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Peak of the Month: Sunburst Mountain

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

October 2019

Volume 62, Number 10



"Love the trees until
their leaves fall off, then
encourage them to try
again next year."

– Chad Sugg

OCTOBER MEETING: Wednesday,
October 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the
BP Energy Center.

Brendan Lee will present "Chasing
Choss." Come take a journey from
the glaciers of the Western Chugach
Mountains to the alder jungles of
the Kenai Mountains. Weekend
outings with good company, good
laughs, and great views.

"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."

This issue brought to you by: Editor—Steve Gruhn assisted by Dawn Munroe

Cover Photo

Jennifer DuFord nears the east ridge of Helios Peak.

Photo by Steve Gruhn

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<https://www.google.com/maps/place/BP+Energy+Center/@61.1900534,-149.8658586,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x56c897b71cd81d1d:0x5058f26b0a2567f1!8m2!3d61.1900534!4d-149.8636699>

Climbing Notes

On September 8 Wayne Todd emailed to report that on September 5 and 6 Matt Green and he had climbed Big Bad Wolf Peak (5560 feet) and Peak 5160 west of Snow River Pass in the Kenai Mountains. We look forward to a full trip report appearing in a future issue of *the Scree*.

Proposed Geographic Name

The Alaska Historical Commission has requested comment from the MCA regarding a proposal to name an unnamed 5195-foot point in the Carbon Lake and Green Lake drainages on Baranof Island as Partition Peak. Contact Steve Gruhn at geographicnames@mtnclubak.org for more information. Please provide comments by October 8 so that Steve can compile them and submit a response to the AHC on behalf of the MCA.

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 11th 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. Send high resolution file photos separately, including captions for each photo. 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. Please submit at least one vertically-oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please don't forget to submit photo captions.

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit <http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?useaction=members.form>.

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Announcements

Hut Needs and Notes

If you are headed to one of the MCA huts, please consult the Hut Inventory and Needs on the website (<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm/Huts/Hut-Inventory-and-Needs>) or Greg Bragiel, MCA Huts Chairman, at either huts@mtclubak.org or (907) 350-5146 to see what needs to be taken to the huts or repaired. All huts have tools and materials so that anyone can make basic repairs. Hutmeisters are needed for each hut: If you have a favorite hut and would like to take the lead on checking on the hut and organizing maintenance, the MCA would greatly appreciate your help!

Mentorship Program

Interested in furthering your skills? The MCA has a volunteer-driven Mentorship Program that connects beginner and intermediate folks seeking technical experience in specific mountaineering disciplines with mentors who help you gain and work on new skills.

If you would like to become a mentee or mentor, please email mentorship@mtclubak.org.

Trip

MCA Winter Mountaineering School February 21-29, 2020

A comprehensive training program for individuals who are accomplished backpackers who wish to START learning mountaineering skills.

Course of instruction: Trip planning, food preparation, leadership, winter travel, gear selection/preparation, navigation, leave no trace, snow travel, snow anchors, running belay, rope handling, communication, terminology, knots, gear essentials, route finding, glacier travel, crevasse rescue, belaying, avalanche recognition, avalanche rescue, staying warm, nutrition/hydration, winter camping, snow shelters, wilderness medicine, rappelling, ice climbing, winter survival, stream crossing, confidence building, and more. NO course fee; however, students share trip expenses. Certificate of Participation issued when student fulfills course requirements. Lead Instructor: Greg Bragiel.

Preparation for this trip starts with an organizational meeting **Sunday, October 13 at 5 p.m.** at Fred Meyers Abbott Road at Starbucks; interested MCA members must attend

Proposed Amendment to the By-Laws

The MCA Board at its meeting on August 28, 2019, adopted a resolution recommending that the membership vote on a By-law amendment authorizing the expansion of the Board of Directors by two authorized positions, from 4 directors to a maximum of 6 directors.

The By-law amendment recommended by the Board would amend

Section IV. A. of the By-laws ("Executive Committee Composition") to change the present requirement of "Directors (4)" to "Directors (minimum 4, maximum 6), as determined by the Board."

The proposed amendment was announced at the MCA membership meeting on September 4, 2019. By that announcement, and by appearing here in *the Scree*, this proposal can be voted upon by the membership at the October 2, 2019, MCA meeting, before the general election of officers is held.

Award Nominations

The MCA's Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Hoeman Award, the Presidents Award, and Honorary MCA Memberships.

The Hoeman Award is the MCA's highest award and recognizes those individuals who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to the exploration, documentation, and promotion of hiking and climbing opportunities in Alaska. Nominees should have some association with the MCA, but may not currently hold elected office in the club.

The Presidents Award recognizes a current MCA member who has made significant contributions of time and effort toward an MCA project or other club activities during a calendar year. Nominees must be current MCA members. The current President may not be nominated for the Presidents Award.

Honorary Memberships recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the MCA and its purposes. Nominees need not be MCA members, but must be living and may not currently hold elected office in the club.

Nominations must be in writing and must include the name of the person nominating the candidate, a description of the contributions the candidate has made, and the names and contact information of other persons who might provide more information to the Awards Committee regarding the candidate's contributions.

Nominations may be submitted to the MCA's Awards Committee at P.O. Box 243561, Anchorage, Alaska 99524-3561 or to Tom Meacham, Awards Committee Chairman, at tmeacham@gci.net.

For additional information, please visit

<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm/About-Us/Awards> and review the MCA's Awards Committee policies at http://www.mtnclubak.org/layouts/layout_mca/files/documents/misc/MCA%20Policies.pdf.

Choate's Chuckle - Tom Choate

Q: A climber asked the salesman to repeat his sales talk. Why?

Answer: on page 23.

Peak 5580 (West Fork of Windy Creek and Cantwell Creek), Alaska Range

Text and photos by Dan Glatz

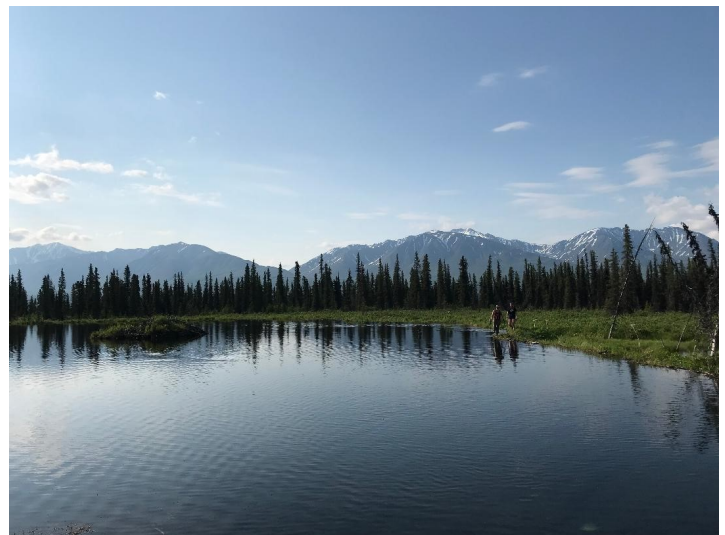


Carrie Koso on the summit of Peak 5580

On June 23, 2019, Theresa Pipek, Carrie Koso, and I parked at a pullout near Broad Pass and made our way toward a highpoint of the ridge that is northwest of the Parks Highway. We traveled northwest and crossed over Cantwell Creek. Once across the creek, we picked our way through the brush on faint game trails. The trails eventually tapered off and we began picking our way through willow-infested swamps. Travel was unpleasant.

Once through the swamps, we passed by a beaver pond and began picking our way through spruce groves, alder, and tall grass on whatever faint trails we could find. We were all quite relieved once we made it above brushline. Once above brushline, we accessed a ridge that ran west to Summit Benchmark (Point 4146). From there we followed the ridge to the northwest, where it eventually gained the summit ridge and we walked to the summit of Peak 5580.

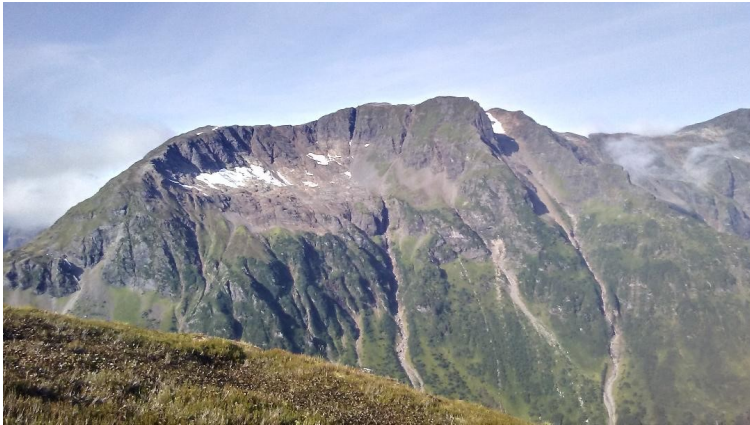
Even though they were partially obstructed due to wildfire smoke, the views were all new for us and were quite expansive. The landscape and colors of the surrounding mountains were incredibly diverse throughout the 360-degree view. Even though the approach is unpleasant, I do believe Peak 5580 is a worthy daytrip, especially if the area is new to you.



Theresa Pipek and Carrie Koso passing by the beaver pond.

Windfall Harbor Peaks, Admiralty Island

Text and photos by Dylan Miller



Peak 4215, ascended via the left ridge.



Peak 3368, ascended via finger of trees left of center.

In Windfall Harbor located in Seymour Canal, on the southeast part of Admiralty Island, lie a few peaks worth noting. Like the rest of Southeast Alaska, there are still many mountains that have not been climbed, mostly because there just isn't anyone interested.

While I was in the area, I climbed Peaks 3368, 3770, and 4215. All three climbs were likely first ascents. Due to the access and steep, semi-technical terrain, it's unlikely that a hiker or hunter would have gone that far out – not to mention the fear of running into bears along the way, because Admiralty has the highest bear population density per square mile in the world. These peaks would have required a mindset.

All three peaks started with the typical Southeast hiking through the Tongass' lush rainforest. Good game trails were abundant. Once in the alpine, the terrain was rocky with scree slopes and rotten ridges.

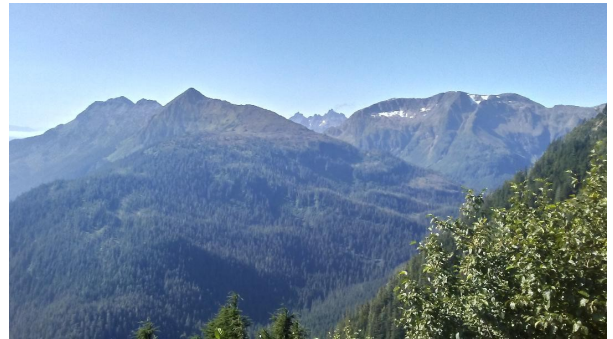
Peak 3770 required Class-3-to-4 scrambling on loose, rotten, and mossy rock with a steep down-climb, then reversing the same route back.

My ascent of Peak 4215 shared the same approach to Peak 3770, but involved dropping into the next valley down, then ascending 2,000 feet of steep heather between small cliffs. At times it was all-fours climbing on heather. Crampons and an ice axe would have been useful. It's worth noting the two small glaciers that are on Peak 4215. Because of the mountain's proximity to the ocean and the lack of glacier ice on Admiralty, it was somewhat surprising to see glaciers up there.

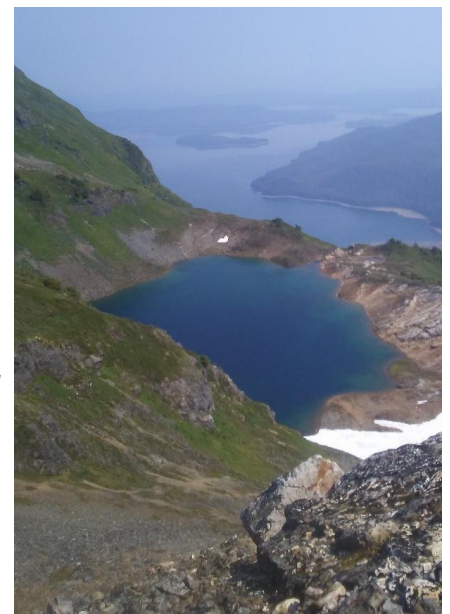
As for Peak 3368, an easy game trail led to a few hundred feet of steep and heinous bushwhacking through salmonberry bushes, devil's club, and alder. Once through that, it was beautiful and easy hiking up the ridges toward the summit.

With nothing better to do, hiking around the Southeast alpine seems like a fine way to pass time, for the sub-alpine around there is said to be some of the finest in the country.

I climbed Peak 3770 on July 4th, Peak 4215 on August 2nd, and Peak 3368 on August 14th.



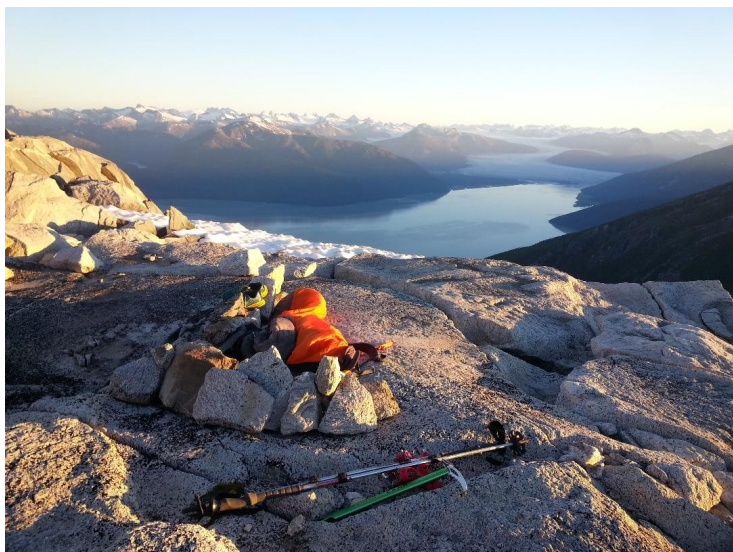
Looking at the peaks southwest of Windfall Harbor. From left to right: Peak 3770 and the ridge leading to it. The approach starts right of Peak 3770. Peak 4215 is back and right of Peak 3770.



Stunning alpine lake on Peak 3770 with Windfall Harbor and Windfall Island below.

We're Not in Kansas Anymore – Lake Dorothy Circumnavigation, Coast Mountains

Text and photos by Matt Callahan



Bivy site on the ridge north of Lake Dorothy with Taku Inlet in the background.



Lake Dorothy from the south side of the loop.

The loop around Lake Dorothy, east of Taku Inlet is one of the more scenic alpine ridges I've ever done. Juneau has phenomenal access to alpine ridge running, but the explorer in me is always looking for new places to go. I'd heard of a possible ridge route around Lake Dorothy from some friends who'd looped around nearby Bart Lake a couple years ago and said it looked possible.

In July 2018 Derek Weiss dropped me off with a kayak near the Alaska Electric Light & Power (AEL&P) power station below Bart Lake and I started up the road. Access note: while the road is technically open to the public, AEL&P likes to be informed in advance of people using it, so please respect that if planning a similar trip. From Bart Lake I took a hard right and 'shwhacked up to the alpine on the first peak of my counter-clockwise loop. Clouds below 2500 feet saturated the blueberry bushes as well as my clothes and shoes, but once above them I was treated to stunning views of peaks rising like islands from a gray sea. I first scrambled up the false summit of Peak 4842 and had to back-track. I traversed around the shoulder and soon gained the summit by the east ridge.

From there I followed the undulating ridge interspersed with snow traverses and glissades around the south side of the lake. A wolverine loped across the saddle west of Peak 5038, my first sighting of one of these elusive animals in all my hours in the mountains! In-

spired by Dorothy, I named the peaks I went over after *Wizard of Oz* characters. The false-summitted Peak 4842 was the Wicked Witch of the West, there was a Scarecrow (Point 4991), a Tin Man (Peak 5170), a Cowardly Lion (Peak 5038), and the highpoint of the trip, Peak 5321, was the Wizard of Oz himself. After the wizard, a 5050-foot peak with a gold rock band was the Yellow Brick Road, then 5050-foot Toto, then the 4550-foot Flying Monkeys around the north shore of the lake.

I bivied somewhere along that north ridge above the lake around the 4200-foot contour with incredible views of Bart Lake, Lake Dorothy, Turner Lake, Taku Inlet, the Juneau Icefield, and the looming pyramid of Mount Swineford, which some friends had climbed for the first ascent just the weekend before. [Ed. note: Read about Dylan Miller's, Mike Miller's, Makaila Olson's, and Ben Still's July 21, 2018, first ascent of Mount Swineford in the March 2019 Scree.]

The next morning I finished the ridge traverse with Mount Dorothy (Point 3254), then linked meadows down most of the way to the Bart Lake

road. The final few hundred feet were very cliffy and I made several false starts before finding a viable way down. Though I was elated from the route, I still had a long paddle back to Juneau. The narrow kayak that I had borrowed for the trip was less seaworthy than I had hoped, but thankfully some magnanimous boaters gave me a lift back to town.



Very fresh wolverine tracks.

East Palmer Creek Ridge Walk, Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Justin Wholey

If you've got a car and a bike, the ridge walk east of Palmer Creek Road is a great dayhike or short overnight hike. From June 30 to July 1, 2018, Lyndsey Kleppin and I hiked over Hirshey Peak (3950 feet), Peak 4014, Cour d'Elene (4448 feet), Peak 4418 (Cub Bench Mark), and Peak 3766 (1148 meters) on a traverse of most of this ridge. Our access was from the end of the Palmer Creek Road, south of Hope. After briefly heading south on the Palmer Creek Trail, almost immediately, a spur headed east toward the historic Hirshey Mine. After about 700 feet, the trail petered out, but from here there was easy walking on tundra, rock, and snow to the ridge crest and

Hirshey. Once on the ridge, it was mostly tundra walking until we decided to camp in a scenic spot overlooking the Sixmile Creek Valley, in Section 32. There were a pond and small stream nearby, one of the only running-water sources we found on the ridge. The next day, we visited Cour d'Elene and continued to Peak 4418. On the top of Peak 4418, we found a wooden tripod structure that I presume originated from the early mining days in the area. [Ed. note: A U.S. Geological Survey party visited the summit in 1942 and might have been the source of the tripod.] We kept following the ridge to the northwest, but in Section 18, there was an option to connect to a ridge heading northeast to Sunrise Mountain (4620 feet); past that junction, you can continue to follow the ridge, or



Lyndsey Kleppin descending northwest of Peak 4418.

drop down the grassy slopes in a number of places to Palmer Creek Road. Once you find your bike, it's a quick ride back to your car. Overall it's a great hike when the ceiling is 5000 feet or higher.



Scree—October 2019



Lyndsey Kleppin at camp near Old Woman Creek southeast of Cour d'Elene. Mount Alpenglow dominates the skyline to the northeast.

Lyndsey Kleppin and the tripod on the summit of Peak 4418 with Turnagain Arm in the background.

Arkose Ridge Explorations, Talkeetna Mountains

Text and photos by Marcin Ksok



Neil Murphy (right) and Dan during the ascent of Delia Peak and Peak 5150.

For a while I had wanted to spend more time in the Hatcher Pass area of the Talkeetna Mountains. Being able to get above timberline by road, numerous trails, the compact geography, and jagged beauty of its peaks would make for an attractive alternative to the Chugach Mountains. Summer and fall of 2018 provided many sunny weekends for venturing up my objective of Arkose Ridge. Unknown to me, not all of the Talkeetnas are granite. The ridge is composed of above-named sandstone and presents an opportunity for fossil seekers. All trips started on the Gold Mint Trail, some on foot, some by bike, the latter being recommended as the trail has been improved over the years and now provides an exciting downhill return ride to the parking lot. There was limited and confusing information concerning the peaks there, previous *Scree* articles didn't always correspond to the designations on the USGS map that I used as a reference, which necessitated reading between the lines and comparing geographic features.

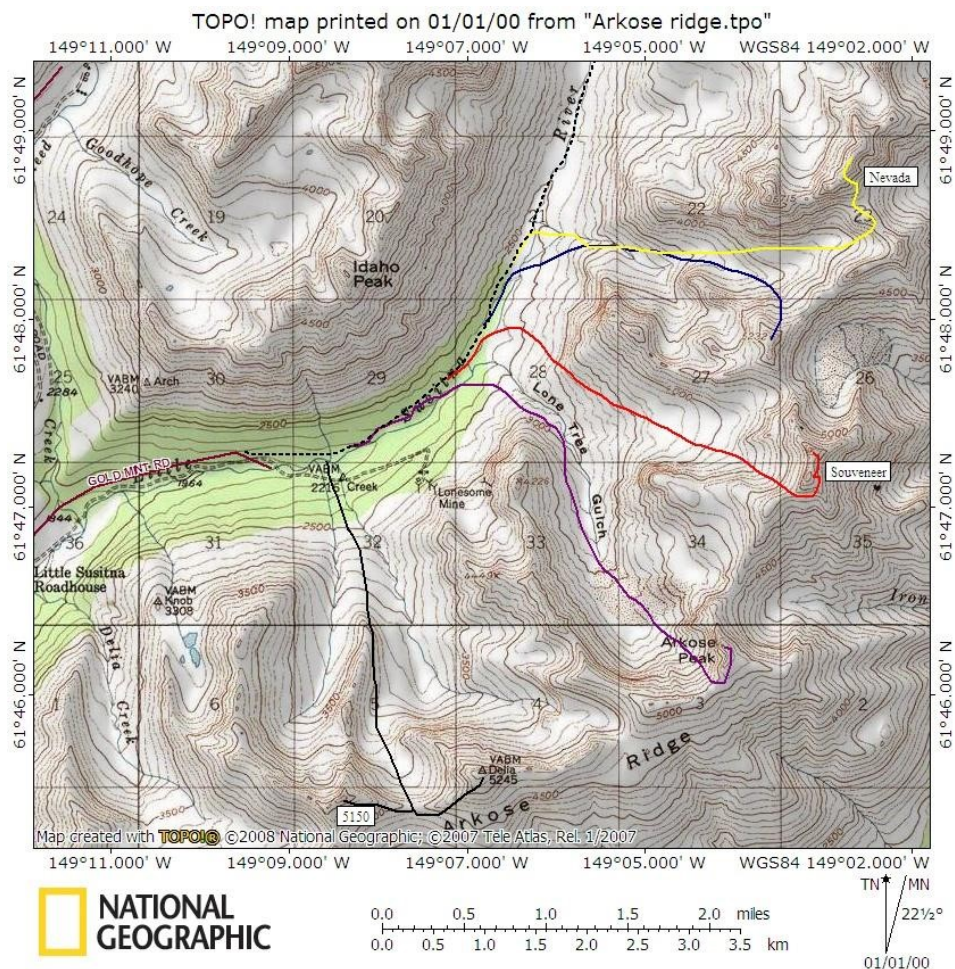
Although our first climb was not the intended objective, it still counted as a summit. Greg Encelewski and I climbed Peak 5232 after looking at Nevada Peak and realizing our lack of gear. Our route followed a snow gully on the north side of the peak and we descended southern slopes, both non-technical. There was a register on the summit with one entry. Souvenir Peak came next, although I would name it cat's ears. The double summit had been climbed by two routes, up the steep middle snow gully or slopes south of both summits; I chose the latter, as snow was gone then.

Either route was accessed from Lone Tree Gulch. The east side of the summits was much gentler and allowed for easy access once reached. The south peak was higher; both offered spectacular views and should be climbed. For a trip up Arkose Peak, I was joined by Bryan Friedrichs who educated me on the geology of the ridge and then paraglided down to the Matanuska Valley, leaving me behind. The summit was quite interesting, jutting out toward the north with a huge drop to the west. Next came Delia Peak and Peak 5150, which was west of it. I was joined by Bryan again, Neil Murphy, and Dan, who had signed up on the Meetup site. It was the most bushwhacky of all approaches, as we had to cross the Little Susitna River at a lower elevation. We started by ascending the north ridge of Peak 5150, but were blocked by steep cliffs, descended east into a high valley and gained the ridge line between Delia and 5150, which we followed to both summits. We tried to descend via the northwest ridge of 5150, but were stopped by a blocky section, which might have needed rappelling. Being without a rope, we retraced our steps, except for Bryan who just flew away on his paraglider.

As one hikes up the Gold Mint Trail, a prominent peak is visible about five miles up-valley, a steep pyramid rises on the hiker's right from a drainage north of Lone Tree Gulch. The point is marked as 5715 on maps and is only a high point on a ridge leading to true summit of Nevada Peak, itself a series of granite towers. At this point the rock changes character from sandstone to granite. It

becomes steeper and less accessible, but more interesting. Willy Hersman wrote a report of climbing this peak in the September 1992 *Scree*; therefore we followed his lead. He mentioned reaching the ridge south of Telemint, so we did the same. We turned south toward Nevada and scrambled to the top of a tower, which turned out not to be highest. From there we looked down into a notch that would require a rappel and would present us with a featureless, steep slab to climb to reach the next tower. According to Willy he climbed grassy cracks, so that could not be the way. We retreated to the unmapped glacier west of the peak and tried a dirty, dangerous gully to reach the ridge line between Telemint and Nevada. At the top we were blocked by a chockstone, which got bypassed on the left, as going under proved sketchy. An exposed scramble deposited us on the ridge and another (or the same) featureless slab to overcome. We retreated again and resorted to contemplate other options from the rock glacier, as now time was running short. The second attempt was conducted from the valley south of Nevada and went much better. We hiked up to the ridge at the end of the valley, turned north, and descended slightly on the north side of the ridge to reach a gully spilling from the east side of the peak. We proceeded up, eyeing cracks and benches as we reached the top of the gully and blocks forming the south ridge line. The cracks there looked difficult, so we descended a bit to reach a diagonal shelf running north. There we roped

up and I took the lead. The angled shelf went smoothly before it terminated at a corner where I spotted a dihedral with a wide crack in it. A couple of easy 5th-class moves with good protection brought me to a small stance and another dihedral. I brought up Greg, as the rope was dragging badly then, and continued up easy 5th-class terrain to a high point, turned my head right and spotted another high point. Greg followed. We debated awhile. It was deep fall then and light was at a premium; an after-dark return was in store if we continued. Therefore we did. A fun, steep, and exposed 100-foot ridge with a single point of protection was negotiated, depositing us on a col. Up one more tower with 4th-class scrambling put us on another high point, but not quite the top yet, but within three vertical feet. A short ridge and a rock step finally brought us to the summit one-at-a-time for photos' sake. GPS readings showed a 5987-foot elevation and location of 61° 48.889' N, 149° 02.699' W. Not wasting daylight, we retreated to our first high point, from which we rappelled twice with a 60-meter rope to reach the shelf, and then executed a traversing sideways rappel back to the gully on a directional (meaning check its holding direction if you venture up there before using) anchor. We did not find any previous anchors or signs of passage. Retracing our route of approach, we reached the stashed bikes as daylight was waning and headed for the parking lot.



Helios Peak (5584 feet), East Ridge, Grant Lake Peaks

Text by Steve Gruhn



Northwest aspect of Skeen Mountain, as viewed from the east ridge of Helios Peak.

Photo by Jennifer DuFord

I became interested in climbing Helios Peak while preparing the Peak of the Month for the August 2007 *Scree*. The Grant Lake Peaks seemed like an area with great views, a rich mining history, and relatively little bushwhacking. On July 30, 2016, I made my first foray into the Falls Creek drainage on a climb of Solars Mountain. On that trip I had entertained the idea of attempting Helios Peak as a possible two-fer. But it was not in the cards on that trip. My attempt would have to wait until the summer of 2019.

On August 9 Jennifer DuFord and I drove to Crown Point. At about Mile 24 on the Seward Highway we turned east on Solar Mountain Road, crossed the railroad tracks, and parked east of the tracks. We walked from there to the Falls Creek Trailhead (which has "No Parking" signs posted). We hiked up the trail, staying on the Falls Creek trail at the three junctions (two for the Ptarmigan Creek Trail and one for the Crown Point Trail). The trail ascended through spruce, hemlock, serviceberries, salmonberries, and devil's club. After about four miles, we reached a sign indicating that all-terrain vehicles were not allowed past that point. There the trail forked. The left fork descended into an alder tunnel and the right fork ascended into alpine heather. We chose the right fork. A short distance later we passed a parked ATV.

Within a couple hundred yards, we began to have difficulty following the trail. I suss'd out a route upstream a couple hundred feet above the valley floor. After about a mile we came to a field of fireweed. I could see ahead that the route was blocked by brush, so I suggested descending toward Falls Creek so we could cross it and ascend the slope on the north side. Just as we entered the willows on the valley floor, I stumbled across a faint trail. It led upstream through willows and I was intent on crossing the stream, so I con-

tinued swimming through the willows until I reached the creek. Some 20 yards upstream it looked like there was a reasonable crossing point. I waited for Jennifer to swap her footwear for stream-crossing shoes and then, one-at-a-time, we both waded across Falls Creek.



Jennifer DuFord wading Falls Creek on the ascent.

Photo by Steve Gruhn

Once we were both across, we made our way to the base of the slope with little bushwhacking. There was a steep stream flowing down through an area denuded of vegetation. We headed up the streambed and when it got too steep to continue following, we exited on the west side, and ascended the slope until we were above the areas devoid of vegetation. Then we turned east and contoured into a basin southeast of Helios Peak. The basin held a small, sparkling lake, a grassy meadow, and a field of fireweed. It was to be the last vegetation on our climb.

Above the lake we ascended a seemingly endless slope of talus. We

reached the east ridge of Helios Peak a little bit northwest of the saddle overlooking Grant Lake. The views of the unnamed glacier to our east were amazing. And just as amazing was how much glacial recession had occurred since the USGS map had been made in 1995. Much of the glacier was below the firn line and it was early August. There were still several weeks of melting before snow would again cover the remaining ice.

At the summit I found a broken plastic container that contained a soaked register with the names of Ben Still and Wayne Todd, who had signed it on August 28, 1998. Helios Peak was first climbed on July 5, 1969, by Harry and Dub Bludworth (see the August 1969 *Scree*). Willy Hersman reported having reached Helios Peak's summit in the summer of 1986; Kathy Still climbed the peak on July 21, 2013; and Mat Brunton climbed it on October 14, 2018 (see the August 2019 *Scree*), so we certainly weren't the first to visit the summit.

Viewing to the east-southeast, a striking peak (5850-foot Skeen Mountain) invited us to explore up the ridge. But time was drawing short; the investigation of that summit would have to wait for another day.

After taking photos, we retraced our steps to Falls Creek. On the return, though, we decided to try to follow the faint trail I had noticed in the willows before we had initially crossed the stream. The trail was pretty easy to follow and soon we were walking out through the alder tunnel to the sign prohibiting ATV travel up the valley. We should have taken the left fork when we came to that point on the hike in.

The descent seemed a lot longer than the ascent, but we reached the trailhead around 7:30 p.m. It had taken us about 10 hours, round-trip.

The Grant Lake Peaks sure have piqued my interest. I'd still like to attempt Skeen Mountain; if you're interested in joining me, let me know.



Steve Gruhn hiking up the Falls Creek Trail. The southwest aspect of Helios Peak looms in the distance.

Photo by Jennifer DuFord



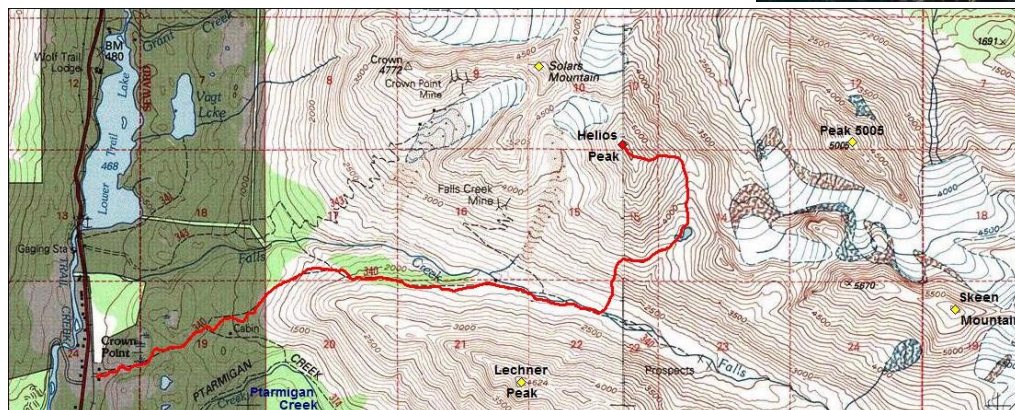
Jennifer DuFord ascending a gully on the south side of Helios Peak.

Photo by Steve Gruhn



Jennifer DuFord on the summit of Helios Peak. Solars Mountain is in the background at right.

Photo by Steve Gruhn



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

Mount Wickersham (7415 feet) Southeast Gully/Valley to South Ridge, Central Chugach Mountains

Text and photos by Nathaniel Bannish

25 Miles - 13.5 hours



Mount Wickersham hiding in the clouds; the Matanuska Glacier is in the foreground.

I'd been scheming about this peak for nearly a year – plotting on Google Earth, reading through old *Scree* articles, and bugging Wayne Todd without mercy, yet I still didn't know quite what to expect. The obvious route seemed to be the southeast gully, but I could find little beta on it. No problem! Sometimes it's more exciting to head into the unknown.

The forecast had taken a turn for the better, and so on Wednesday night, July 24, I found myself sleeping in my Honda Civic in the Matanuska Glacier parking lot, true hobo style.

After a 3 a.m. coffee, I made my way out onto the glacier, or at least, I tried to. Being pretty unfamiliar with the Matanuska, I attempted to get on the ice as soon as possible ... which turned out to be a bad idea. The glacier is initially a maze of crevasses and seracs, where one wrong turn would put one into a total dead end that would take agonizingly long to reverse.

Heading left onto the moraine turned out to be a much better option, and one that my feet appreciated (walking lots of miles in crampons is brutal). Once on the moraine, I quickly found a trail. This was easy travel for a mile or so until it eventually ran out, leaving me to fend for myself.

The moraine remained good travel for quite a while, sometimes turning crevasse-y, but mostly staying flat. Eventually the ice on my right mellowed out, so I figured it was a good time to strap on the crampons and cross to the correct side of the glacier.

Crossing took a while. I never came to a true dead end, but I did backtrack around some wider crevasses, which was time consuming.

At last, I finally got off the glacier, managing to put my boot into some deep cement mud in the process. YUCK! It felt like it added five pounds. Some vigorous rinsing brought the boot back down to weight, and I vowed to tread more carefully around sickening, silty mud.

After less than a mile along the edge of the glacier, I came to what I was waiting for – a stream flowing in from the right. I ditched my crampons and ice axe, and went upward.

Going up this stream proved to be very easy. The brush stayed well back and there were never any true bushwhacking moments. At a clearing, I realized I had arrived at a key feature I'd observed on Google Earth.

*Looking back
toward the
glacier, climb-
ing up the
stream
Nathaniel
Bannish
used to access
the southeast
valley.*



Ahead, the terrain got steeper and narrower, turning into more of a gorge. To my right, a scree gully seemed the obvious route around. I went up that, and once at the top, I realized how well the Google Earth scouting paid off! I was on a wide grassy bench, and it was just a matter of easy side-hilling to get back to the (now more gentle) stream flow.

I was now in a wide, open valley with the stream trickling through its middle. Travel remained tranquil, and I thoroughly enjoyed climbing to the peaceful sound of running water. After a while, I came to another scree field leading up to the south ridge of Mount Wickersham.

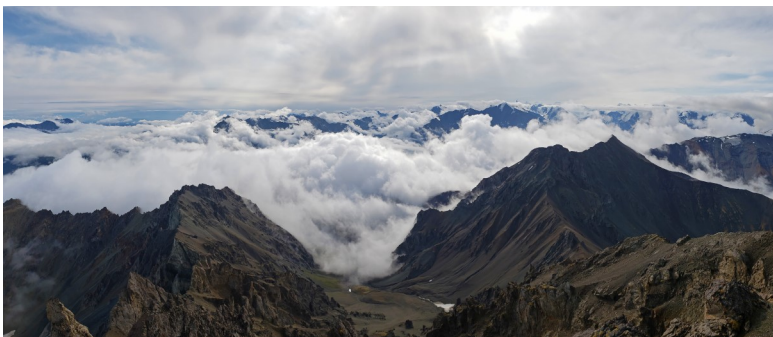
As I clawed my way to the top of the scree, I realized just how mellow the rest of this route was – all the gendarmes ahead had easy scree bypasses, keeping travel squarely in Class 2. Only once or twice did I go hand over hand, and even then that was optional. It almost felt like cheating.

10:10 a.m. saw me at the summit, where I was surprised and amused to see I had four bars of cell service (AT&T, you da best! Haaaa.). I sent a few photos, and decided I wanted to stand on the actual summit, which is a slightly precarious block of stacked choss. Once I tagged that, I figured it was time to head down and face the long walk back.

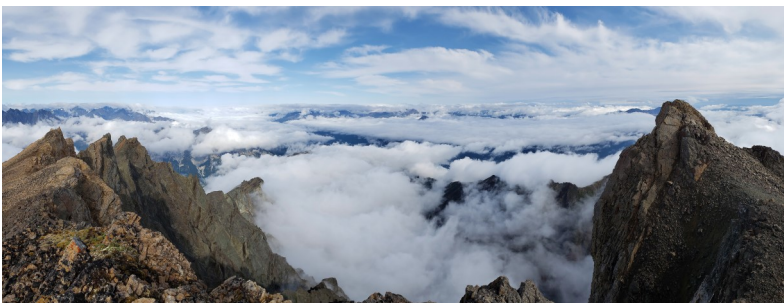
As I ran down the scree, I couldn't help but gleefully (and badly) sing my new favorite song –

*Now I'm scree,
SCREE fallin'!
Scree fallin', now I'm scree fallin'*

*Looking down the south ridge of
Mount Wickersham.*



Southeast view from the actual summit block. Nathaniel Bannish did manage to take one or two photos from here, but did most of his photo duties on safer terrain.



Looking back down the scree ramp. Who put a golfing green in all the way out here?



The final scree ramp to the south ridge of Mount Wickersham.



GPX overlay on Google Earth of Nathaniel Bannish's route. Bannish couldn't say for sure if this is the easiest route for the glacier travel, but it did work!

Looking north from near the summit. The actual summit is on the right, and was chossy enough that Nathaniel Bannish didn't feel comfortable taking a bunch of a photos from it.

Troublemint Spire (6850±50 feet), Southeast Ridge, Talkeetna Mountains

Text and photos by Nathaniel Bannish

20.66 Miles / 10:16:38 / 5950 feet of elevation gain



Melt pool with algae. Troublemint Spire is in the background at left.

This was one of those days where I remained indecisive 'til the very end – I wanted an easy approach, no 'shwhack, and something I hadn't climbed before. Hurdygurdy Mountain seemed like a good idea, but when the day dawned with plenty of smoky haze from the Kenai Peninsula wildfire, I decided to set my sights farther north.

I figured I'd try one of the Mint Glacier peaks. The approach, Gold Mint Trail, fit the bill as an easy, run-able approach, and the distance from the Kenai (hopefully) meant less smoke. The problem was which peak. After a quick look at peakbagger.com, I decided to aim for Troublemint Spire ... Although the truth was, I didn't mind climbing whatever seemed possible and appealing upon seeing it.

I was on the trail and running toward the Mint Hut just before 7 a.m. The brush was remarkably dry, and miles passed quickly and pleasantly. Visibility was awesome, and I had a few good glimpses of the peaks ahead. I still wasn't quite sure which was which.

Coming to Mile 8, it was time to stray from the trail and ascend a small chute to the

moraine. It was beautiful up there! Small, beautiful, blue melt pools, with the sound of rushing water a constant background noise. I began climbing snow on the south side of what I hoped was Troublemint.

Looking up to my left, I studied multiple gullies on the peak. None of them seemed promising. I continued onward, hoping to find something better.

Finally, I noticed a likely looking, wide ramp up to a col. I went up that ramp, turned left, and eyed the southeast ridge ahead. It looked mellow for a while, and then steepened to a blocky band of rocks after a few hundred feet.

This steep area of rock proved to be the first low-5th-class section. I took my time, and gave all the pieces hearty *WHACKS* with my palm before weighting them. Going right turned out to be the best option.



The southeast ridge of Troublemint Spire. Several difficult sections, but on "better-than-Chugach" rock.

After that, I came to some very large blocks with deep pits between them. Passing those was fairly easy and secure.

Finally, I came to a butt-clenching section of exposed ridge, with the initial few

steps being the butt-clenching-est. The ridge eventually thickened back to a more respectable width, only to usher me on to the next trial ...

A huge, challenging, 5th-class gendarme blocked the way, and I was terrified that it was the end. There was NO WAY I could climb up and down it without rope. After some contemplation, I managed to spy a bypass down to climber's right, but it involved some serious sideways down-climbing. Not for the faint of heart!

The terrain eased off for a while once past the gendarme, before once again becoming more technical and exposed. There was an awkwardly angled, less-featured corner/dihedral on my right, but I chose to climb blockier and looser terrain on my left. After some low 5th/4th moves, I came to the tiny summit boulder.

That boulder, I felt sure, must be the summit. I couldn't see anywhere higher. I figured I'd go up to it and take a look.

After some careful scrutiny, I decided I didn't like it at all. The obvious route had very small handholds, with friction footholds on dry moss. That didn't bode well for down-climbing ropeless!

Several abortive attempts later, I decided to take off my shoes and try it barefoot. Heck, if I'd known there would be moves like that, I would've brought rope AND ROCK SHOES. Even barefoot, I didn't like it. It was just too exposed. My grasp on the rock, the only thing keeping me alive, was too tenuous. Discouraged, I backed off. This was going to be worst asterisk of them all.

Then I remembered.

Keep looking around ... You'll find a better way.

Dropping to the east side of the boulder, I skirted along a ledge, coming to the opposite side from which I had been before. There, there were more moves, BUT, there were handholds!

Gripping a wedged rock, I carefully placed my bare feet on several sharp footholds, making sure to note their placement for the coming down-climb. A crack running on my left was the next goal, and I shimmied my hands, then feet into this reassuringly large space. One or two moves later, I was there. I was on the one-person summit of Troublemint! I let out an emphatic, joyful whoop, spent a few minutes, and began to descend.

Down-climbing was careful and controlled all the way back to the col. I never felt I would fall, and I didn't move a single rock. Still, in hindsight, I should've done my research. It was a lot more difficult than I was expecting, and the margin for error was very low.

After a brief stop at the glacial melt "Mint Lagoon" I began my descent back to the Gold Mint Trail. As I jogged back to the car, I couldn't help but take in the sights of Alaska in all its summertime glory – flowers, sun, mountains, snow, clouds, rain showers.

Man, I'm lucky to live here!



The crack/fault in the summit boulder Nathaniel Bannish used to ascend and descend Troublemint Spire.



Beta - Overlay of Nathaniel Bannish's approximate route up the Troublemint Spire summit boulder.



Beta for the southeast ridge route on Troublemint Spire.

Good Camaraderie Makes Talkeetna Mountains Hike Enjoyable

Government Peak (4781 feet), Bald Mountain Ridge

Text and photos by Frank E. Baker



Ridges connect to 4781-foot Government Peak, in the distance at left.

A smoky haze limited our long-distance views and the heat was sometimes oppressive as we made an 11-mile hike south from the summit of Hatcher Pass to the summit of Government Peak and down to the recreation area. But great camaraderie among friends – all with a good sense of humor – made the eight-and-a-half-hour outing quite enjoyable.

We began the hike July 9th at 10 a.m. from the top of Hatcher Pass in the Talkeetna Mountains, starting on the popular April Bowl Trail. In addition to me, the group was comprised of Eagle River's Pete Panarese, retired from Chugach State Park; Scott Sims, M.D., retired; and Paul Forward, a retired forester.

A few days earlier, Panarese and I had made a late-evening hike on the April Bowl Trail and noticed that the ridges connected, albeit in a circuitous way, to 4781-foot Government Peak. We knew that noted hiker Shawn Lyons and others had made the transit, and other than distance, the route didn't look that difficult.

I first thought that the smoky air might cause some lung or eye irritation, but it didn't seem to bother any of the group as we worked our way upward and past April Bowl's tarns. Along the



Small lakes, or tarns, reward hikers along the April Bowl Trail.

way a few snow patches offered a respite from the heat and allowed us to make more water. We were blessed by a light breeze from the north that continued for most of the trip and usually kept the mosquitoes at bay.

A few times along the ridges, we came upon families of rock ptarmigan. But other than a few parka squirrels, a marmot, and a cou-

ple of eagles soaring in the distance, no other wildlife was sighted.

While some parts of the ridge route presented cliffs or gendarmes, there was always a way around them and most often, a slightly worn path indicating where others had gone. Government Peak, its summit silhouetted with a box-like building (used for weather recording) seemed far away. But slowly, methodically, we worked our way closer, and after a while, the destination



From left, Pete Panarese, Scott Sims, and Paul Forward pause in front of a gendarme along the route.

seemed to be within our grasp. No other hikers were seen throughout the day.

We were aware that afternoon thunderstorms weren't uncommon in the area, wondering if through the dense haze we'd be able to see the formation of thunderclouds. On a mountain hike several years ago I was in close proximity to thunder and lightning and it wasn't pleasant. Luckily, there were no close lightning strikes and the only disturbing effect was the hair on my arms standing up. I'm still not sure if that was from fear or static electricity. Probably both.

A last patch of snow helped us refill our water bottles before making the final push up to the Government Peak summit. While resting on top, a very determined parka squirrel kept pestering us for food, which we denied. Feeding wild critters, we agreed, was not the right thing to do.

The steep trail down to the Government Peak Recreation Area Chalet turned out to be one of the most difficult parts of the hike. Worn smooth over many years by runners in the Government Peak Race (held in early June), it was almost impossible to gain footholds. The lower trail on Seward's Mount Marathon is worn similarly, and becomes a muddy nightmare with the slightest rainfall.

Near the bottom we crossed a small stream and a few of us soaked our heads. At that point the heat seemed almost unbear-



Paul Forward traverses the mountainside on the way to Government Peak.

able.

Pushing through fields of fireweed in full blossom and dodging the cow parsnip, we reached the Recreation Area Chalet about 6:30 p.m. Waiting for us in Sims' car were coolers filled with ice-cold drinks, which we gulped with gusto.

We unanimously agreed that despite the haze, heat, and mosquitoes, it was a great day to be in the mountains on a hike none of us had done before.

Frank E. Baker an MCA member and freelance writer who lives in Eagle River.



Paul Forward is dwarfed by fireweed on the descent to the Government Peak Recreation Area.

Ice to Ice: Lunching in Style at the Harding Icefield

Text and photos by Frank E. Baker



The Harding Icefield sprawls out to the southwest.

Staring out at the Kenai Peninsula's vast sheet of ice called the Harding Icefield, a remnant of the Pleistocene age some 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, I uncapped a cold non-alcoholic beer that had been chilling inside a small container within my pack that contained ice cubes.

Carrying ice to a world of ice reminded me of lines from a movie called *The Eiger Sanction*, which I'll paraphrase. Upon arriving at the summit during a training climb, actor George Kennedy asked Clint Eastwood for a beer. "If you hauled beer up this rock, you're insane!" Eastwood rejoined. "I may be insane, but I'm not stupid. I didn't carry it, you did!" quipped Kennedy. "It's in your pack."

This time, the crazy one was me. I wanted to have an ice-cold drink when I arrived on top, rather than wait for it to chill in the snow. Along with the non-alcoholic beer, my lunch included a ham-and-cheese sandwich, barbecue potato chips, chocolate chip cookies, and a thermos of coffee. My wife noted that a tablecloth would have added a touch of class to my "picnic by the glacier."

July 22 was a sunny day, and most of the Kenai Peninsula wildfire smoke seemed to be drifting to the south and east. I left the parking lot about 8 a.m., but within an hour it seemed to become quite hot, with not a breath of wind. As soon as I began building up a sweat, black flies descended. It seemed they actually liked the 100 percent DEET, which I applied carefully, lest it melt my eye-

glasses frames.

People didn't really start showing up for a couple of hours as I slowly trudged up the well-built, 3.8-mile trail that rises about 3,000 feet. Most hikers were 20- and 30-somethings, and they bounded past me like gazelles, as if I were standing still. "But I've got ice-cold beer in my pack," I rationalized, leaning into the hill to catch my breath.

It had been five years since I hiked the trail and I didn't remember so many people – throughout the day about 150 by my estimate. A cruise ship must have arrived in Seward. I met folks from Switzerland, Ireland, China, England, and some state-siders from New Mexico and Colorado. I spotted a couple of people in their 50s, perhaps even 60s, but not a soul in my age league: 70s.

One of my first hikes to the icefield was in 1997 with my son (David) and daughter (Emily), then ages 14 and 10, respectively. Early in the hike, I accidentally led them off trail. After thrashing through alders for

Frank Baker's children, Emily and David, during a 1997 hike to the Harding Icefield.



about 30 minutes, we came to clearing and Emily asked, “Dad, why aren’t we down there with the other people hiking on the nice trail?” After some lame excuse about “taking the scenic route,” I quickly got us back on route.

Cooling off in the heights: Climbing higher to an open area called Marmot Meadows, at about 2500 feet, a merciful breeze drove away the bugs and it began to feel much cooler. After a methodically slow, plodding pace, I arrived at the top, or “icefield overlook” at 12 noon.

I’ve come to believe there are no words to describe the mind-blowing spectacle of the Exit Glacier, with its sharp-blue, crevassed incisions, ramping up to the Harding Icefield’s sprawling white ocean of ice. Words like “stunning,” “awesome,” “stupendous,” “unbelievable,” just didn’t do it. It was almost too much for our eyes to take in.

This place was primordial, and journeying to it was like stepping back into time. Small mountain islands called “nunataks” rose above the ice expanse that stretched to the south, north, and west, capping the Kenai Peninsula. Seeing it reminded one of what geologists say much of Alaska looked like 10,000 years ago.

After about an hour of eating more than I should – if only to justify the fact I’d carried it all the way up there – I packed up for the return hike. Moving a bit more quickly on the descent, the flies and mosquitoes didn’t seem nearly as bothersome.

Among five other hikes to the Harding Icefield, this was the first time that I didn’t see any goats. Perhaps the sheer number of people on the trail had pushed them into other areas. That afternoon someone did see a black bear crossing the Exit Glacier.

Waiting for me in the car was another ice-chilled non-alcoholic beer, which I pressed against my overheated forehead. Temperatures in the 70s were just too high for this lifelong Alaskan. If this summer represents climate change, I’ll have to confine my hiking to spring, autumn, and winter.

And I suppose that on future hikes, it would be prudent not to load down my pack with ice, especially if I’m bound for an area with snow and ice.



Frank Baker pauses for a rest on the Exit Glacier Trail on the hike up to the Kenai Peninsula’s Harding Icefield.



Fireweed bloom prolifically on the slopes overlooking the Exit Glacier.



Frank Baker’s lunch along the Harding Icefield included a non-alcoholic beer chilled by ice he packed up the mountain.

Slouched posture denotes the author’s state of weariness as he prepares for the long descent.

Peak of the Month: Sunburst Mountain

Text by Steve Gruhn; photos by Wayne Todd

Mountain Range: Kenai Mountains

Borough: Kenai Peninsula Borough

Adjacent Pass: Taylor Pass

Latitude/Longitude: 60 45' 21" North, 149 10' 30" West

Elevation: 3812 feet

Adjacent Peak: Pastoral Peak (4764 feet)

Distinctness: 522 feet from Pastoral Peak

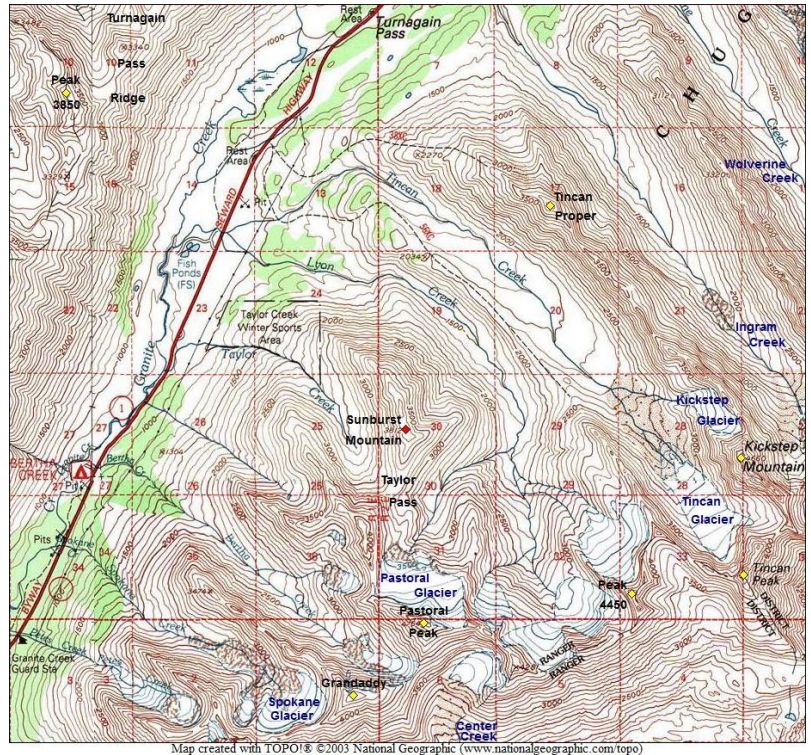
Prominence: 522 feet from Pastoral Peak

USGS Maps: 1:63,360: Seward (D-6), 1:25,000: Seward D-6 SW

First Recorded Ascent: Unknown

Route of First Recorded Ascent: Unknown

Access Point: Mile 66.8 of the Seward Highway (north of the Taylor Creek bridge)



Due to its proximity to the Seward Highway and its alluring slopes, Sunburst Mountain has long attracted the attention of backcountry skiers. Since the 1970s, I'd heard of skiers enjoying its slopes, but oddly enough, there had never been mention of an ascent of Sunburst Mountain in past issues of *the Scree*.

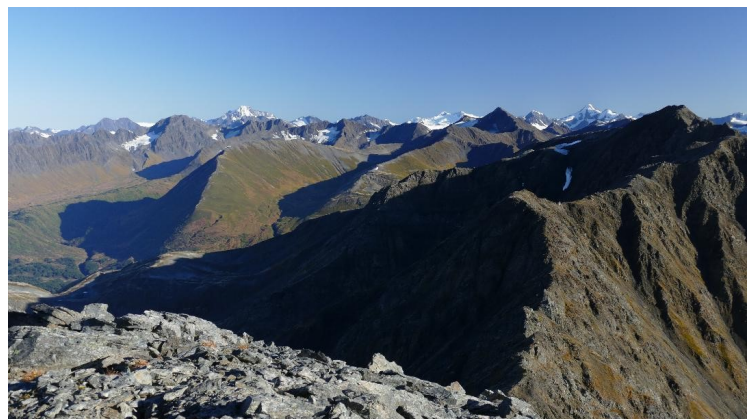
Access to Sunburst Mountain, particularly in the winter and spring months, is most commonly from a pullout at Mile 66.8 of the Seward Highway between Lyon Creek and Taylor Creek. The route

heads east up Taylor Creek and above brushline turns northeast to attain the northwest ridge of Sunburst Mountain. Another route heads up Taylor Creek to its head at Taylor Pass and then heads north up the south ridge of Sunburst Mountain. Both routes have significant avalanche potential.

Another route, particularly useful in the snow-free months, begins at the Turnagain Pass Recreation Area parking lot at Mile 68.1 on the east side of the Seward Highway. A trail leads east from the parking area. At the fork, follow the Nissman Center Ridge Trail to the right (south). A bridge crosses Tincan Creek. The trail forks again. Follow the Iditarod National Historic Trail southward to Lyon Creek. Wade the creek and continue southward along the trail until



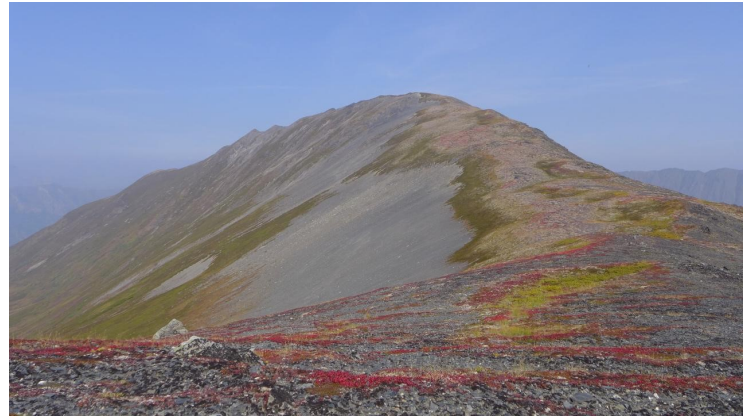
Northwest ridge of Sunburst Mountain on February 24, 2008. Note the avalanche crown at right.



West-northwest aspect of Sunburst Mountain (center left of photo) as viewed from the summit of Peak 4430 above Gulch Creek on September 29, 2018.



Skiing up the northwest ridge of Sunburst Mountain on March 25, 2007.



South aspect of Sunburst Mountain as viewed from Taylor Pass on August 29, 2019.

exiting a stand of spruce west of the northwest ridge of Sunburst Mountain and approximately a quarter mile north of Taylor Creek. There is an INHT symbol nailed into the south side of a tree on the east side of the trail. Turn east and head up the grassy slopes until above brushline. Then turn northeast to attain the northwest ridge of Sunburst Mountain. An alternative would be to continue up the Taylor Creek valley to Taylor Pass and ascend the south ridge of Sunburst Mountain.

Either route makes for a relatively easy half-day outing.

Jennifer DuFord, Lance Lekander, and Wayne Todd accompanied me on a hike of the northwest ridge of Sunburst Mountain on August 29, 2019, using the snow-free route and contributed to this column. We exited by descending the south ridge of Sunburst Mountain to Taylor Pass and then following the north side of Taylor Creek to the INHT.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2019 at 6:00 p.m., UAA 105A CPISB

Roll Call

Mike Meyers (President) - Present
 Gerrit Verbeek (Vice-President) - Absent
 Jen Aschoff (Secretary) - Present
 Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Absent
 Max Neale (Director) - Present
 Tom Meacham (Director) - Absent
 Lila Hobbs (Director) - Present
 Jonathan Rupp Strong (Director) - Present
 Charlie Sink (Past President) - Present
 Visitors:

Scribe: Jen Aschoff

Committee Reports

President (Mike Meyers)

- Slideshow for introduction to each general meeting is in progress.

- Paxson Woelber is working on a five-hut traverse map to benefit the MCA, but disclaimers are needed! 1) dangerous nature of the glaciers, and 2) huts have a low capacity (less than 10) and may not be able to accommodate all users. Consider listing the capacities.
- Got someone else ready to work on an Eklutna Traverse map. We will put a dashed line on the map that indicates the general technical route with a disclaimer about the changing conditions and high danger.
- Spoke with Kurt Hensel regarding the Chugach State Park fee for events. He discussed the option of donating a yearly pass possibly for free. Events correspondent should follow up with Kurt about this option.
- Icefest party open to all members; beer from Mooses Tooth has been ordered.
- Who is interested in returning to board next year? Jonathan, Tom, Mike, Lila. Not sure about Gerrit, Katherine, Jen, and Max.

Vice-President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- September meeting will be up to 12 speakers giving a trip summary on their winning photos.
- October is a to-be-determined speaker plus new board voting.

Secretary (Jen Aschoff)

- BP Energy Center boomerang set through December 2019. UAA space booked through December.

Treasurer (Katherine D. Cooper)

- Nonprofit Status - Form has been submitted.

Training (Gerrit Verbeek)

- Over 71 people have been trained by the MCA since December.
- CPR class may be offered for trip leaders. REI is willing to help; we need to set a date. MCA will reimburse up to \$80 per person. Potential date is September 18 (Wednesday at 6 p.m.)

Strategic Planning Task Force (Max Neale)

- Assisting coordination of a grant with Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation for the Mint Hut.

Liability Committee (Tom Meacham)

- 14-15-year old policy was voted on and needs to be updated in liability forms.
- We will propose two-year terms for board members in the forthcoming by-law revisions.
- A motion was made and unanimously passed to add additional board members, by-laws will be amended once it runs in *the Scree* and passes membership. "The board will include 8-10 board members and the President can appoint the individual if the vote is out of sequence." This is needed in order to make progress on club objectives. This will be presented by Tom at the general meeting in September, and voted on at the October meeting.

Parks Advisory (Tom Meacham and Ralph Baldwin)

- Some concerns about how guides need to get official access/use of the huts. There are some legal issues that are not clear and Tom will look into it. Tom will draft letters concerning the liability forms for the huts and respond to Gary Kuehn.

Trips (Needs chair; members are Jen Aschoff, Katherine Cooper, Gerrit Verbeek, Andy Kubic, Kelly Whitman)

- Trips committee chair is still needed, and volunteers to train other trip leaders.
- Jen organized a trip in July, but had to cancel due to low interest.

Scree (Steve Gruhn, Dawn Munroe)

- Submission deadline is the 11th of each month like usual.

Huts Committee (Jonathan Rupp Strong, Greg Bragiel, Cory Hinds, Vicky Lytle)

- 10-year master plan is making progress. Present draft to membership at September 4th meeting.
- A note will be added on facebook to encourage users to check the huts "needs list" for items that need to be transported into the hut. Huts team is currently prioritizing items that might be good candidates for Mat-Su Parks and American Alpine Club grants.
- Rosie's Roost to get a re-skin in 2020. The committee will present a budget in the fall.
- Pilot Mint Hut caretaker program update – not many volunteers to be caretaker, but collecting some numbers on volume of users.
- Holden Hut parts to be replace after bear digs in.

Awards Committee (Tom Meacham, Charlie Sink, Steve Gruhn)

- Nothing to report.

Communications Committee (Lila Hobbs)

- Lila's communications work was sidelined this summer by taking on mentorship committee duties and helping with the calendar committee. She'll get back in touch with Billy Finley in September about website updates.
 - If you have minor website updates for your committee or know of updates/news that should be posted, please let Lila know and she'll make the updates.

Mentorship (Lila Hobbs)

- **14 people** have completed the mentor Google Form; **32 people** have completed the mentee Google Form. We have only been able to match about a third of the people who would like to be mentored. How can we get more people interested in mentoring?
- Prospective mentees are most interested in gaining glacier-travel skills. Would it be possible for the MCA to offer a couple one-day glacier-skills trainings in the coming months?

- New mentorship email address is mentorship@mtnclubak.org, please feel free to give this email to folks who are interested in being a mentee or mentor.

Library (Charlotte Foley)

- A possible move is coming.

Calendar Committee (Lila Hobbs, Vicky Ho, Andrew Holman, Mike Meyers)

- Great range of photo submissions this year!
- Submissions were open July 31 to August 14 (then again for one more day on the 16th). Voting was held from August 21 to 28th.
- If a person submitted a vertical and/or panoramic photo, that photo was removed (as per the rules of the contest and it being a landscape-submission year). When possible, we attempted to crop the vertical photo before removing

it. If a person submitted more than four photos (as per the rules, that was the maximum number of photo submissions allowed), the committee voted on which photos submitted by that person would be removed.

- Breakdown of total photo submissions:
 - Skiing: 17 photos (had to remove four photos)
 - Mountaineering/Hiking/Slogging: 31 photos (had to remove three photos)
 - Climbing (Rock or Ice): 19 photos (had to remove three photos)
 - Scenery/Landscape: 26 photos (had to remove five photos)
- Photographers of winning photos have been contacted.

Date and Location of next Board Meeting

- September 25 UAA CPISB 105A

General Meeting Minutes

September 4th, 2019

MCA Winter Mountaineering School February 21-29, 2020

A comprehensive training program for individuals who are accomplished backpackers who wish to START learning mountaineering skills.

Course of instruction: Trip planning, food preparation, leadership, winter travel, gear selection/preparation, navigation, leave no trace, snow travel, snow anchors, running belay, rope handling, communication, terminology, knots, gear essentials, route finding, glacier travel, crevasse rescue, belaying, avalanche recognition, avalanche rescue, staying warm, nutrition/hydration, winter camping, snow shelters, wilderness medicine, rappelling, ice climbing, winter survival, stream crossing, confidence building, and more. NO course fee; however, students share trip expenses. Certificate of participation issued when student fulfills course requirements. **Lead Instructor:** Greg Braziel – email: unknownhiker@alaska.net

Preparation for this trip starts soon with an organizational meeting **Sunday, October 13 at 5 p.m. at Fred Meyers Abbott Road at Starbucks**; interested MCA members must attend.

~Thank you to all the volunteers that made Icefest happen and a special thanks to Jayme Mack for all her hard work and dedication.

~MCA flag is available to take out on trips for summit pictures and general fun.

~MCA stickers available at Alaska Mountaineering & Hiking and Hoarding Marmot.

~Bomber trip maps are available at winterbear.com and a portion of the proceeds will benefit the MCA.

~Calendar voting is done and the calendar pictures have been selected. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped get this done. Thanks to all for all the amazing picture submissions. It should be another great MCA calendar.

~ A bear visited the Holden Hut and chewed on the fuel tank for the hut. It has been replaced with a new and improved tank. A big thank you goes out to Randy Williams and Pete Holden for their great work.

~MCA board elections will be happening at the October 2nd meeting. Any interest in becoming a board member, trip leader, or volunteering in any way for the MCA, please contact info@mtnclubak.org.

Choate's Chuckle - Tom Choate

A: He loved to deal with an additional pitch.

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Mike Meyers	mcmeyers24@msn.com	Director 1 (term expires in 2019)	Tom Meacham	346-1077
Vice-President	Gerrit Verbeek	903-512-4286	Director 2 (term expires in 2019)	Max Neale	207-712-1355
Secretary	Jen Aschoff	ilaschoff@gmail.com	Director 3 (term expires in 2020)	Jonathan Rupp Strong	202-6484
Treasurer	Katherine Cooper	209-253-8489	Director 4 (term expires in 2020)	Lila Hobbs	229-3754
			Past President	Charlie Sink	529-7910

Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$30

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. Material should be submitted by the 11th 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.

Mailing list/database entry: Katherine Cooper—209-253-8489 - membership@mtnclubak.org

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Gerrit Verbeek—903-512-4286 or hcc@mtnclubak.org

Mentorship: Katherine Cooper and Lila Hobbs—mentorship@mtnclubak.org

Huts: Greg Bragiel—569-3008 or huts@mtnclubak.org

Calendar: Vicky Ho—512-470-8640 or hovcky@gmail.com

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

Lyndsey Kleppin hiking the ridge northwest of Peak 4418 in the Kenai Mountains.

Photo by Justin Wholey

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