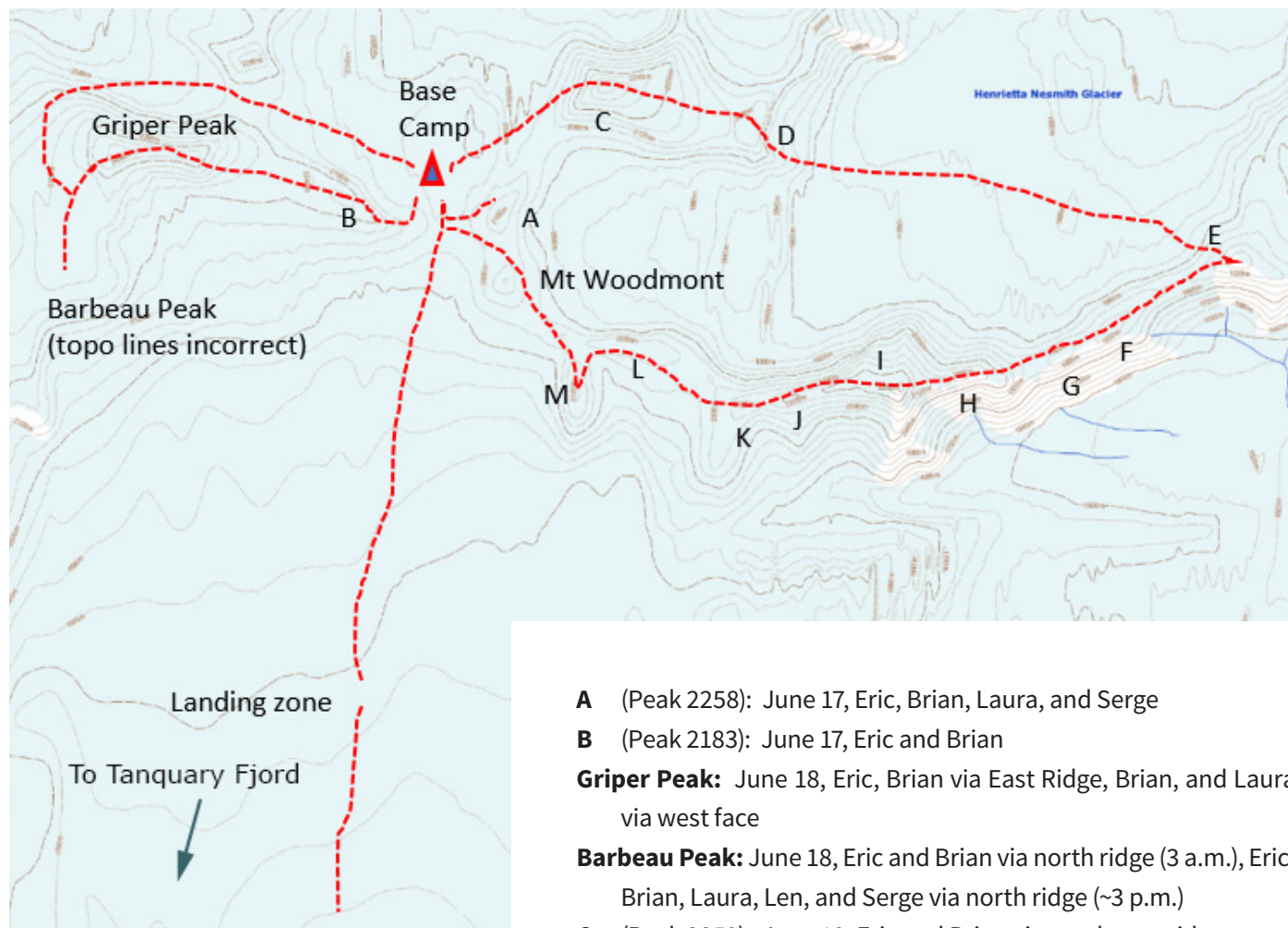
After a leisurely morning, Brian and I suited up and left camp at 11 a.m. on June 19. Since it would be light all day and all night, there was no particular need for an



Serge and the team hiking down the Adams Glacier, with Barbeau Peak in the background. Photo by Eric Gilbertson.

breathtaking looking around at the snowy mountains in all directions, and realizing how truly remote we were. The wind was calm, and the high sun made it almost feel warm out.

The true top was actually quite exposed, with a large icy drop-off to the west, so we descended to a more level spot on the south ridge on a rock outcrop with a small cairn. Here we found the tobacco-tin summit register left



A (Peak 2258): June 17, Eric, Brian, Laura, and Serge

B (Peak 2183): June 17, Eric and Brian

Griper Peak: June 18, Eric, Brian via East Ridge, Brian, and Laura via west face

Barbeau Peak: June 18, Eric and Brian via north ridge (3 a.m.), Eric, Brian, Laura, Len, and Serge via north ridge (~3 p.m.)

C (Peak 2359): June 19, Eric and Brian via southwest ridge

D (Peak 2131): June 19, Eric and Brian via west face

E (Peak 2016): June 19, Eric and Brian via west face

F (Peak 1925): June 19, Eric and Brian via northeast ridge

G (Peak 1931): June 19, Eric and Brian via northeast ridge

H (Peak 2087): June 19, Eric and Brian via northeast ridge

I (Peak 2254): June 19, Eric and Brian via northeast ridge

J (Peak 2235): June 19, Eric and Brian via northeast ridge

K (Peak 2176): June 19, Eric and Brian via northeast ridge

L (Peak 2125): June 19, Eric and Brian via east ridge

M (Peak 2246): June 19, Eric and Brian via east ridge

N (Peak 1893): June 20, Eric and Brian via northwest ridge

O (Peak 432): June 23, Eric, Brian, Laura, and Serge

P (Peak 845): June 24, Eric via northeast ridge

Q (Peak 925): June 25, Eric and Brian via west ridge

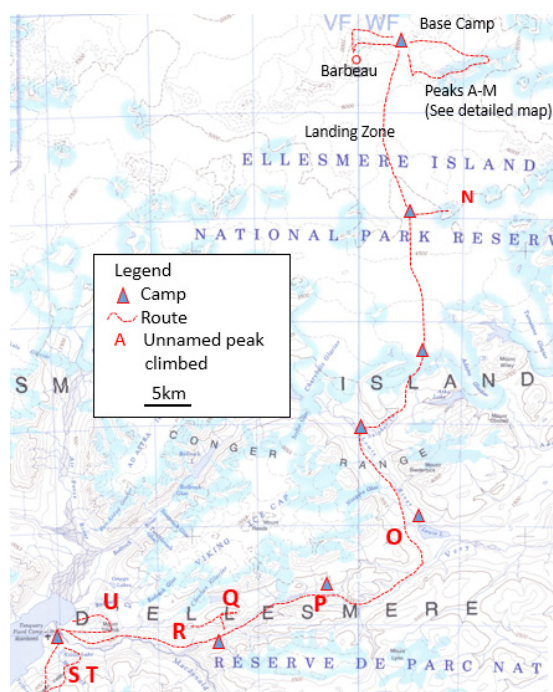
R (Peak 835): June 25, Eric via east ridge

S: June 27, Eric and Len

T: June 27, Eric

Mount Timmia: June 29, Eric, Brian, and Len

U: June 29, Eric and Brian



alpine start at that latitude. Our plan was to complete a circuit to hit the handful of mountains we had scoped out from the peak near camp two days earlier. The rest of the crew would either take a rest day in camp, or hike up some of the closer mountains.

Brian and I started with the huge pyramidal summit to the northeast of camp, unclimbed Peak 2359 (meters). Brian led the way, and after crossing a flat snowy basin in snowshoes, we started ascending the south ridge, and soon switched over to crampons and ice axes. We passed numerous small crevasses, some big enough to fall in, and were glad to be roped up.

The ridge was another knife edge, but this time icier and steeper than the one on Griper Peak. We would later find that almost all the mountains up here have steep snowy knife-edge ridges, which is unusual compared to the mountains I'm used to climbing in the Cascade Range of Washington.

We took a short detour to construct a cairn on the highest rock outcrop below the summit, and then made it to the top. The summit was the convergence of three knife-edge ridges, and was quite exposed. From there we got an excellent view of the rest of our circuit. We would cross a broad glacier valley and then hit a ridge on the other side and hike over all the peaks along the ridge back to camp. One peak was particularly impressive, with a huge rock cliff facing us, straddled by a hanging glacier. Steep cliffs were rare in the British Empire Range, given all the sedimentary rock, and that peak was definitely an outlier.

I led the way down, carefully down-climbing the sharp ridge until it leveled out. We descended steeply to the Henrietta Nesmith Glacier, and on the way I punched through a few crevasses, but quickly rolled out with no problems.

Eventually we reached the far ridge on the summit of Peak 2016 (meters), and started following the ridge back toward camp. We got to follow several kilometers of fun, snowy knife edges, with occasional rock bands to scramble over. That was probably my favorite stretch of terrain on the whole expedition, and I highly recommend it for anyone else in the area.


We passed over many minor peaks along the

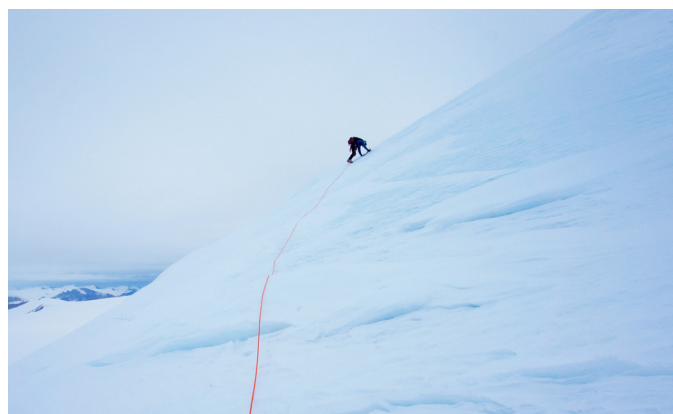
ridge, before climbing steeply up to Peak 2254 (meters). That was the one flanked by the huge rock cliff and hanging glacier, and made for a fitting dinner break. It was 9 p.m. by then and we were both out of water and low on food, but we made due by eating snow.

After a few more hours we reached our last summit of the day, Peak 2246 (meters), but from there all the descent options turned out to be hard blue ice. Brian tried descending what looked like snow, only to start slipping on what was actually dust-covered ice. I instantly dove into self-arrest position on a snowbank, but Brian caught his fall in time so my maneuver was unnecessary.

Luckily we'd brought a few screws, and carefully belayed each other across the ice, about 50 meters, back onto snow. From there the hiking was easy, and we arrived in camp, exhausted, at 2:30 a.m.

Over the next 10 days or so, we headed south, pulling sleds and climbing one more prominent unclimbed peak (Peak 1893 [meters]) along the way. We exited the Adams Glacier above Atka Lake, and descended down into the Lewis River Valley. The valley was full of wildlife, and we saw herds of nearly 20 arctic hare (that hop around like kangaroos on their back legs!), a dozen musk oxen, and even an arctic wolf with pups. After passing Lewis Lake we hiked up the Very River, down the McDonald River, and arrived at Tanquary Fjord on June 26. The fjord was still mostly frozen solid, but we managed to clean off with a few quick swims along the edge, before flying home on June 30.

I've also posted a longer report and more pictures here: <http://www.countryhighpoints.com/nunavut/>. 



Eric down-climbing the icy slope of previously unclimbed Peak 2254 (meters). Photo by Brian Friedrich.

Boisterous Peak (6,865 feet)

Text by Nathan Hebda

Alex McCready and I set off for Bold Valley right after work on a mostly cloudy Friday afternoon (July 21st). The weather forecast called for sunny to mostly sunny conditions over the next two days and we wanted to waste no time. We watched the cloud cover clear that night and were heading out of camp up Hunter Creek Pass in the sunshine by 7:30 the next morning.

We caught first sight of Boisterous Peak from the pass, an unsettling distance away. It quickly disappeared behind Bold as we made the requisite 1,700-foot drop to the creek. A herd of over twenty mighty moose cleared way for the two of us. We crossed the creek very early and travelled south on the east side of the water, encountering mercifully short and unsustained alder.

Up valley we debated which way around point 4790 to access the northeast ridge, correctly passing the point and going over the rock glacier around its south face. The terrain up to the ridge consisted of large and relatively stable boulders with pockets of snow. Crossing under Boisterous's northeast-facing glacier, we marveled at Willy Hersman's accomplishment of ascending this and wondered how different it was in 1991. Water flowed up to this point.

It was already almost 2:00 p.m. by the time we made it on route and committed to pressing forward even with the prospect of a bivy or super-long night on the horizon. The ridge immediately demanded attentive route-finding, a quick start to the mostly 4th class terrain that would persist almost to the summit. Travel starts out relatively simply with either a series of ledges or a scree gully to choose between. The rock was a special kind of rotten, even by Chugach standards.

Things started to get particularly tricky at the large gendarme between five and six-thousand feet. Climber's left

appeared not so bad, however, I believe we ended up taking the right-sided near-vertical pitch that Tom Dolan wisely backed off of in 2007. (*Editor's Note: reference October 2007 Scree for Tom's account*) It was between 20 and 25 feet with some good solid cracks but loose holds at the crux at the pitch's top. Alex described it as "fun," estimated difficulty at 5.6 - 5.7, and would have liked to have .5 to .75 cams for it. Fall consequence was total, and while I would have preferred another route, it was too late to down-climb by the time I realized how committing it was.

From the top of the gendarme we continued almost directly on top of the ridge, again through still demanding but relatively straightforward terrain



Alex McCready on the summit of Boisterous Peak. Photo by Nathan Hebda

until getting just above 6,200 feet. My heart sank here, finding a quickly steepening ridge composed of junk rock. The climbing looked difficult and very committing, and a fall would almost certainly lead to the glacier, which would then end at the bottom of the mountain.

I seriously considered backing off here, but Alex employed incredible coolness and skill while finding our way over and along either side of the ridge. Travel slowed tremendously. At one point we were pressing our full weight on narrow foot holds littered with tiny scree while traversing over assured destruction. We came prepared to sling rock horns, but this section offered no opportunity for protection.

Finally, with about 100 feet to go, the ridge



The glacier's bergschrund. Photo by Nathan Hebda

relented, and straightforward terrain took us up to the last false peak. A large flat area that could easily accommodate a tent or even a helicopter separates it from the true summit. We packed a Nalgene full of melting snow here. Now well after 5:00 p.m., we were on top of the mountain. Views were tremendous, offering unique perspectives of Bashful, Bold, and large peaks and glaciers across from Hunter Creek. Marcus Baker even towered in the distance. We signed into the original summit register, which contained 11 previous entries by my count.

For the descent, we first avoided the temptation to take friendly-looking scree gullies, fearing the possibility of ending up on a far too eastern aspect of the mountain. We instead bypassed the most difficult down-climbing on the upper reaches of the ridge by dropping a ways down a narrow gully on a more northerly aspect of the mountain, taking turns to avoid continuous rock fall. Unfortunately what appeared to be snow at its terminus turned out to be an incredibly hard, slick, and steep extension of the glacier that did not accept ice ax and might not have taken crampon points even if we had them.

We found a good rap station though our single 60 meter rope was not long enough to cross the ice to easier terrain. Ultimately we had to traverse unbelievably solid but steep rock with terrible fall consequence over the precipitous glacier, finally finding a series of ledges that got us back on the northeast ridge. A huge barrage of rock fall came down the gully not thirty minutes after we exited it. Though

the shockingly solid and featured rock along the traverse offered up some fun, we cannot recommend this route.

Coming upon our large gendarme, we descended what I thought was the climber's-left route that we spotted from the bottom, connecting a series of 3rd-class ledges over a 5th class drop. We ended up popping out the middle of it, and I looked back up on our fearsome pitch over my left shoulder. It might have been before or after 10:00 p.m. by the time we scree-skied back to the bottom of the ridge and reached the rock glacier. A chilly breeze pooled off the ice as we again crossed back under the hanging monster. All day we watched and heard rocks crashing off of the thing.

Things get hazy after that but it wasn't until 6:00 the next morning that we reached camp again, laying down for 15 minutes before getting back up the pass but never sleeping. We slept in until the mid-morning sun baked our tent and brought us to awareness. We spent an incredibly pleasant few hours basking on the tundra, enjoying hot food, partly cloudy skies, and a cool breeze before making our way down and out Eklutna Lakeside Trail. 🏔️

Editor's Note: Car to car is 30 miles and 9,000-feet elevation gain. Reference September 1991 Scree for Willy Hersman's first ascent article. Willy soloed the 1,800-foot north face glacier while Greg Dubois, Dolly Lefever, Jim Sayler and Kneely Taylor took the northeast ridge. Kneely remembers Willy describing his glacier solo using some pretty colorful words, which are better left unpublished.)



Bashful Peak from the summit of Boisterous Peak. Photo by Nathan Hebda

Sovereign Mountain (8,849 feet), Talkeetna Mountains

Text by Dave Hart

Sovereign Mountain is the highest peak in the Talkeetna Mountains and located in the heart of the glaciated alpine terrain which feeds the Talkeetna River, Chickaloon River, Kings River, Kashwitna River, and Sheep River. Although not very high in altitude, its 5,849 feet of clean topographic prominence ranks 40th in Alaska, out of a total of 64 peaks with over 5,000 feet of prominence in the state.

Lee Helzer and I had initially planned to fly in for a winter ascent of Mts. Torbert and Talachulitna in the Tordrillo Mountains this March 11-12, 2017, weekend, but low clouds, high winds and cold temperatures to the west changed our plans to Sovereign Mountain. We met our pilot friend Conor McManamin at his Lake Hood slip at 8 a.m. Saturday March 11 and loaded up his Cessna 180 with our weekend gear, plus a bit extra. One hour and 85 miles later we were circling the Talkeetna and Sheep River Glaciers looking for a suitable spot to land. Five years prior Conor had landed our friends Ben Still, Sean Cahoon and Danielle Varney at 7,000 feet on the Centennial Glacier below the northwest face of the mountain, so we quickly decided on the same spot.

Conor placed us at 6,850 feet on the Centennial Glacier at 10 a.m., a half mile east of Peak 7960 where we made camp in the chilly 5 degree temperatures. We bid Conor farewell, with plans for him to return the following afternoon. Lee and I quickly set up camp and packed our day packs. By 11 a.m. we were skinning south up the glacier for 1 mile to the 7,750-foot pass due west of Sovereign Mountain. We had to boot up the final 300 feet due to steepening ice. It felt good to hit sunshine on the pass and then boot down to the sunny warm side of the pass and get our first views of our route up the southeast ridge. Once back on the Talkeetna Glacier we put on our skis and quickly descended a mile to the base of the southeast ridge at 7,200 feet.

The weather remained pleasant and clear though snow plumes were visible off the higher ridges. We left

our skis at the base of the ridge and started booting up the lower slopes. Decent, though occasionally deep, snow afforded quick travel. By 2:30 p.m. we had followed obvious gullies on the southeast ridge to ~8,500 feet where



Dave looking southeast across the Talkeetna Glacier with Marcus Baker distant on right horizon. Photo by Lee Helzer

we were seemingly cliffed out with steep drops on the right and impassable cliffs above. Lee traversed left and found a sneaky exit west to the more mellow southern slopes above. From there another hour of plodding in the increasing wind brought us to the top, surprisingly left/west of where we expected it. We reached the top around 3:30 p.m.

We had wonderful views of Denali, Hayes and Marcus Baker and countless smaller Talkeetna Mountains peaks. We could even faintly make out our camp 1.5 miles below and northwest of us. We found the register and added our names to the many familiar names of Willy Hersman and Phil Fortner (referenced in January 2017 Scree), Tom Choate and Mark Miraglia (referenced in April 2009 Scree), Billy Finley, Yvonne Lamoureux, and Eric Parsons among others. I realize peak registers and cairns are anathema to some purists, but I personally enjoy looking through years old registers and seeing friends' names. We'll save that debate for a future discussion.



Lee at -20F with Sovereign behind, the ascent pass on right horizon after returning to camp. Photo by Dave Hart

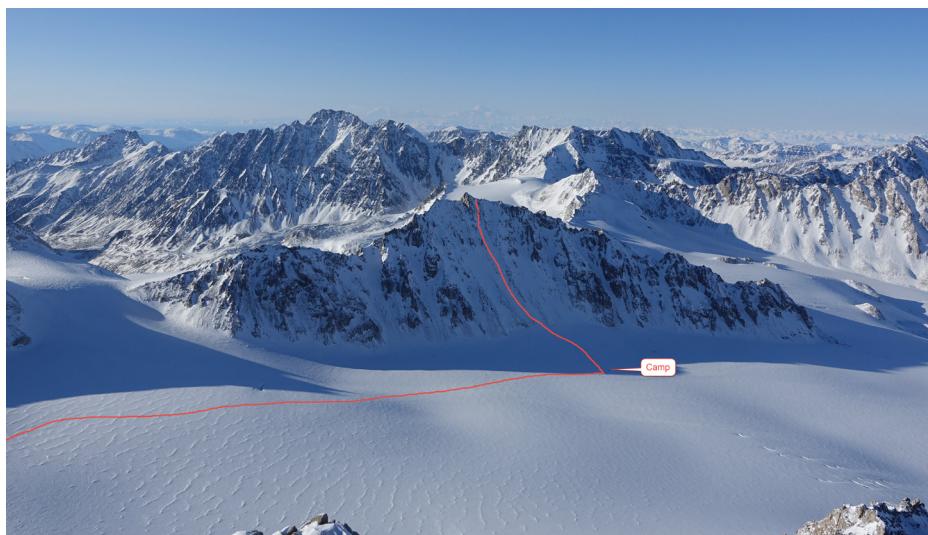
rock. We finally crested the very windy and cold north ridge at 7,800 feet where Lee poked around a bit further to find the summit defended by steep rocky terrain requiring protected and belayed travel, which was impossible with our rope left in camp. We descended in a quick hour back to camp and were packed up in time for Conor to pick us up at 4 p.m. An uneventful flight back to Lake Hood found us having a hot shower before dinner.

Although Lee and I only climbed Sovereign, there are 100+ lesser peaks in the 200 square mile glaciated alpine terrain surrounding Sovereign, including 10 impressive peaks with over 1,000 feet of

prominence. Many of these have likely seen few, if any, visitors. Sovereign Mountain is a fun destination for either a quick weekend peak bagging trip, or a longer alpine glacier ski touring expedition. It would be suitable for those looking for a first-time Alaska glacier climbing trip or for experienced mountaineers looking to for more technical rocky alpine peaks. Flights can be arranged with Mike Meekin's Air Service or Blue Ice Aviation in the Mat-Su area, or one of the several flight services in Talkeetna. 📍

By 4 p.m. it was time to head down. We reversed our route pretty quickly, only having to down-climb the tricky spot around and below 8,500 feet. We put our skis back on for the one mile and 500-foot ascent back to the pass, the last several hundred feet of which was a pretty impressive wallowing trench led by Lee. We then down-climbed the icy northern side of the pass and had a leisurely coast back to camp by 7 p.m. ending our 8-hour hike. We were surprised to look at our thermometer while cooking dinner and the -15F temperatures.

We went to bed planning to wake up once the sun hit the tent to allow a leisurely breakfast. Little did we realize that with daylight savings that night, the sun wouldn't reach us until 10:30 a.m. After a chilly breakfast, we loaded our day packs to climb up the shadowed and cold east face of Peak 7960 right above camp. Easy terrain transitioned to pleasant 40-plus degree Styrofoam, then into bottomless 50-degree sugar, breakable crust and sketchy

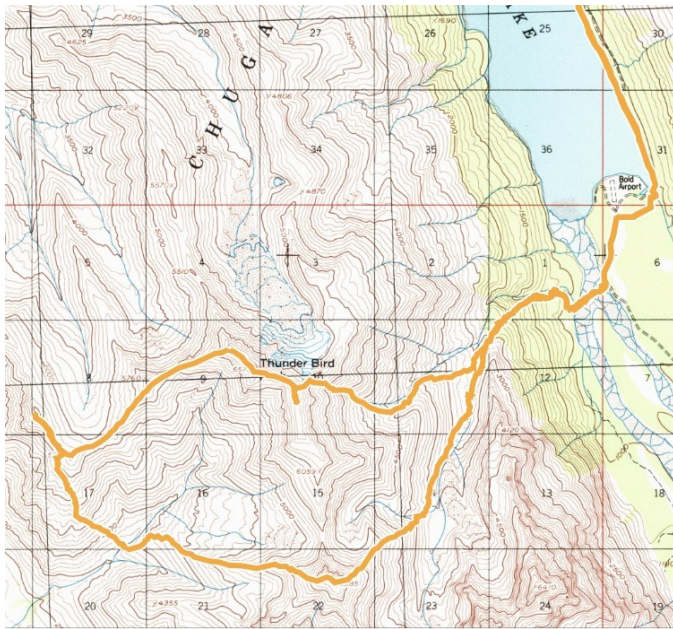


Peak 7960 with attempted route and Base Camp from summit of Sovereign Mountain. Foraker, Hunter and Denali on distant horizon. Photo by Dave Hart

From the Bees to the Bird – Bee’s Heaven Peak (6,385 feet), Peak 5537, and Thunder Bird Peak (6,587 feet)

Text by Dan Glatz

It was mid-May and the adventure bug was hitting hard with the coming of summer. Many ideas began to form in the back of my head, but one stood out. On an April ascent of Thunder Bird Peak, there was a ridgeline traverse that caught my eye. After looking over a map, the



idea seemed like a long day, but also plausible. The plan was to bike to the end of Eklutna Lake and climb Bee’s Heaven Peak, then make a giant loop on ridgelines while also climbing Peak 5537 and Thunder Bird Peak.

On May 19, 2017, my friend, Daryll Vispo, and I set out for the traverse. On our bike ride along the lake we jumped a wolverine, which then shot off running up the trail in front of us at a speed that I never thought was possible for such a creature. At Mile 9 we stashed our bikes and crossed the Eklutna River, which was shallow, but also quite chilly! From there we took the climbers’ trail on the east side of the drainage that flows between The Watchman and Thunder Bird Peak.

Five hours after leaving the truck, we were standing on the summit of Bee’s Heaven. After a quick

break spent checking out the impressive views of Benign Peak and Bellicose Peak, we dropped down the west ridge to the valley floor at 3100 feet. We weren’t thrilled about losing so much elevation, but it was definitely worth it because we were able to refill our water supply and take a break at the little stream there.

From the valley floor it was a tundra-and-scrree-filled 2400-foot climb to the summit of Peak 5537. Numerous sheep were grazing along the hillside and the views of Mount Rumble and the Peters Creek Valley were phenomenal. The ridge from Peak 5537 to Thunder Bird Peak was straightforward and mellow, which we were thankful for because fatigue was starting to set in. We hit both the east and west summits of Thunder Bird Peak, stopping at both to soak up some final views and look back at how far we had come.

Minutes later we were happily racing down scree and snow chutes to the valley floor. The river crossing that time around was actually quite welcome, as the cool water was soothing to our tired feet and ankles. Finally after 14 hours, 31 miles and over 10,000 feet of elevation gain, we arrived back at the truck with tired bodies and happy souls. 🏔️



Thunder Bird Ridge, looking toward Cook Inlet.
Photo by Dan Glatz

Bear Mountain (4,019 feet), Kenai Mountains:

The past guarantees nothing

Text and photo by Wayne L. Todd

June 17, 2017. 5 ½ hours, 5 ½ miles, 4100' gain. Wayne L. Todd with Paul Andrews and Carrie Wang

After a splendid day with Harold and Steve on Foundary Peak and with a continued excellent forecast, it is logical to return to Seward two days later for another ridge hike with fantastic views. (And the continuing search for those elusive goats).

Carrie and Paul are my traveling companions this go around (and fortunately both comfortable on scrambly terrain).

The low clouds around Seward are contrary to prediction but surely they'll burn off. We easily find the trail* for Bear (thanks, Harold). The excellent trail initially sustains a steep grade (more so on the ascent than descent) and we have good views below 2,000'.

At two miles distant and 4,000', this route has almost a 4/10 rise over run. Kings Peak across the Mat River is king for southcentral regarding grade. Grade could be a new peak bagging category along with significant prominence (a recent sought after goal).

At Little Bear, and just below the cloud layer, we see just the beginning of Bear ridge. Off ridge, the scene is still mostly snow covered, including a blue water dappled snow lake.

Entering the cloud zone, we scramble up, then steep hike, then scramble, mostly avoiding the latent snow. We use standard safety protocols such as "no knocking rocks on your friends". With 50 yard visibility we keep thinking "the next bump is the top". After numerous instances, I check our altitude. Really, another 400' to go?

Axes are used for a couple very short traverses that have serious consequence (that we can see). The environment seems especially quiet and no birds are flying in these IFR conditions, nor are goats encountered. Boot tracks of late are seen off and on. Bump, scramble, bump... (like a cartridge on a turntable at the end of the record, without automatic return)

Then a massive snow pile cornice covers the ridge, altitude is about right, and nothing protrudes in near view. We wait for ¼ hour for the views to open up and... nothing. We retrace our north east route, glad the terrain is only barely damp. We avoid a bit of the ridge by boot glissading toward the snow lake but step carefully around exposed rocks as the isothermic snow collapses to whatever surface lurks below. Occasional glimpses of the ridge between Bear and Lowell exhibit unfriendly human travel terrain. The nice views return below 2,000' and overall the visibility has improved slightly from a few hours earlier.

Hopefully you have the 'full monty' views on your Bear day and can try the suggested loop below.

(Harold suggested descending north on snow from on high down to a snow bridge over Lowell Ck which makes a nice loop, axe and crampons mandatory).

*The trail starts within ten yards south of the house lot located on the south west corner of First and Jefferson. Respect residents' private property, parking and driveways.

Perhaps more clever names need to be used. This is the third Bear Mountain I've climbed in southcentral Alaska. There are at least nine Bear Mountains in Alaska. Perhaps that's another quest. You're in for trouble if you are a boater and seeking all the Sheep Creeks! 📍





Eastern aspect of Mount Thorofare from the Denali Park Road.

Mount Thorofare (5,629 feet), Alaska Range

Text by Steve Gruhn. Photos by Jeff Rettler.

I had wanted to climb Mount Thorofare after conducting research for a Peak-of-the-Month column on nearby Mount Galen in July 2013, but I don't get up to Denali Park very often. So, when I had company from the Lower 48 who wanted to tour Denali, I jumped at the chance to join in and attempt Mount Thorofare.

After taking the park bus to the Eielson Visitor Center, Jeff Rettler and I set out up the well-traveled Eielson Alpine Trail to attain the southwest ridge of Mount Thorofare at about 4700 feet. The rest of the many hikers on the trail turned to the left and settled for photos on a nearby promontory on the ridge. Jeff and I turned to the right, crested a small rise, rounded a corner, and came upon four caribou. They arose from the snow patch upon which they had been resting and moved away from us. When they stopped to look at us, I put my trekking poles above my head to imitate antlers. Curious, the caribou turned toward us and then began to trot in our direction. Each of them came within 10 yards of us as they loped by to check out those creatures with the weird antlers.

After the caribou had gone by us, we resumed hiking up the ridge past where we had initially seen them. Many caribou trails guided our path as we ascended the

corkscrew ridge. En route we encountered several hidden basins. Evidently the caribou knew well of their existence.

Gradually, the tundra gave way to rocks and scree. As we crested a rise, we were surprised to see an antenna near the 5629-foot summit of the peak. We continued up the rocks and past several small ponds. On the summit we looked northwest to Mount Galen and the headwaters of Moose Creek and I contemplated future trips. Two cairns were present on the summit, but we didn't dismantle either of them to search for the bench mark that a U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey party had placed there in 1953.

A building afternoon storm soon chased us from the summit. As we moved down from the summit, I noted a shed caribou antler. We followed our route of ascent and when we reached the Eielson Alpine Trail, sleet began to pelt us. I'd been caught out in a hailstorm previously and I raced down the trail to avoid that fate again.

Three hours after leaving the Eielson Visitor Center, I returned. Fifteen minutes later we caught the next bus headed back to the park entrance. 🚌



Steve Gruhn impersonates a caribou.



Roost Peak from Eagle River Valley, Western Chugach Mountains. Photo by Frank Baker

WHICH IS THE RIGHT PICTURE?

Can you tell which photo below is oriented correctly?



Answer on page 18

Peak of the Month: Mumtrak Hill

By Steve Gruhn. Photos by Luc Mehl.

Mountain Range	Kuskokwim Mountains; Ahklun Mountains
Borough	Unorganized Borough
Drainage	Tunulik River
Latitude/Longitude	59° 8' 6" North, 161° 34' 9" West
Elevation	773 feet
Prominence	698 feet from Ikuktitlig Mountain (2588)
Adjacent Peak	Ikuktitlig Mountain
Distinctness	698 feet from Ikuktitlig Mountain
USGS Map	Goodnews Bay (A-7)
First Recorded Ascent	Unknown
Route of First Recorded Ascent	Southwest ridge
Access Point	Goodnews Bay



Sarah Histan on the summit of Mumtrak Hill.



View from Mumtrak Hill: Sarah Histan and Beluga Hill in the background.

Mumtrak Hill is a low hill directly northeast of the city of Goodnews Bay. The U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey named the hill in 1914 after the village of Mumtrak, which was located on the western shore of the mouth of the Goodnews River. In the 1920s flooding and storms encouraged the population of Mumtrak to move 0.2 mile northwest and establish the community of Goodnews Bay. By 1930 Mumtrak was abandoned. In 1951 while working for the USGS, Joseph McCormick Hoare reported the Yup'ik Eskimo name for Mumtrak Hill was Kamguvluagvik. The hill has also been called Boots Mountain.

In March 2016, Sarah Histan and Luc Mehl skated, hiked, and skied from Bethel to Quinhagak and on to the northeast ridge of Mumtrak Hill and camped at the summit before descending the southwest ridge to Goodnews Bay. It was Mehl's subsequent blog post (<https://thingstolucat.com/climate-change-alaska-ice-skates/>) that brought Mumtrak Hill to my attention.

Mehl reported numerous all-terrain vehicle and heavy equipment tracks throughout the area, including on the summit.

The information for this column came from Donald Orth's Dictionary of Alaska Place Names and from my correspondence with Mehl. ①



Sarah Histan hiking down Mumtrak Hill to Goodnews Bay.



O'Malley Peak to Hidden Peak, Western Chugach Mountains

Text and Photo by Marcin Ksok

Over the years I disregarded Hidden Peak. Not being a true mountain in technical sense it sat on the ridgeline between O'Malley and The Ramp. I did not bother it, letting it be, and yet it is a named feature and looking at the map one cannot avoid it. During a ridge walk from Flattop to Flaketop it stood out prominently. I couldn't dispute its existence from Wolverine either. The time has come late in the winter therefore I made my way up Hidden Valley taking advantage of early morning crust. From below it is difficult to tell what is what on that ridgeline so of course I made a mistake of going up too soon and after some loose scree ended up on the top of O'Malley. From that vantage it was easy to see that between me and my goal stood a formidable looking ridgeline. I was not deterred, really wanted a new summit and proceeded by descending a bit and traversing the southern slopes to avoid gendarmes blocking my way. At one point a way presented itself up a snowy, narrow gully. I was relieved to find soft snow because crampons didn't make their way into the pack. Little bit of kicking and scrambling brought me to the end of the gully and almost to the top of the hidden ridge bump. Few more steps and there I was, sitting near the top and admiring the views. On the return I just pointed my feet down and descended on now softer snow down to Hidden Lake. The warming temperatures worried me some, being just on foot, but hardpacked snowmachine tracks, whether they are supposed to be there or not made for comfortable walking. At one time I noticed a moving mass above the lake, not far from my line of ascent. The black bear seemed to be

PICTURE QUIZ ANSWER

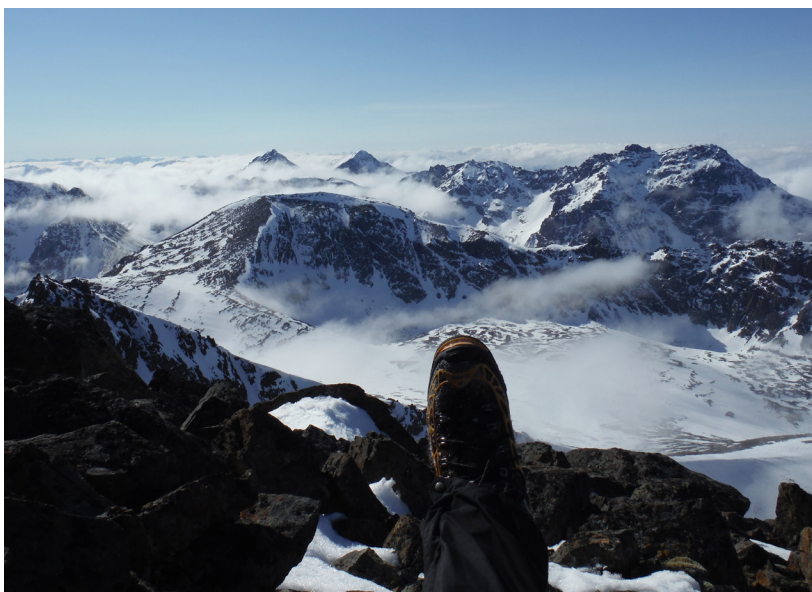
Quiz on page 16



Trick question, they are both Right (Mountain), but here is the correct orientation.

Dave Hart, Theresa Pipek, Carrie Wang, and Dan Glatz above Crescent Lake. Photo by Wayne Todd.

in hot pursuit of ground dwellers and paid no attention to me, yet I lengthened my stride and rapidly gained powerline trail and the parking lot. ①



Looking south from the summit of Hidden Peak

CLIMBING NOTES

July 16, 2017 JT Lindholm and Eric Parsons made the 11th ascent of Baleful Peak 7,990' in the Western Chugach Mountains by the standard 4th class Northeast Ridge from Blissful Lake in a speedy round trip time of 9.5 hours. A trip report will follow in a future Scree issue. The first ascent was by local legends Art Davidson and Vin Hoeman in 1965.

July 21, 2017 Joe Chmielowski and Dave Hart made the 12th ascent of Baleful Peak also by the Northeast Ridge. Joe and Dave are drafting a "How to access and climb Baleful Peak" article with annotated maps, photos and route descriptions for a future Scree issue.

Dave Hart became the 9th person known to have climbed all 21 of the 7,000-foot peaks in the Western Chugach Mountains on July 21, 2017 with his ascent of Baleful Peak. There are several more folks closing in on this list. Good luck to them. The finishers include:

1. Willy Hersman, 1990
2. Jim Sayler, 1993
3. Richard Baranow, 1997
3. Wendy Sanem, 1997
5. Kneely Taylor, 2002
6. Niles Woods, 2003
7. Karen Cafmeyer, 2003
8. Wayne L. Todd, 2006
9. Dave Hart, 2017

The July 21-23, 2017 weekend had perhaps the best weather of the summer. We encourage folks to submit Scree articles from their trips so we can all share in their adventures.

Race veteran gives it his all

Seward's Fred Moore, 77, crests over the top of Race Point on July 4, 2017, on his way to completing his 48th consecutive run, which he first started in 1969. Moore holds the record for the best time in the 70-79 age group with 1 hour, 7 minutes and 9 seconds.

Photo by Frank E. Baker



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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 Membership Committee at 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. Articles should be submitted by the 24th 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.

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.

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Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MCAK/info>.

**Background photo: Dave Hart
descending to the upper Talkeetna
Glacier with the south ridge of
Sovereign Mountain in profile. Photo
by Lee Helzer.**

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