

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

September 2020

Volume 63, Number 9

"Everybody wants to reach the peak, but there is no growth on the top of a mountain. It is in the valley that we slog through the lush grass and rich soil, learning and becoming what enables us to summit life's next peak."

– Andy Andrews



Contents

Caribou Tower (6350 feet), Clearwater Mountains

Augusteamo (Augustine Volcano, 4025 feet), Chigmit Mountains

Trident Peak (6050 feet), The Unicorn (5250 feet), and Peak 5850, Kenai Mountains

Telemint (6036 feet), Triplemint Spire (6408 feet), Peppermint Spire (5878 feet),

Talkeetna Mountains

North Suicide Peak (5065 feet), Western Chugach Mountains

Bookend Peaks – Gentoo Peak (4196 feet) and Penguin Peak (4334 feet), Western

Chugach Mountains

Peak of the Month: Peak W-13 (10060 feet), Wrangell Mountains

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Wednesday, September 2nd at 6 pm AKDT.

Virtual Q&A with Nate Menninger on his film 'The Porter.' See the Announcement section for details on streaming the film online.

"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—Gerrit Verbeek assisted by Dawn Munroe

Cover Photo

Joe Chmielowski, Carrie Wang and Lee Helzer descending the west side of Mt. Augustine.

Photo by Wayne Todd

SEPTEMBER MEETING The September General Meeting will be held online on Wednesday, September 2nd, at 6 pm. Nate Menninger will host an online Q&A regarding his experiences working as an Everest basecamp porter alongside Sherpas in 2019. He made a documentary film about his experience, which is currently available to MCA members for streaming both online in the MCA Member area (<http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=membersaccount.login>), or on his website (<https://www.theporterfilm.com/film>).

Details on how to attend the general meeting will be circulated on the MCA's Facebook page and the website calendar as soon as possible.

Trips

September: Ice Fest Cancelled

2021 MCA Calendar

Voting for the MCA's 2021 calendar submissions has closed, thanks to all who participated! The October General Meeting will showcase the winners for each month.

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More Accolades for Steve

Ed. note: Wayne Todd had some kind words for Steve which barely missed the deadline for last month's edition.

Steve had been climbing for many years before I met him twenty years ago. I am very impressed at how hard he will work to climb a peak, regardless of the hardships involved.

His memory is phenomenal. Between that and his passion for mountaineering, he has become the historian for Alaskan ascents, most of which he can recount on the spot. Steve is encouraging and thoughtful, freely giving information to help others achieve their climbing goals.

He has done an amazing job at editing the Scree for many years which we're all very thankful for. Additionally, he's edited countless articles for me (and consistently 'encourages' me to write more). We'll still appreciate his peak of the month submissions.

Thank you Steve.

—Wayne Todd

COVID-19 Announcement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all MCA-sponsored trips, training or other activities will require a COVID-19 waiver to be signed by each participant at the beginning of the trip, until further notice. MCA trip leaders and event organizers will have hard copies of the waiver signed by all participants, including the leaders, before the sponsored activity starts. See page 22.

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

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.

Online? Click me!



**Check Facebook for last-minute trips and activities.
Or, schedule one that you want to organize.**

Announcements

Hut Needs and Notes

Hut Needs and Notes- If you are headed to one of the MCA huts, please consult the notes below to see what needs to go to the huts or be fixed. 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!

Mint Hut- Hutmeister Vicky Lytle – Maintenance Alert/Needs: Painting exterior with red oil paint. Clean downstairs ceiling. Lantern mantles. Fire extinguisher. Many thanks to Richard Rasch for delivering supplies on a helo mission, July 9 at his own expense AND thanks again Richard for removing large collection of trash on July 21 helo mission at his own expense. Many thanks to Scout Troop 144 for maintenance done July 17-24

Bomber Hut – Maintenance Alert/Needs: All windows on main floor are boarded up/ need repair/ replacement (bear incident – See August Scree) Scrape and paint outside wood. Install two windows in kitchen area (onsite). Clean with TSP and paint inside walls of hut. Supplies are on site. Many thanks to Richard Rasch for delivering supplies on a helo mission, July 9 at his own expense AND thanks again Richard and his team for maintenance done on recent trip. Many Thanks to Cole Talbot, Forrest Voss, Savannah Lorenz, Luke Konarzewski for reporting the hut damage after bear damage AND to Luke Konarzewski for returning to secure all broken windows. Future considerations: Window replacement with Foyer/ deck are in the planning.

Dnigi Hut – Maintenance Alert/Needs: Evaluate hut structural integrity, mold concerns. Many thanks to Richard Rasch for delivering supplies on a helo mission, July 9 at his own expense AND thanks again Richard and his group for maintenance done on recent trip. Future needs: vents- (flies entering)! Bear deterrents in rough shape.

Holden Hut – Maintenance Alert/Needs: Need a window for entry hall or door. Many thanks to Richard Rasch for delivering supplies on a helo mission, July 9 at his own expense AND thanks again Richard and his group for maintenance done on recent trip. Suggest adding finer mesh over inside vent covers.

Pichler's Perch – Maintenance Alert/Needs: None. No stove fuel present. Coleman stove working. Helo mission planned to change poo barrels out early August. As of May 17, 2020: Human Waste barrels: 3 empty, 1 is 2/3 full. Many thanks to Brad Nelson and Alpha Aviation for May 17, 2020 helo mission.

Han's Hut – Maintenance Alert/Needs: Install window hold open clasp. Helo mission planned to change poo barrels out early August. 1/3 gallon stove fuel present. Coleman stove work-

ing. Supplies to go in: none. Many thanks to Brad Nelson and Alpha Aviation for May 17, 2020 helo mission.

Rosie's Roost – Maintenance Alert/Needs: 1 gallon stove fuel present. Coleman stove working. Many thanks to Stan Olsen, Ross Noffsinger, Peter Holden, Cory Hinds, Bradley Nelson and Sally Balchin: Rosie's reskin project successfully completed. (See August Scree) AND thanks again for supplies delivered. Alert!!- bears have been feeding on human waste in barrels and were observed multiple times during maintenance trip. Securing lids of Human Waste barrels imperative!!

ALL EKLUTNA TRAVERSE HUTS – ET travelers should take trash compactor bags along. Human waste system WAG bags have been used inappropriately. WAG bags are for packing out NOT placing into onsite human waste barrels. For depositing human waste onsite, use 5 gallon bucket lined with trash compactor bag, place tied bag into onsite human waste barrel.

Scandinavian Peaks Hut – Maintenance Alert/Needs: Kelly Mann reports "...was just at the Scandinavian Peaks hut and it looked great, door was closed..."

All Huts - The MCA Board of Directors has decided to phase out the Coleman cooking stoves in the huts. In the future, as a stove fails, it will not be replaced. Be prepared- take your own stove. Additional supplies available for placement at any hut: WAG bags (approx. 100) for human waste collection/pack out along Eklutna Traverse. One functional Coleman stove. Tools: saw, pliers, screwdrivers, metal snips, stapler, hammer, paint tray, 2 roller brushes, 4 paint rollers, door lock set, crowbar, caulk gun, socket set.

Considering Options for Our Mint Hut

By Cory Hinds and Greg Bragiel

For many years now, MCA leadership has pondered how to manage the impacts of increasingly heavy summer traffic at the Mint Hut. We see large groups, youth groups, church groups, training groups, boy scouts, etc. For example, on July 24, 2020 an estimated 41 people in 5 or 6 parties were at or headed to the Mint Hut. Magazine articles like the 2017 feature in Backpacker's [America's Best Huts](#) and various internet travel sites fuel the increased traffic. Analysis of log books indicates that this overcrowding is happening only in summer months. Impacts include trash and human waste removal, soot from the stove, and general cleanup and maintenance.

The MCA holds and pays an annual lease fee and maintains the hut and outhouse. However, it is believed that most visitors do not bother becoming MCA members and do not contribute to the maintenance. This effectively means that MCA members pay to

maintain the hut for the general public to use the hut for free. Some have commented that the Mint Hut is no longer a climber's refuge but a weekend refuge/destination/hangout. We are also concerned for the safety of travelers who appear unprepared. The Backcountry is becoming the front country. What should we do?

Here are some of the options being considered by the Board:

1. Volunteer caretaker to sort out use/users as they show up
2. Change the lease to a "Commercial" lease, set up a reservation system, charge for use and hire a caretaker to manage
3. Transfer the hut lease to the Alaska Huts Association for their management
4. Take down the hut and consider rebuilding in another location that is farther/higher and more challenging to get to
5. Close the hut in the summer months, but keep outhouse open

The increased pressure on the Mint is a change from we are used to seeing; these large groups are somewhat of a shock. It is easy to get caught up in the injustice of paying to maintain the hut for others who don't contribute, or to clean up after others who don't carry out their trash. There is also a feeling that "our" wild places are getting overrun when the large groups show up. We get it, and we feel it too.

But our thoughts on the issue have evolved. We realize that we don't want to see the hut taken down or closed. We are glad that a portion of our dues go towards maintenance of the Mint Hut, and we are willing to join work parties to maintain it. We like knowing that the Mint Hut is out there with open doors. Open for us, our family, friends, or anyone else to go visit. And for emergency use.

The MCA should be proud that we have one of America's Best Huts. Do we really want to take it down or close it? Sure, we would rather have every visitor contribute in a positive way, and we can work on this.

There will be always be people who show up unprepared. Who has not been unprepared for a new activity? The second time these folks visit, they won't be so unprepared. It is good to see young people of all ages and skill levels heading into these areas, even if they are unprepared. Being unprepared means learning a lesson. Learning these lessons is valuable for them. Outlets like the Gold Mint trail and the Mint Hut are particularly important during this pandemic. Let the adventures happen.

Some people say that the maintenance of huts is not aligned to our Mission Statement and we are becoming a Huts Club not a Mountaineering Club. This comment is based on how we spend our money; the largest allocation of our budget is for hut maintenance.

Our mission is to maintain, promote and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, im-

proving, stimulating and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering.

We argue that every part of this mission also happens at the huts. Associations of persons are made in our huts around the table after long hikes and climbs. Exercise of skill and safety is promoted and improved as we journey to and from these huts. Recent membership surveys document strong support for maintenance of our huts.

Note that our mission statement says nothing about our huts being only a climber's refuge. If the Mint Hut is only a weekend refuge and it promotes association of persons who are interested in the art and science of mountains, then it supports our mission.

So let's have a look at these management options and gather information, then we can make an informed decision that we can all get behind. The MCA has a strong reputation in the community for providing training, speakers, a meeting place for friends and climbing partners, The Scree, library, etc., but perhaps it is best known for providing a high level service to the community by maintaining our huts. Let's find a way to work through this and keep the Mint Hut open year-round.

Specifically, we suggest:

- Generating an electronic letter or flyer to be sent to major user groups. Let them know about us, what we do, how we maintain the Mint Hut, how much it costs. Ask them for a donation for upgrade of the hut. "The Mint Hut is not maintained by State Parks or taxpayer funding. The Mint Hut is maintained by Mountaineering Club of Alaska member dues, the labor of our members and hutmeister Vicky Lytle. Groups are requested to contribute to maintenance via a contribution of \$20/year (individual membership) or \$30/year (family membership)."
- Talking to large organized groups on the trail. Members should talk to all groups in a friendly manner and encourage them to send contribution to MCA and /or become members.
- Posting warning to Mint Hut users on our webpage and at trail-head: poor trail, mud, route finding, windy cold conditions at any season, no guarantee of overnight space in the hut.
- Scheduling maintenance and upgrades to the Mint Hut in the future. Usage has increased but this is not an emergency. The hut is not falling down and we have budgeted to manage the human waste system. We don't need to upgrade the Mint Hut immediately.
- Starting a funding campaign to solicit donations for hut maintenance and upgrade so we spread the costs to other user groups. Continue to investigate grants from Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation.
- Organizing more hut trips for our members to join for fun, mission, and maintenance.

Caribou Tower (6350 feet), Clearwater Mountains

Text by Mat Brunton



The grooved ramp pitch.

Photo by Mat Brunton

This peak, which I've dubbed "Caribou Tower," is the highest and most prominent in the southern Clearwater Mountains of the Hayes Range (a subrange of the Alaska Range). I noticed its striking towers, and seemingly good stone, while caribou hunting from the Denali Highway a couple years ago. Since then, it's been on my peakbagging to-do list.

Mid-June 2020, with an unfavorable weather forecast for alpine activity in most areas, the Clearwater Mountains offered a couple days with good probability of favorable alpine climbing conditions. I decided it was time to go for Caribou Tower, and left Anchorage in the late evening driving to the west end of the Denali Highway.

Regrettably, we Cache Camper-ed in the same pullout as I'd camped on the caribou hunt a couple years prior. I say regrettably because I hadn't processed that when I'd stayed at this pullout in mid-August on the caribou hunt it was post-mosquito season. It was a fitful night with basically no sleep as the swarms of mosquitoes managed to stream into the camper through tiny holes I'd neglected to bug-proof.

Given the 2 a.m. bedtime and lack of sleep, I probably could have slept in the next day and not been motivated to go climbing. But, the hum of a mosquito swarm that had worked its way inside the camper by 7 a.m. forced me to get up and take action. By the time the interior walls of the camper were covered with slaughtered mosquitoes there was no going back to bed, I quickly made breakfast and coffee, and Jess and I were off hiking (quickly through the

lower elevation morning mosquito swarms) up Alpine Creek.

As Caribou Tower came into view from several miles away once we reached treeline elevation of Alpine Creek, I immediately thought to myself "damn, that looks burlier than I remember." The seemingly sheer upper walls of the south face had me hoping that there was indeed a manageable route up the north side, which I hadn't seen firsthand before. With overcast weather and the threat of showers, we hiked with haste up valley to the Alpine Creek pass.

At the pass, I got out my monocular to have a closer look at the



route up Caribou Tower

Photo by Mat Brunton

south face. While it still looked steep, with several hundred feet of fourth and fifth class, it looked more reasonable than from when we were a few miles further away. It seemed there might be a way up the south side rather than making a much longer approach to check out the questionable north side I hadn't seen before. I found a potential line up the south face and continued to scope it as we got closer.

At the point of decision between the north or south side approach, I made a final examination with the monocular and decided to give the south side a shot. I had scoped a line that seemed like it would go without anything beyond very exposed mid-fifth class. There was one particularly questionable pitch, but it was worth a shot knowing that the steep north side was even more questionable and would be holding a lot more snow and ice.

We worked our way straight up ~500 feet of steep snow and then followed the filled-in gully another 100-200 feet to climber's left before we left this snow (that had provided good booting) for a short stretch of third class scree. From the steep and exposed scree, we followed a relatively solid fourth class rock band up until it became steep and exposed enough as to be unreasonable not to use the rope I was carrying in my pack.

We then pitched out a 50 meter rope length of mostly fourth class, with some mid-fifth class moves, directly up the south face. From the lower angle scree ledge where I anchored and belayed Jess up to, the route-finding got more interesting. I eventually decided to quest climber's left, sticking to the potential route I'd observed from the valley with the monocular. After a pitch of very exposed fourth class from which I followed exposed scree from the south face to a narrow grooved ramp running up the otherwise sheer west face, I anchored on a horn and brought Jess up.

We were at the crux of the route (in terms of climbing consequence but not necessarily difficulty), and the questionable section I'd observed from the valley. About halfway up the narrow and exposed ramp running along the otherwise sheer west face, there was a notch where the grooved ramp we had been climbing

disappeared and a sliver of snow and ice ran down the sheer rock wall of the west face several hundred feet to a lower angle (but still steep) and wider snow couloir below. While this gap would be tricky enough to climb over, what I was really worried about was safely rappelling back over it to the reliable anchor we were at.

Given that we only had a 50 meter rope, limited accessory cord for slinging anchors, and I'd neglected to bring disposable pins or nuts I was willing to leave behind (instead opting for just a light rack of cams); I didn't know if I could find a reliable anchor at a distance that would allow us to safely descend this very high consequence section. After hemming and hawing and being belayed back down the ramp looking for an alternative, less exposed option; it became clear that the route over the gaping gap was our best bet. Plus, once passed this crux, the route to the summit seemed

obvious and reasonable.

I got down on my ass, feet dangling into the gap, kicked away loose and unsupportable snow, found solid handholds, and stepped across. I shimmied my way up the narrowing and steepening grooved ramp on the other side of the sheer drop over

small chockstones wedged in it on to looser choss, and began the desperate search for a suitable anchor within 25m of the anchor Jess was at. As the ramp feature we'd been climbing up ran into an impassable patch of steep snow, I noticed what seemed to be a suitable anchor horn just above its moat. I got out my ice axe and climbed to it, hollering to Jess to see if I'd passed the half-way mark of the rope.

She replied that I had, but only by ~2". With the couple of cams I'd placed re-

moved, and a more direct line for the rope on the rappel, I felt confident we could rap this crux safely. I brought Jess up to the horn anchor, in which we stood a few feet down in the moat where the steep snow patch met more fourth to low fifth-class rock.

I climbed up this short but steep pitch, that turned out to be the loosest of the route, careful to not dislodge any choss that would fall on Jess. From the top of this pitch, the summit was an easy



*The grooved ramp pitch.
Photo by Mat Brunton*



*Mat Brunton on the summit of Caribou Tower.
Photo by Jess Tran*

fourth class scramble up relatively solid blocks. As mentioned, considering limited anchor building material, we belayed each other up and down the two upper pitches so as to not have to leave any material behind.

The rappel over the gap crux went smoothly, with about a foot of rope to spare. We then began the less anxiety-provoking, but still somewhat nerve-wracking, descent. This consisted of exposed fourth class down-climbing and two more rappels down the steepest sections. As we'd climbed four pitches on the way up, but made the descent with only two down climbs and two rappels, we descended in a less direct fashion than the ascent in order to down-climb as much as possible to make sure we had enough anchor material for the steeper and sketchier sections that required a rappel.

Back down to where we first roped-up for the ascent we opted to descend third class rock and scree, instead of down-climbing the steep snow, in order to avoid making a transition to crampons and axe. Once the steep snow mellowed and was no longer exposed, we moved on to it for a nice slide down to the valley. We had a relaxing and uneventful hike out after a fine day of adventure climbing that provided a good test of mountain craft.

Before we left the alpine we prepared and planned for the last crux of the trip: getting back to the truck without being eaten alive by mosquitoes. As soon as we were back to the Alpine Creek Lodge's parking lot the biting began, but we were able to make it into the truck without much damage. We quickly drove east to higher elevation and more wind-exposed terrain, finding a high and dry pullout between Alpine Creek and the Maclaren River.

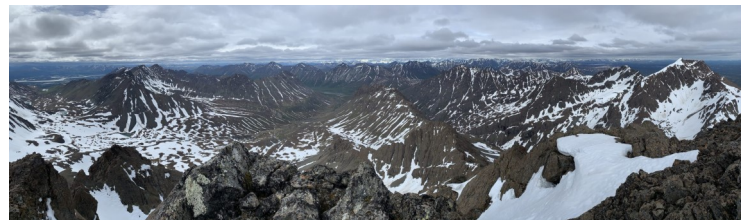
As we opened the Cache Camper, the swarm trapped inside that we'd transported from the Alpine Creek area escaped. After killing off this swarm, we were pleased to find only a few native mosquitoes in the area. Another culinary mac and cheese masterpiece from Mac Master Mat, a fire under the beautiful purple-pink sky and midnight sun, and fine herbs ended a magical Alaskan summer day.

While we found no obvious sign of prior human ascent of Caribou Tower (such as anchor material, cairns, or summit register) and have inquired without any positive history of ascent, it's unclear if this fine Clearwater Mountain summit had ever been attained before. Regardless if this was a first ascent or one of very few ascents, Caribou Tower is a superb adventure climbing destination deep in the wilderness of interior Alaska. It can definitely be done as a daytrip from the Denali Highway, or as a more leisurely climb from camp in the spectacular upper Alpine Creek valley. This area is a fantastic alpine playground with tons of opportunity for exploration and bagging less prominent but easier peaks.



Jess at the final belay with a view of the crux gap.

Photo by Mat Brunton



Summit views from Caribou Tower. Above: east, below: west.

Photos by Mat Brunton



Jess at the crux rappel over the gap in the grooved ramp of the west face.

Photo by Mat Brunton

<https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/alaska-range/hayes/caribou-tower/>



63.081, -147.137

Augusteamo (Augustine Volcano, 4025 feet), Chigmit Mountains

June 5-7, 2020, with Joe Chmielowski, Lee Helzer and Carrie Wang

Text and photos by Wayne Todd

Though not a volcanic peak you see from Anchorage that's always beckoning to be climbed, Mount Augustine is always there, lurking, just below the horizon. Jaunts up Iliamna and Redoubt are great vantage points for this 4,000 foot volcanic island, further 'peaking' interest.

When I check with Lee about interest he's all in. Coincidentally (?), when I check with Joe he's totally in and had just given up on his own plans for Augustine due to non-committal pilots. I'd already checked with the new owner of Northwind Aviation who is keen on flying us in and at last year's rate.

After a quick drive to Homer (at least seemed that way with Joe driving) we all four check in early. We max out the 800 pound payload of their 206 (those dang 150 pound plus guys). The copious payload option is the Turbo-Otter.

Jimmy is our pilot who's landed many times on the Augustine lagoon. As we approach the island a few striking features are: the north side is completely foliage free, the east is moderately covered by a zone of brush but the west side is quite verdant. Guess which side the lagoon is on? Many harbor seals and sea otters are spotted just before landing. We crane our necks trying to spot a magical brush free route up thru the greenery.

Jimmy even shuttles us ashore on his back so we don't get our feet wet. It's quite breezy which is great as we have minimal flying insect encounters. We set our tents on the only brush free flat ground which is old structure sites. Joe first discovers the outhouse and states there is a fox around because of the turd left on the toilet seat. Hasn't anyone taught them to lift the seat? Sure enough over the next two days we have glimpses of a red fox in and around camp. The young guys show their physical prowess by lifting some impressively large rocks (hint, the type of rock is a factor).

Everyone is solid with climbing tomorrow despite the very favorable afternoon weather so we explore clockwise hoping to gain the island just west of the lagoon. This ocean walk takes longer than



Carrie, Wayne, Lee and Joe at the lagoon with Augustine in the background.

expected and at the potential crossing site, where we'd just startled numerous lounging seals, the outflow is still more than anyone wants to cross, despite being almost low tide. The resplendent exposed bolder field at the north entrance to the lagoon is a serious deterrent to any boat intrusions. Mt. Iliamna makes for a great backdrop.

On the return, Lee succeeds in a mildly wet shortcut but he is a six time Wilderness Classic contender. Exploring cleared areas around camp reveals prevalent fern, Chocolate Lily, Lupine, Nagoonberry and...by far, unfortunately, the most prolific plants are Alder and Elder berry, five to eight feet in height. We briefly test the defenses to the east but our foray reveals no obvious easy routes. Our ingress medium is established. Brauts over a ringed campfire for dinner, this is luxury mountaineering.

We're hiking by 8 a.m. as we know there is some quality upcoming brush time. After a brief hesitation, while looking for the decades old phantom tractor trails, we plunge in headed east, at a comfortable brush pace. I don't appreciate elderberry whacking, partly from the pungent smell. The paths of least resistance keep moving us right, slightly away from Augustine proper. We soon find that unlike swhacking most other places, the dried stream gullies are

the least resistive path. The alders are tall enough to reduce undergrowth and the Devils Club are minimal, as are Willow. Despite the island having no bears, I occasionally “Hey bear” for practice. A few hours later we’re linking gravel piles and then clear the brush zone, luckily at a much lower elevation than the mainland.

The day has been disappointingly cloudy for route views but makes for a pleasant traveling temperature. While the snow free terrain isn’t terrible, one step up, one quarter slide down, the firm snow is a very pleasant surprise and our route choice.

At a geographical bench at 2000 feet which is heavily instrumented (scientific not musical), we can’t glimpse the top so route-find one snow section at a time. Speaking of, we discuss sTience and other timely topics. We soon crampon up because of short nearly ice-hard horizontal bands within the snow.

Views open up on an as-needed basis. Though this island is not glaciated, there is sufficient snow depth that cracks are crevasse equivalent. Steam vents thru snow free ports. The snow gets softer, almost to ‘snowshoe worthy’ depth but soon we’re on the snow free crater rim at 4000 feet. There are more instruments here. If you want an idea of how instrumented Augustine is, check out the AVO site [Ed. note: The Alaska Volcano Observatory, <https://avo.alaska.edu/volcanoes/volcinfo.php?volcane=Augustine>]. I wonder if monitors could tell four humans were plodding up the mountain.

Though this is the conservative stopping point, the city block size dome arises slightly next door. We transition from snow and crampons to mild volcanic rock scrambling. The terrain is unearthly: Sharp jumbled boulders stacked around house size pits, deep snow, laced around steaming vents, all draped with

clinging fog. Small sections of rock are bright orange and red though most is tan to black. Only one small section of micro plant growth is noted (possibly Alpine Haircap Moss).

With some short fun route finding we find our way to the probable top as the sky is bluing. We also check out a nearby obvious dome which doesn’t sound as firm underfoot and feels warm to the hand. Joe and Lee hang out there for a butt warming break

while Carrie and I picture explore from a snow patch. The clouds mostly abate an hour later which makes more photo ops for Lee and me.

It’s an easy descent following our snow steps but rock fall is a slight hazard off snow. At brush route decision time Lee, from various observations, suggests we try a westerly creek gully. We agree and this route segues from snow to gravel and just goes and goes. Fox tracks (must be good), large cairn adjacent to gully (another good sign?), weaving down... but alas alders block the lovely stream bed. Still, we cut our brush distance nearly in half. (I should have given a previous trips track more credence as it also follows this bed). In less than half the brush ingress time we exit to the glorious sea breeze and shoreline where fresh water flows from a nearby stream (may be dry later in

the year).

The hill below camp sports old failing steps and an assist rope that we speed up with steaks and box wine awaiting. The grilled flesh is mighty tasty although Joe and Lee’s are much larger than Carrie’s and mine. Augustine is now showing her entirety.

After a full rest night, we explore counter clock wise along the coast destined for the south end of the lagoon. The first entertainment is kelp strand tugging and nibbling, followed closely by Joe’s seal skull au chapeau. Next is an oh-so-cute seal pup lounging on the shoreline that seems interested in possibly following us. We assume mom is just away briefly. A Greater Yellowlegs makes Eagle like calls. A pair of eagles

perches nearby, the actual call emanators. After attaining a small jetty with more lounging seals, and otters giving us a look over from the water, we turn about a bit shy of the lagoon mouth not wanting to miss our afternoon departure time.



Carrie and Joe gaining the summit crater.



Lee, Joe and Carrie traversing the summit crater.

After a very timely retrieval, we're soon reminiscing about the Augustine days.

For this trip: choose an excellent forecast, use our egress creek for ingress also, fly with Northwind Aviation, possibly bring a light inflatable craft (packraft or SUP), and plan on spending at least four days for some excellent shoreline exploration (or perhaps an Augustine circumnavigation).

We used only poles, crampons and axe. We had no need for the rope and hardware carried, giving wide berths to the obvious cracks, steaming vents and crater pits.



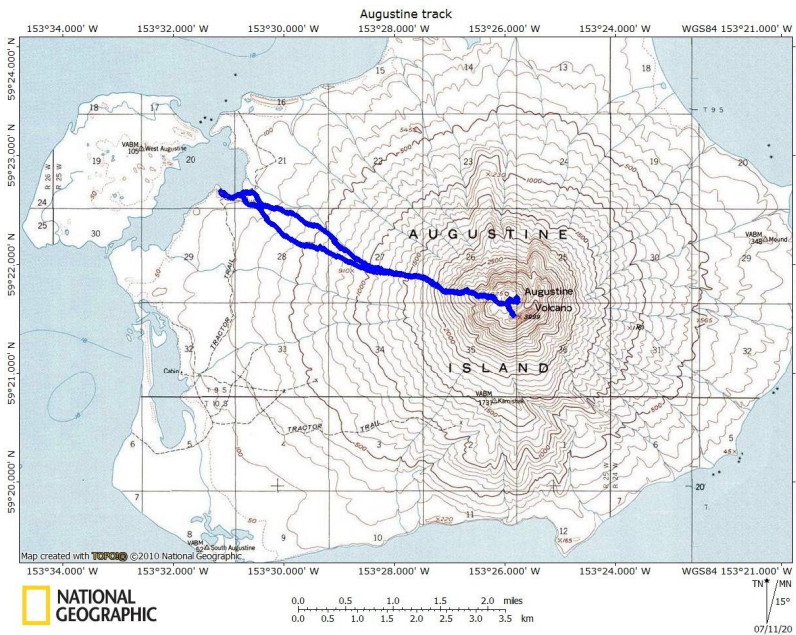
Carrie and Joe descending the summit crater.



Joe on the summit crater.



Carrie, Joe and Lee by a water trickle.



Augustine from base camp.

Augustine map with our route.



59.362, -153.433

Trident Peak (6050 feet), The Unicorn (5250 feet) and Peak 5850, Kenai Mountains

Text by Mat Brunton



Photo by Mat Brunton

In early June 2020, I made my third trip from Crown Point into the Kenai Mountains' Falls Creek valley. A few years ago, I made my first trip up there to climb Helios and Solars. [Ed. note: Report available online at <https://anchorageavalanchecenter.org/trip-reports/kenai-mountains/helios-solars/>] In early May of 2020, I made my second trip to climb and ski Peak 5850. On a third trip, in early June 2020, I hoped to climb the only other 1000'+ prominence peak (The Unicorn) in the Falls Creek valley as well as exploring deeper in the range towards the Snow River from this alpine access point in order to climb other big peaks (Trident, Jokulhlaup, and Mile Pile). [Ed. note: In the original article the author referred to Peak 5800. It is called Peak 5850 here, reflecting its uncertain elevation between 5800 and 5900 feet.]

Conditions in early May for climbing and skiing Peak 5850 were interesting. I was hoping the lower valley floor would still have plenty of snow for easy travel by ski, but it was patchy and thin at the start. Nonetheless, there was enough snow for travel via ski and a melt-freeze crust with low brush made for relatively easy travel (better than walking, at least). Once into the upper valley above 2500', the snowpack was significantly deep and it became apparent the afternoon corn skiing would be excellent.

I was unsure how to summit Peak 5800, considering its lack of history and that I was climbing the peak with a significant snowpack and plans to ski it from the summit. From my prior trip up Falls Creek, map, and satellite imagery research; I knew I'd likely need to approach it from the back (east) side considering the steep and massive relief on its south side from the valley floor

(2800'+ of very serious avalanche terrain) and that west and north aspects were guarded by very steep and difficult to access terrain.

The east side access was initially quite efficient, as I headed up valley to the NE from Falls Creek and eventually wrapped around to the NW. I was at the base of the mountain's upper 1000' of steep terrain on all sides here and while the east ridge was dry and seemed like it would be the way to ascend sans snow, I wasn't fond of wrangling a long stretch of somewhat steep and exposed Kenai knife-edge ridge choss in ski boots. Thus, I opted for steep snow chutes up the SE face.

While I'd maintain that this was the best route option given the circumstances, the snow was already nearly isothermal on this early to thaw aspect and it was a struggle to skin and boot up this 800' of steep terrain. Lower down on the SE face there was no option but wallowing through isothermal mank in the snow chutes themselves, but up high I opted to link up dry rock bands on which I could scramble more efficiently. I connected to the summit ridge a short distance from the top.

The steep SE chutes would be a fun descent in better conditions, but I wasn't keen on jump turning down that much isothermal mank with my super lightweight spring ski setup. I had eyed a line on the more due southerly aspect on the way up from the valley floor and figured I'd give this one a shot, as it seemed like it would provide better corn and was a longer and more direct descent line. It turned out to provide a great ~2500' of fall line 30-

40° corn. More mellow, but exceptionally smooth, corn brought me back to the valley floor and I was then employing all sorts of interesting techniques to get back to the Falls Creek ATV trail while keeping skis on and in descent mode. The walk down the ATV trail required a bit of W12 avoidance given the spring runoff, but otherwise was an easy finish to the day.

Just a bit more than a month later, Jess Tran and I headed back to Crown Point for a multi-day trip to climb and explore sans skis. The Peak 5850 trip had provided me with an ascent line up The Unicorn that seemed a lot more reasonable than previous route options I'd considered before seeing aspects of The Unicorn that I was able to glass from 5850 on the May trip.

We camped around 3200' next to Falls Creek on day one and, after dinner, I scrambled up The Unicorn climbing the third class north ridge of a 4700' sub-peak that sits along the east ridge of The Unicorn. At ~4500' I left that north ridge and traversed a snowfield (shown on the USGS map) to gain The Unicorn's east ridge at ~4700' where it makes its final climb to the summit. About a quarter-mile of more third-class scrambling and I was on the summit with incredible Kenai views in all directions.

The next day Jess and I headed up to the pass at the top of the Falls Creek valley and dropped NE down big, steep slopes to the creek that is the most prominent drainage to Ptarmigan Lake. We set up camp around 2600' to the WNW of Trident's summit below its beautifully glaciated west side. With questionable weather, as Kenai murk was blowing in and out, we headed up valley to the prominent pass between Trident's north ridge and Mile Pile.

Weather and visibility improved as we reached the pass and, at this point, I'd decided to at least give Trident a go. Given the heavily serrated summit ridge, questions as to which gendarme was the true summit, and no beta; I wasn't committed or confident about summiting. Satellite and map research combined with my monocular observations from The Unicorn's summit the day before and Peak 5850's summit in early May seemed to make the NE ridge the most reasonable and viable option.

Donning glacier gear, Jess and I traversed SE up and across Trident's north glaci-

er. While the NE ridge definitely looked reasonable (at least until up near the summit gendarmes), it wasn't very direct – especially when considering that the NE face had beautiful couloirs that lead much more directly up to the potential summits and their snow conditions were great for booting. Given my penchant for steep couloirs and the efficient snow conditions, we decided to boot straight up. Other than one mega crevasse that runs across the upper north glacier which the runout of the NE facing couloirs are somewhat exposed to, everything was filled in and we were able to boogie up to the summit ridge at 6000'.



*Jess heading up to Trident pass.
Photo by Mat Brunton*

Unfortunately, it became obvious the broader and easternmost potential summit I'd scoped from The Unicorn was not the top. I initially balked at continuing along the summit ridge to the west, considering the mixed conditions along the very exposed knife-edge ridge and that the highest looking gendarme seemed to require fifth class

climbing up notoriously loose Kenai choss. However, having come this far, I decided to at least have a closer look.

Jess and I climbed fourth class mixed conditions along the ridge with our ice tools around a significant gendarme and to the top of a second, which provided just enough standing room for both of us. From here I could more closely examine the seemingly highest one, and true summit, more closely. It was a very steep pinnacle. Sanity would definitely be in question if continuing further (and after returning home and discovering the first ascensionists' report, found out they had the same feelings). Given that I was undecided and initially thinking I wouldn't go further, Jess turned around and began the climb back to the top of the NE facing couloir that provided a reasonable spot to relax on a broader area of the ridge.

I thought I was done too, but having come this far and being this close to such a prominent and beautiful Kenai summit I was spurred on to at least take a look at the summit gendarme's south side (which was an engaging proposition). This required down-

climbing ~50° snow on the south face, scrambling across a fourth class rock band, and then climbing up more ~50° snow to the base of the steep rock on the south side of the summit gendarme. From this point, it was still very ques-



*View from the Unicorn looking east.
Photo by Mat Brunton*

tionable if it'd go without a sincere death wish but I eyed a linkup of narrow ledge systems that seemed do-able especially if I could find an anchor from which to rap down.

I anchored my pack with a screw into ice at the base of the rock band and began the spooky 4th-5th class climbing above the 1500'+ of steep snow and exposure on the south face with my 30m coil of rope. Surely enough, I made it to the top. Finding a suitable anchor on such a precarious gendarme with such questionable rock was a challenging endeavor, but one was located and I delicately rappelled back to my pack with the 30m rope being just right for getting back on the snow. I reversed route back to Jess at the top of the couloir and we plunged-stepped and glissaded back to the glacier with an uneventful but beautifully sublime hike back to camp.

Sleeping-in the next morning I awoke to pee and seeing that a thick murk had set in, moved our gear under the tent's rainfly in anticipation of precipitation. Sure enough, the rain came and we were tent bound for about 20 hours as it poured. After the rain stopped and we had made it through that powerful session of low sensory stimulation wilderness therapy, where the mind has only itself to feed on, we set off through heavy residual murk up 1500' of steep tundra slopes to the pass and back to the Falls Creek trailhead.

Trident Peak (6050', 3600'+ prominence) was first climbed on July 1, 1969 by Bob Spurr and Charles McLaughlin via the NE ridge. This trip report is from the second known ascent of the peak, and the first known ascent of the north face.

[Ed. Note: Peak 5850 and the entire ridge between Grant Lake and Falls Creek has occasionally been referred to as Skeen Mountain,

notably on D.H. Sleem's 1910 Map of Kenai mining district and Moose Pass regions, Kenai precinct, Alaska. Peak 4624, south of Falls Creek and north of Ptarmigan Lake, was referred to as Lechner Peak. Frank P. Skeen and John Lechner were prospectors and business partners who mined the region starting around 1905. Those names were never made official and are no longer in common local usage.]



View of the summit gendarme from the east
Photo by Mat Brunton



Mat on the summit.
Photo by



Jess crossing the glacier.
Photo by Mat Brunton



Jess at the top of the north couloir that we climbed to access the summit ridge.
Photo by Mat Brunton



60.397, -149.075

Telemint (6036 feet), Triplemint Spire (6408 feet), Peppermint Spire (5878 feet),

Talkeetna Mountains

Text by Marcin Ksok



Greg with Peppermint in the background.

Photo by Marcin Ksok

After getting up Nevada Peak, Telemint was the logical next objective on the Arkose Ridge. Wayne Todd described his climb of the true summit in an October 2006 Scree article so we followed his lead and expertise in finding the real highpoint of a mountain. Apparently the peak culminating Telemint Glacier and frequently dubbed as its summit in reality is not; a point on a ridge extending north towards Triplemint is though. We stash the bikes around Mile four of the Gold Mint Trail and start walking, overshoot a possible crossing and therefore have to hike extra distance up valley to find a suitable ford. Feet get numb while crossing the creek and we head up the snow-covered remnant of Telemint Glacier. The summit block towers over the ridgeline and is easily identifiable, seemingly unapproachable. We overshoot it by a short distance, this time on purpose, and ascend through a weakness in the ridge and drop over to the east side. Unfortunately I descend too far and get shut down by steep gullies and side ridges. Up we go again to within hundred feet of the ridge proper, just like Wayne stated, traverse a short distance, just around one buttress, and ascend again to easier ground, traverse and drop down the gully spilling from below the summit block. Up the gully we go, looking for the right-trending bench from the description and not finding it. We rope up and I climb up left, change my mind, downclimb and head straight up over easy fifth

class, I spot the bench, far below me now, lower down the gully. Up we go, over blocks, steps and cracks, with some nuts and tricams for protection. Greg follows and joins me on top. We both comment of how fun the climb was and a need to do more like it. The search for Wayne's and his partner Randy Howell's rappel anchors is fruitless. They couldn't have disintegrated yet, did someone clean them up? The register did not mention other ascents, is some purist "ghosting" peaks in the area? We will never find out. Maybe we did not look hard enough. No worries, we leave our own anchors and drop down to the gully in order to retrace our path to the bikes and the awesome downhill ride to the trailhead.

In a few weeks we return for more fun in the Talkeetnas. With light overnight packs we repeat the approach, ford the creek at a lower point and follow Wayne's directions for getting up Triplemint Spire. From Telemint Glacier we head due north up benches and run into a descending fellow. Strange to find someone else up here, it's getting crowded. Attaining the summit is mostly straightforward, devoid of technical difficulties. Benches, scree slopes and gullies are followed to the top and over to its north, dark side. Less is known of that aspect, Clint Helander and Aaron Thrasher documented their Mint Peak Traverse in the 2016

American Alpine Journal (AAJ) and mentioned a single rappel to get down to the saddle below Peppermint Spire, our next objective. It took some steepish grass benches and rock steps and two single rope rappels. Peppermint is a joy to climb and, judging from the amount of slings at the first belay, a frequented objective. The first pitch is forgettable but the second one starts up a wide, low angle crack which terminates at a true knife-edge ridge which I mostly straddled to the top. Climbing is easy but exposed and beautiful. Greg followed and from size of his grin also enjoyed the experience. We summit one at a time and retreat to the top of the crack, two raps get us down to the saddle. Time to head for the Mint Hut. Voices are heard from our left flank and we spot a team retreating from Triplemint's west ridge. Really crowded around these parts. We pick up our pace in order to reach the hut first in order to have a place to sleep for the night, an unnecessary precaution we later learn since they are bedding down in tents. Their ridge attempt wasn't completed due to level of difficulty. Curious if it has been climbed prior? The much loved and worn hut is already housing six so upstairs is not in our cards, but the main floor provides a flat surface to roll out our pads on. I apprehensively attempt to start the old Coleman stove, but my fears are not justified as the trusted friend proves fully capable, holds pressure and fires right up. It is quite busy in the area with at least four tents surrounding the hut and eight of us inside, plenty of opportunities for conversation. The following morning we fill our packs with old webbing and cord retrieved from Peppermint and trash from the hut. One empty extinguisher, four propane canisters and smaller junk, weren't we supposed to come out lighter?



*Greg on Peppermint's summit ridge.
Photo by Marcin Ksok*



*Marcin starting the wide crack on Peppermint.
Photo by*



*Greg on summit of Triplemint.
Photo by Marcin Ksok*



61.826, -149.041

North Suicide Peak (5065 feet), Western Chugach Mountains

July 10, 2020

Text and photos by Matt Nedom

Friday, July 10, I hiked ninety minutes to Rabbit Lake with my friend Ed Colvin. I went in to stay overnight and climb North Suicide from Windy Gap, something I've never done but have wanted to do for a long time. I would be climbing it solo. Ed had other plans for the weekend.

Although I announced the trip on a couple, what are they called, social media or meet up www things, I had no response. Maybe that was because of the rain forecast to fall through the weekend. I expected to find other people camping at the lake, especially since this same trip was announced as tentative on the MCA Scree.

I arrived finding only one unoccupied tent perhaps set by the lone fisherman on the opposite side of Rabbit Lake. Returning to my pack after a trip scouting the surrounding area I saw one woman setting up a tent for herself and her not yet arrived partner.

By the way, I also found a tent stashed along the shore secured by a rock, in case anyone is looking for a tent. Seeing that it was a WalMart tent made me realize it was probably abandoned.

The whole day clouds dressed the surrounding peaks but no rain fell until I was awoken to the sound of it tapping on the tent at 0300. After a while the rain started to beat really hard making me wonder if I'd be able to climb in the morning.

I awoke to cumulus clouds filling the sky but no rain. After a quick breakfast, then filling my water bottle, I began my walk across the tundra and rocks to explore Windy Gap, to find a way up to the peak. The night before I'd seen what looked like a trail on a scree field between the snow packs, heading up the left side to somewhere, hopefully a chasm up to the ridge. As I got closer I saw what looked like what once were boot tracks on the snow field now washed by the rains. I stepped onto the snow finding the surface still hard and slick in the morning chill. Without an ax, I tread carefully.

As I climbed higher the snow pack and scree grew steeper. I did find a 'trail' on the scree field which poured out of a chasm, unseen from below. It climbed a steep route up the south face this side of Windy Gap. Seeing it veer to the right, out of sight, near its top, I realized that it would be a challenge. I hoped it led to a safe route up the right shoulder and a path to the summit.

Another snowfield above me offered some relief from climbing the scree but it was too hard packed to kick steps. I continued up the scree, some the size of pebbles, some like bricks. A few rocks were the size of a seat cushion. All were ready to slide, the slope being near the angle of repose. Each step up brought a pile of rocks down, the old one step up,



West Ridge

slide down two climbing. I found the smaller rock fields to be somewhat easier to climb. I climbed these when they existed.

Once inside the chasm I tried walking along the rock wall, thinking it would be easier. The rocks there were smaller, and I guessed the scree would be less deep. I could also find hand holds on the wall to help me! The rock being Chugach crud, only a few holds were usable. Plus I cut my fingers a couple times on the sharp edges causing me to stop and apply bandages and stop the bleeding. Traversing, making switch backs, seemed to work the best in the steeper sections. I did have to use my hands, almost crawling, in some places.

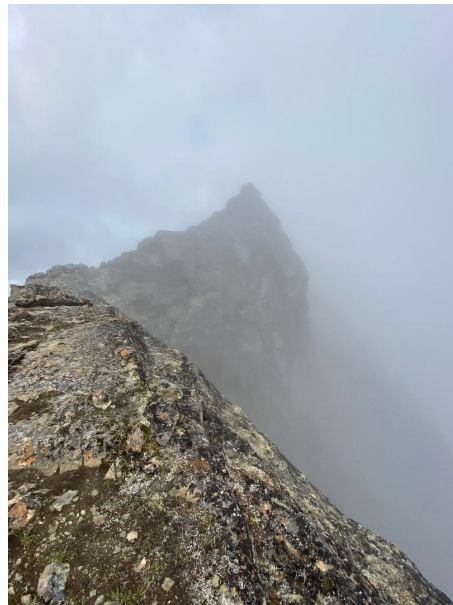
Am I doing this for fun? I was actually glad I was climbing solo. The person below was always in danger of rock fall. Another danger I felt, walking at the base of the wall, at the foot of the cliff, was rock fall either naturally or if we had an earthquake! These are great thoughts to have while climbing. Is this like meditation?

I kept climbing higher, feeling that I had come all this way. I wasn't going to give up. Plus I'd always wanted to climb North Suicide and I was here, now. I'd been up the South peak three or four times. The last time, a few years ago, climbing the south peak from the Rainbow Peak route with my dog and some folks from a Meet Up group, another woman and I tried to traverse to climb the north peak but it was getting late and I didn't want to hike down the Falls Creel trail in the dark, then back along the highway to the Rainbow parking lot, tired and with a dog.

The climb was beginning to lose all aspects of being fun. Do I really



North Suicide



North Suicide fog approach

61.038, -149.560



want to do this? I still couldn't see where the chasm ended, its top hidden as it turned to the right above me. Looking back over my shoulder I saw that I was now above the Windy Gap saddle. I could also see South Suicide rising into the clouds above me. I had gained some elevation, but still had a ways to climb.

Slog up. I can do it. I have come this far though I am getting tired, tired of the trudging, the step up, slide back down. No need for me to be calling "ROCK" since no one is after me. What will it be like going down? Easier, I'm sure. I hope. I also hope that I don't dislodge a key-stone, letting loose more rock above me!

A bit higher I look to almost see the top of this chasm. I'm almost there! I'm going to do it! I'll get up to this ridge, pull out my sandwich and cookies to re-energize myself, and drink lots of water, then call it for a climb. I had reached this goal.

Now at the ridge I found a flat rock where I sat, ready to pull out my lunch. Ahead of me I saw snow on the ridge dropping over the north side. I couldn't see where or how far it went because of the clouds. I looked back down my ascent route then up to see the top of South Suicide peeking out of the clouds just a little bit above me! Since the north peak is only 60 feet higher than the south I was almost there! Halleluah!

Instead of eating lunch, I had some water then jumped up to climb to the top! Instead of scree I saw a trail! This was going to be easy! Then I saw the rock face leading to the mountain top. A couple cracks-hmmm, which way to go? A short rock face with minor class 5 moves would get me to the top. I'd heard there was some climbing involved. I'm almost there- Up I went, toward the top hidden in clouds. At the top of this rock I found that this was not the top! The mountain kept going! The trail resumed here, with a few steps climbing up rock. I could now see the top, a prominent block at the top, though I didn't feel the need to stand on it. Once there I saw it was a knife edge, not allowing me to stand on it if I had wanted to!

It took me three hours to reach the summit from Rabbit Lake.

After a few photos from the top, checking out the route down the ridge to the west, seeing the cliff drop to the north, and Rabbit Lake at the base of the cliff to the southwest, I walked back to sit and eat my lunch and drink water. The down climb of the 5th class section was easy.

The descent to Rabbit Lake took only two hours. The snow packs had softened enough to allow controllable glissades, adding to the speed and excitement! As I neared the lake I felt a few drops falling from the forecast rain but stayed dry as I refilled my water bottle. As soon as I crawled inside my tent to begin packing, the rain began! I timed that cloud burst just right! That gave me an excuse to take a power nap before the hike back to my car.



Rabbit Lake Camp

Bookend Peaks – Gentoo Peak (4196 feet) and Penguin Peak (4334 feet),

Western Chugach Mountains

Text by Greg Higgins



*Greg on Gentoo Summit
Photo by Shannon*



*Shannon on Crested Peak
Photo by Greg Higgins*

If you turn your map to about 20 degrees to the right, Gentoo and Penguin Peaks look like the corners of a smiling mouth with Penguin Creek and Penguin Ridge the lips. I have long wanted to do the traverse since reading Vin Hoeman's description of its west end in his write up in 1966 of his climb on July 13 (the Scree, Vol 8, No. 11, 9/66). He climbed from Mile 94 on the Seward Highway to "Adelie Point" (3800+ feet) then turned west and in keeping with the penguin theme he went over "Rockhopper Point" (3802 feet), King Point (4100+ feet) and finally to the true summit of Penguin Ridge which he called "Emperor Point" (4305 feet). On my 2016 National Geographic map, only the name Adelie Point appears to have survived.

Now that I am an old man, I did not want to try the entire ridge in a single day. With this in mind Shannon and I got a 2 p.m. start on July 28 up the California Creek Trail. We had faith that there was a viable trail to gain the ridge as Carrie Wang told me she had used it on her trip earlier in the month. Thank God for that trail. It would have been most unpleasant gaining that two thousand feet in the dense brush without something to follow. We conjectured that going up was probably easier than coming down. After two hours up we traversed to the south with plans to gain the southern ridge of Gentoo Peak. Our goal was the lake at 3200 feet where we spent the night. Once we hit the ridge, we dropped our packs and then finished the trip to the summit. After 9 p.m. we spotted a single climber going up Gentoo, but we never saw him/her again.

We set out the morning of the 29th around 7 a.m. reaching Chinstrap Point in a little over an hour and Crested Point in another

3/4 hours. On Crested we found one of only two registers on the route with the other being on the true summit. (There is an ammo can register placed on the ridge west of Penguin Peak that does not seem to mark anything significant). The next two hours on the ridge approaching towards Adelie were the most enjoyable of the trip with interesting towers to pass over and a good trail to follow. Adelie Point stands out clearly because it has a north/south profile with its 3600+ northern point. It took us another two+ hours to get into the gap beyond the Adelie/3802 complex leading to the last ridge up to Point 4100. Not shown in this gap on the NG map is a small pond/tarn that is on the old maps I have from 1951. This tarn is still there and is a potential water source. There is a lot of up and down before you get to this gap that marks the last hill to Point 4100. My map estimation was 5,200 feet total elevation gain from our camp at Lake Gentoo to Penguin's summit.

Naively we assumed that the 3/4 hour spent getting to Point 4100 would put us onto easy ground to the summit. We were sorely mistaken. We slogged along that final ridge amongst rotten gendarmes and a marginal trail for an hour and forty minutes before finding ourselves on the loose pile of rocks that constitutes the summit of Penguin. The register is stored beneath the weather station in plain view. We carefully nursed our knees down the steep exit valley in around 2 and 1/2 hours to regain our car from the top around 8:30 p.m.



60.965, -149.375

Peak of the Month: Peak W-13 (10060 feet), Wrangell Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Wrangell Mountains

Borough: Unorganized Borough

Adjacent Pass: Mountaineers Pass

Latitude/Longitude: 61° 47' 24" North, 143° 13' 48" West

Elevation: 10060 feet

Adjacent Peaks: Atna Peaks (13860 feet) and Peak 8962 in the Nabesna Glacier drainage

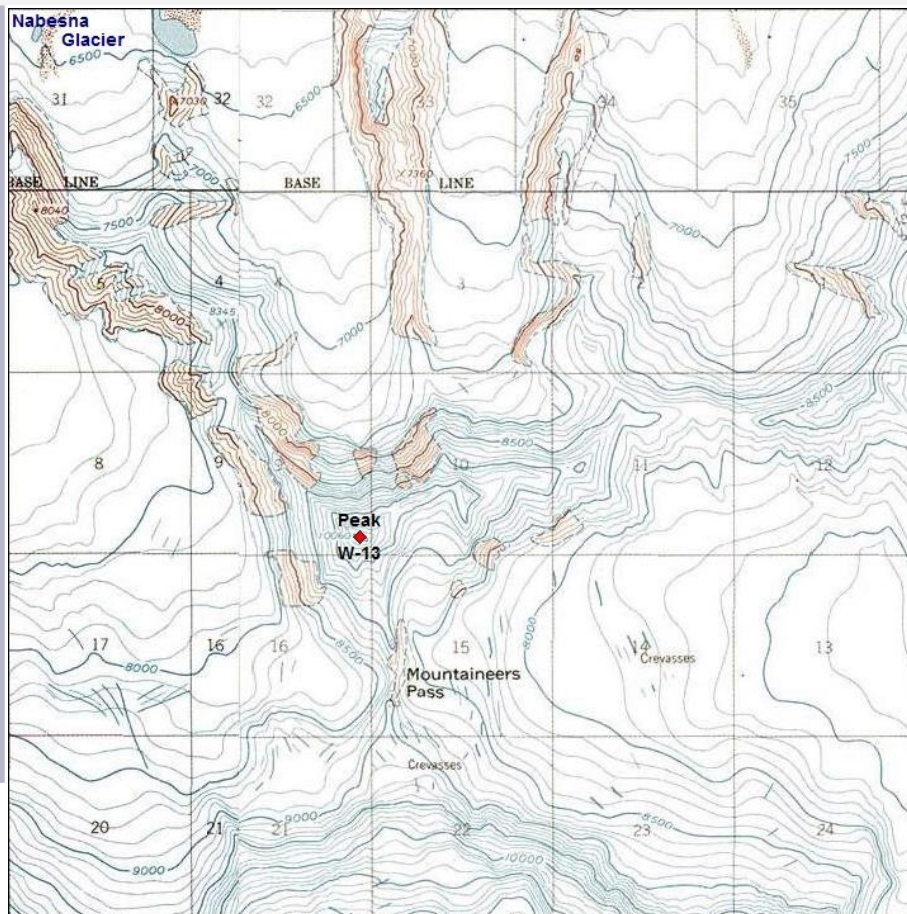
Distinctness: 1350 feet from Atna Peaks

Prominence: 1350 feet from Atna Peaks

USGS Map: 1:63,360: McCarthy (D-6), 1:25,000: McCarthy D-6 SW

First Recorded Ascent: April 30, 1976, by A. Ando, N. Komatsu, K. Kyogoku, and N. Watanabe

Access Point: 7200-foot level of the Nabesna Glacier



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

By my counts 10060-foot Peak W-13 is tied for the 358th-highest peak in Alaska and is the 44th highest peak in the Wrangell Mountains.

In his unpublished manuscript on the mountains of Alaska and northwestern Canada, the late Vin Hoeman labeled the 10060-foot peak as Peak W-13, the "W" presumably a designation for the Wrangell Mountains.

On April 18, 1976, 24 members of the Hokkai College Alpine Club from Sapporo, Japan, flew to the 7200-foot level of the Nabesna Glacier, where they set up a base camp east of the northwest ridge of Mount Blackburn. A portion of the party attempted the northeast ridge of the East Peak of Mount Blackburn, establishing camps at 8200 feet and 11500 feet. On April 25 K. Kyogoku and four teammates reached the summit of Rime Peak (12741 feet). Heavy snowfall subsequently caused avalanches and the team lost a tent and equipment. On April 29 Kyogoku again climbed Rime Peak with three different teammates. Giving up the attempt on the East Peak of Mount Blackburn due to the lost equipment, Kyogoku's attention turned to Peak W-13. On April 30 A. Ando, N.

Komatsu, Kyogoku, and N. Watanabe reached the summit of Peak W-13 for its first recorded ascent. On May 3 Kyogoku joined three other team members to make the first recorded ascent of Peak 10685 in the Kuskulana Glacier and Nabesna Glacier drainages.

In 1979 Stu Brody, Don Brooks, Art Kampen, James Meigs, Tom Miller, and Dave Shrimpton attempted the northeast ridge of the East Peak of Mount Blackburn, but after seeing the route from the summit of Rime Peak, they abandoned their plans and climbed Peak W-13 via an icefall on its southwest side. Brody, Meigs, and Miller then climbed Peak W-13 via the northwest ridge, making the third ascent of the peak, while Brooks, Kampen, and Shrimpton climbed Parka Peak (13280 feet). Brody, Miller, and Shrimpton flew out and Brooks, Kampen, and Meigs hiked out via the Nabesna Glacier.

On May 9, 1999, Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters flew Dawn Groth, Dave Hart, Cory Hinds, Elena Hinds, Ben Still, Kathy Still, and Wayne Todd to the 9000-foot level of a tributary of the Nabesna Glacier below Regal Mountain (13845 feet). They moved camp to the 10800-foot level of the glacier and climbed Peak W-

15 (12454 feet) and Regal Mountain. The team then skied 15 miles to the west, over Mountaineers Pass, and established a camp at 8000 feet below the north faces of Rime Peak and Atna Peaks, with Groth, Hart, Ben Still, Kathy Still, and Todd ascending Peak 8560 en route. Cory Hinds, Ben Still, Kathy Still, and Todd then climbed Parka Peak. On May 16 Hart, Ben Still, and Todd ascended the northwest ridge of Peak W-13 while Cory Hinds climbed the west face of the peak. Elena Hinds and Kathy Still climbed Peak W-13 from the south a few days later to. The entire party then climbed Peak 8550 northwest of Rime Peak. Groth and Hart subsequently climbed Peak 7280 northeast of Peak W-13. On May 22 Claus returned and flew the party off the glacier.

I don't know of any other ascents of Peak W-13.

The information in this article came from page 14 of the January-February 1977 *Mountain* (issue No. 53); from Nobuyuki Sakaue's report titled "Blackburn, Northwest Ridge, P 10,600 [sic] and P 10,685, Wrangell Mountains," which appeared on pages 167 and 168 of the 1977 *American Alpine Journal*; from Luther G. Jerstad's report titled "Peaks in the Wrangell Range," which appeared on page 531 of the 1980 *AAJ*; from Hart's "Climbing Notes," which appeared in the July 1999 *Scree*; from Hart's report titled "Regal Mountain, Peak 12,454', Parka Peak, Rime Peak," which appeared on pages 218 and 219 of the 2000 *AAJ*; and from my correspondence with Hart, Cory Hinds, Ben Still, Kathy Still, and Wayne Todd.



Ben Still (left) and Dave Hart descending the northwest ridge of Peak W-13.

Photo by Wayne Todd.



Polar Bear Peak 6614 feet. Taken March 22, 2020 from Mile High Road.

Photo by Frank E. Baker

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2020, at 6:00-8:00 p.m., conducted online via Zoom

Roll Call

Mike Meyers (President) - Absent
Gerrit Verbeek (Vice-President) - Present
Curtis Townsend (Secretary) - Absent
Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Absent
Tom Meacham (Director) - Present
Jonathan Rupp Strong (Director) - Present
Lila Hobbs (Director) - Present
Andy Kubic (Director) - Absent
Heather Johnson (Director) - Present
Nathan Pooler (Director) - Present
Visitor: Cory Hinds
Scribe: Gerrit Verbeek

Quorum was met - President or Vice President in attendance, and at least 5 Board members.

Committee Reports

Vice President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- September Meeting - Streaming film and Q&A opportunity with Nate Menninger (The Porter).

Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- Katherine is currently recovering from an injury and requests help with some duties, specifically checking mail and issuing checks
- There is currently only one mailbox key. Board votes to duplicate key.

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

- Greg Bragiel was out recently with Boy Scouts at Mint Hut, sees that most Mint Hut users are not MCA members or contributing

- Reports one Hut user told him "Why should I become a member, I've always been coming here"
- Cory entered Wednesday, exited Thursday, passed ~20 people
- Cory's thoughts:
 - Board has right priorities with focus on emergency Bomber repairs
 - Equal priority between Mint and Bomber Arctic Entry
 - Mint recommendation - consider decision process
- Tom Meacham's thoughts:
 - MCA cannot require membership to use the hut
 - Option 1: Turning over management of Mint Hut to Alaska State Parks or Alaska Huts
 - Option 2: Potential option to renegotiate the hut lease to allow for reserved use
 - Option 3: Close the Hut during the summer
- Board Discussion (nonbinding):
 - Group - "Not really a mountaineering hut" in summer, "vital tool" in winter.

Calendar Committee (Vicky Ho, Lila Hobbs, Heather Johnson, Mike Meyers)

- Calendar contest closing in a few days.

Date and Location of next Meeting

- General Meeting – September 2nd at 6 pm with Nate Menninger. Online meeting, details to be published.
- Next Board Meeting on August 26, 2020 from 6:00-8:00 pm via Zoom??

Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA) COVID-19 Guidelines and Waiver

These Guidelines and Waiver apply to all

MCA-sponsored trips, events, and other Club activities

1. If I have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 virus including fever, headache, cough, respiratory congestion, body aches and/or chills, I shall not participate in any MCA-sponsored event.
2. If I am cohabitating with any person who has any of the symptoms listed in Paragraph 1 above, or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, I shall not participate in any MCA-sponsored event.
3. If I have traveled into the State of Alaska from Outside within the 14 days prior to the event, I shall not participate in any MCA-sponsored event.
4. If I have been contacted by a health authority about my recent contact with a person who has subsequently been diagnosed with COVID-19, I shall not participate in any MCA-sponsored event.
5. I acknowledge that social distancing (at least 6 feet between persons) continues to be a best practice; and if social distancing is not possible, I acknowledge that wearing a mask is strongly encouraged.
6. I acknowledge that handwashing or using hand sanitizer is strongly encouraged.
7. As a participant in an MCA-sponsored event, I agree to inform the Board of MCA if I do become sick with any COVID-19 symptom within seven days after participating in the event, so that the other participants can be advised that a fellow participant has become sick, so that they can monitor for symptoms, and can practice recommended social distancing measures.
8. As a participant in an MCA-sponsored event, I agree to consider and evaluate my participation if I regularly are in close contact with, or anticipate coming in close contact with: people at higher than normal risk for severe illness; people 65 years or older; people who live in a long-term care facility; people with underlying medical conditions (particularly if these conditions not well controlled). For reference, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.
9. It is recommended that anyone visiting an MCA hut should first clean and disinfect interior surfaces per CDC guidelines, where practical. For reference, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>.

I expressly acknowledge that naturally-occurring disease processes and risks of exposure, including the virus COVID-19, occur in all environments in which MCA-sponsored activities may occur. I acknowledge that although MCA has applied reasonable measures to avoid or minimize contact, exposure, transmittal or contamination by the virus between participants, it is my sole responsibility to safeguard myself and others in this regard. I understand and agree that if I participate in any MCA-sponsored activity, I hereby waive any claim of legal liability by MCA to me, if I contract the COVID-19 virus.

Signature of Member _____ Date _____



Hesperus in the Revelation Mountains.
Photo by Earl Redman



Golgatha in the Revelation Mountains.
Photo by Earl Redman

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Mike Meyers president@mtnclubak.org
Vice-President Gerrit Verbeek 903-513-4286
Secretary Curtis Townsend 355-9820
Treasurer Katherine Cooper 209-253-8489

Director 1 (term expires in 2020) Jonathan Rupp Strong 202-6484
Director 2 (term expires in 2020) Lila Hobbs 229-3754
Director 3 (term expires in 2021) Tom Meacham 346-1077
Director 4 (term expires in 2021) Heather Johnson hjohnson@mdausa.org
Director 5 (term expires in 2021) Andy Kubic andy.kubic@gmail.com
Director 6 (term expires in 2021) Nathan Pooler Nathan.lee.pooler@gmail.com

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: Vacant — training@mtnclubak.org

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

Huts: Greg Bragiel — 350-5146 or huts@mtnclubak.org

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

Librarian: Gwen Higgins — library@mtnclubak.org

Scree Editor: Gerrit Verbeek — MCAScree@gmail.com assisted by Dawn Munroe (350-5121 or dawn.talbott@yahoo.com)

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

Mat Brunton and Caribou Tower.

Photo by Jess

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