

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

February 2021

Volume 64, Number 2



**"I care not what others think
of what I do, but I care very
much about what I think of
what I do! That is character."
– Theodore Roosevelt**

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**Brown Pants, Nenana Mountain, Hayes Range
Moonlight Mountain and White Lice Mountain,
Western Chugach Mountains
Peaks 5160 and 5560, Kenai Mountains
East Andy Simons Mountain, Kenai Mountains
Arctic Valley/ Ship Creek Maintenance, Round 2
Peak of the Month: Acorn Peak,
Wood River Mountains**

**FEBRUARY MEETING Wednesday February 3, at 6:30 p.m.
Virtual. Join us for Heather Johnson's presentation on her mission to
ski every month of the year, now up to a 65-month skiing streak.**

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

www.mtnclubak.org

"To maintain, promote, and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating, and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering."

This issue brought to you by: Editor—Gerrit Verbeek assisted by Dawn Munroe

Cover Photo

Gerrit Verbeek on the class 3+ traverse on the west ridge of White Lice Mountain.

Photo by Billy Finley

FEBRUARY MEETING

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Calendars

2021 MCA Calendars are available for purchase at AMH, SkiAK and Hoarding Marmot for \$15. Thanks to the photographers and committee for a stellar final product!

January Election Results

Elections were held at the January general meeting, with 31 members in attendance for voting.

The 2021 budget was passed unanimously, as was the proposed by-law amendment changing the term of an officer position from one year to two years. The intended effect is to stagger the terms of pairs of officers so that each election will always have two officers with at least one year of experience, in order to promote continuity.

The 2021 Board, serving until October 2021, is:

President: Michael Meyers

Vice President: Nathan Pooler (new to VP)

Treasurer: Katherine Cooper

Secretary: Curtis Townsend

Directors: Andy Kubic, Heather Johnson, Tom Meacham, Luke Konarzewski (new), Brendan Lee (new), Josh Pickle (new)

Congratulations to the new Board members, and also a big thanks to past board members (Lila Hobbs, Jonathan Rupp Strong, and Gerrit Verbeek)

Trips

Feb 28 - Mar 6: Resurrection Pass Trail North OR South Ski Tour - Trip leader is Greg Bragiel (unknownhiker@alaska.net, 907-350-5146). The precise route will depend on snow conditions, please contact the trip leader for details or to reserve a place.

Apr. 11 – 17th: MCA Bomber Traverse - Trip leader is Greg Bragiel (unknownhiker@alaska.net, 907-350-5146). This route will cover roughly 23 miles and involve glacier travel. COVID, glacier travel and avalanche safety protocols are all required.

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

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Online? Click me!



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

Brown Pants (5.11a), Nenana Mountain, Hayes Range

Text by Ethan Berkeland, photos by Jonathan Koenig

With Jonathan Koenig and Tristan O'Donoghue

63.544, -147.835



After a long summer of perpetually attempting to align busy schedules, weather, and transportation, our ducks finally drifted into a row. Around 5 p.m. on August 8th, we called Temsco Helicopters to inquire about transportation to Nenana Mountain. No more than four hours later, Jonathan Koenig, Tristan O'Donoghue and I had driven from Fairbanks to the Denali Park entrance and flown to this seldom travelled-to granite monolith in the Hayes Range. It was too easy, we almost felt as if we were cheating ourselves. The helicopter allowed for guilt-inducing excess in the alpine. However, when the heli-transported, glacier-cooled beer hit our tongues, any feelings of culpability washed away.



Camp Views

We landed and camped on the glacier to the south of Nenana Mountain which has been dubbed the Hotel Glacier by some of the few people who have spent time in the area. The north side of this valley plays host to some impressive walls and the climbing mentioned here is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of new route potential. Several major formations loom above the head of glacier, awaiting ascents to this day.

Our original plan had relied on landing our friend Jesse's Piper Pacer on the Yanert River. Jesse's plane had an oil leak and he wasn't confident he could fly. He would have dropped us a mere 6 miles from Nenana Mountain where we would have humped our gear up the valley. This approach would be mild by Alaskan standards, but the helicopter was downright decadent. Nonetheless, we had packed our bags for a hike and when we made the last minute decision to take the helicopter, the only things we thought to pack more of were camming devices and beer. As a result, we had frustratingly little food which was not freeze dried, but a beer with every Mountain House and four #2 cams to really sew up those perfect hand cracks. Priorities, like the weather, were fickle.

We spent the first night running around the valley like kids in a candy store. Many of the cracks, as you came closer to them, were revealed to be thin seams, so we focused our efforts on the cracks that we could easily protect. The first morning we found ourselves beneath an aesthetic corner that Jed Brown had cragged on 16 years prior. Glacial recession graciously provided us with an additional 30 feet of climbing beneath where he had started up the rock. The rough plan for the first day was just to crag and check out the valley. Plans are generally self-stifling, hence, we were soon racking up for pitch number 4, far above where the previous party was rained off the route. Lured in by a hand crack, Jonathan started up a nearly 50-meter splitter, which slowly got wider and wider until he popped out of it while trying to walk a tipped out #4 cam through butterfly stacks. He looked up and saw the crack got even wider and then he looked down at his measly rack. We bailed, hoping to recover the precious camming device at a later date.

After a full day of rain and vegetating in the tent, we awoke the day after to a light mist. We optimistically took this as a sign that the weather was improving and it was prudent we climb again. We quickly dispatched the first two 5.10 pitches of our previous route, despite wet rock, hoping to push the route higher. The third pitch was friction dependent and 5.11 to boot. I had on-sighted the pitch two days prior, but that was with dry rock. With two small pieces of gear in a thin crack, I committed to some smears on wet rock and was promptly ejected from the corner, pulling both my pieces. I fell 15 feet to the belay ledge where I landed on Jonathan's chest and was subsequently bounced into a comfortable seat on the flaked rope. I was without scratch, Jonathan, on the other hand, was confident he had a broken rib. Upon closer examination, the giant 40 foot flake forming the crack in question appeared to be completely loose and likely moved when the pieces pulled.

The fall, while mostly inconsequential, convinced us that this was not the climb to be doing in the rain. Again, we began rappelling, retreating from the route for the sec-

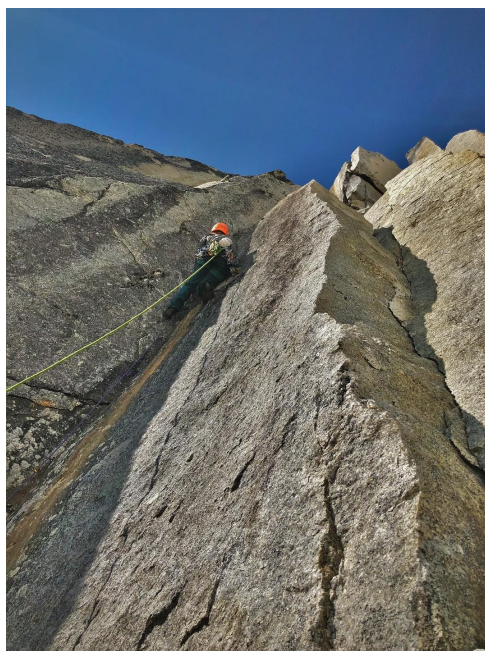


Consolation Crack

ond time. Feeling defeated and desiring some sort of redemption, we considered alternatives for the rest of the day. We had seen a perfect splitter hand crack the day before and figured that it might still go while wet, so we went to have a look, this time with a rope and rack. We climbed the crack in two short pitches, using all four #2 cams on each pitch and established Consolation Crack (5.10b). I have no doubts that it is one of the best hand cracks in Alaska.

The next day brought more rain, so much that we did not even consider climbing. On the bright side, it brought us some friends as well. Andy Sterns, Grant Wilson, and Tait Chandler flew into the valley in the evening, bringing with them great weather, which we all enjoyed the next day.

With blue skies and warm sun we started up our route for the 3rd time, moving fast on known terrain. A variation to the problematic crux third pitch was well-protected, higher quality and it went at about the same grade as the original. Jonathan led a more reasonable variation to the wide fourth pitch and after that, easy terrain allowed us quick passage upward. Tristan was feeling worked so Jonathan and I hightailed it to the top as a party of two. We simul-climbed and soloed the last 400 feet to some incredible views and established Brown Pants (1100', IV 5.11a). Linking up with Tristan on the rappels, we descended quickly and safely to catch up with the other party and chat about their day. They had gone part way up the South Buttress (1500', IV



Crux

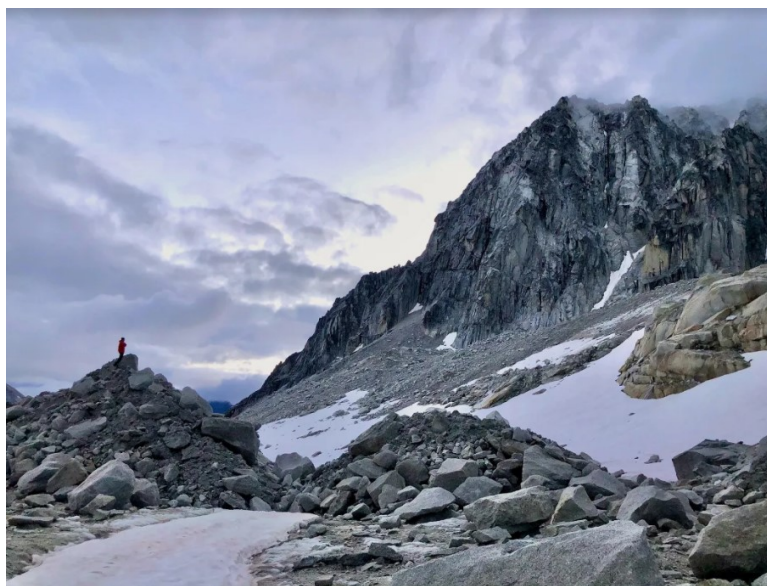
5.8) which was established by Jed Brown and Kevin Wright in 2004. These are currently the only two technical routes on the peak. Our route does not reach the summit of Nenana Mountain proper but a subsidiary peak we referred to as the Southeast Buttress. Taking the route to the summit would require multiple rappels off the buttress and then a very loose 4th class scramble.

Plans to run up the South Buttress after completing our route fell apart somewhere between celebratory beers and waking up to sore muscles. On account of work and bad weather, none of us had climbed much in the month before this trip. Three attempts on a new route that was hard and long for us scrappy Interior climbers had us beat. Alternatively, we sunbathed and heckled

Andy, Tait and Grant from below while they worked their way up the South Buttress. The Helicopter picked us up at 3 p.m. and the next week was some of the best weather the region had seen all year. We felt foolish for leaving but were proud of what we had accomplished.

This trip was funded by an American Alpine Club Mountaineering Fellowship Grant.

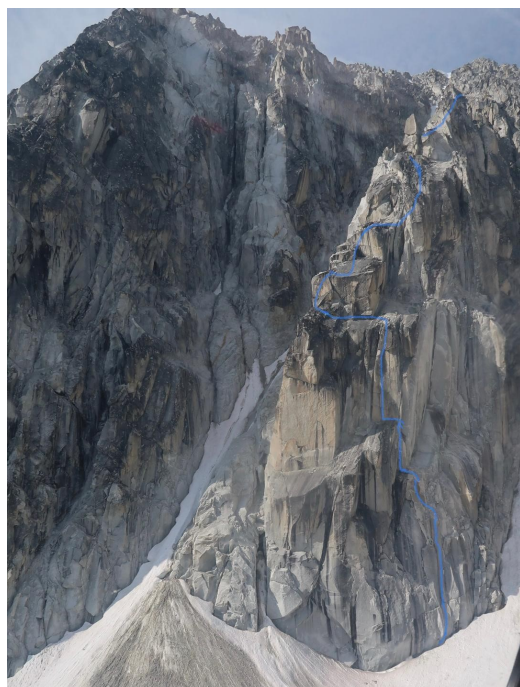
First pitch



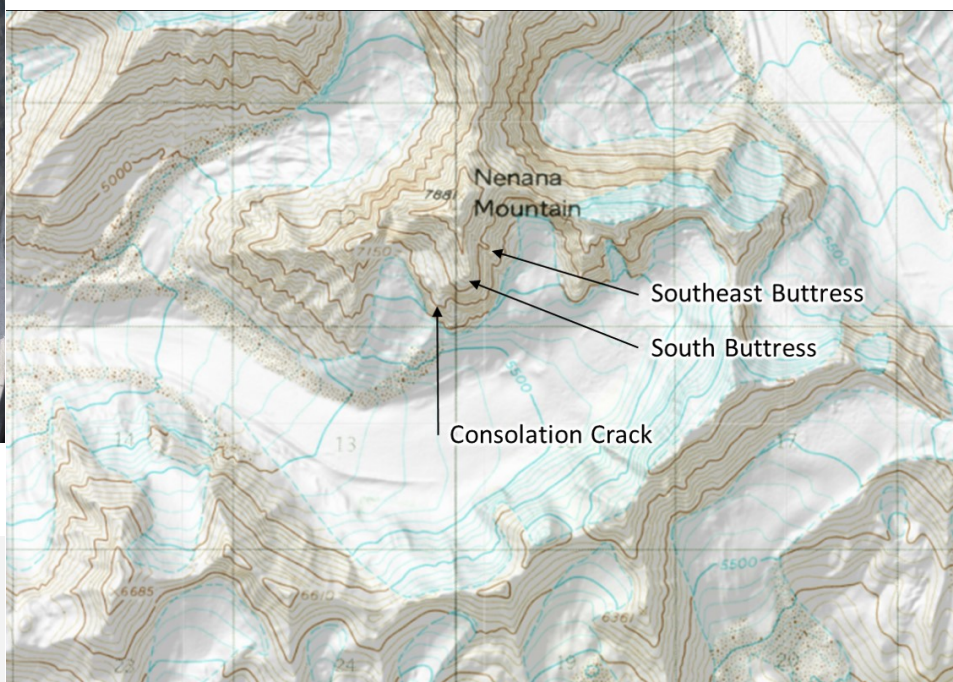
Nenana Mountain



Views



Route of Brown Pants (5.11a) in blue



South and Southeast Buttresses of Nenana Mountain. The map doesn't really capture the topography in that area well as there are a few independent spires on that face of the peak.

Moonlight Mountain (6270 feet) and White Lice Mountain (6675 feet),

Western Chugach Mountains

Text and photos Billy Finley

With Gerrit Verbeek, July 14-16, 2020

61.236, -148.950



*Joe Chmielowski on Ovis Peak with White Lice Mountain in the background. The North Ridge is the left trending ridge. The West Ridge is the right trending ridge with the glacier remnant near the top. The summit is the second bump to the right of where the North and West ridges meet.
September 2018.*

[Ed. Note: Adapted for the Scree from

<https://www.akmountain.com/2020/07/15/moonlight-mountain-northwest-glacier-white-lice-west-ridge/>]

Moonlight Mountain (6270 feet) and White Lice Mountain (6675 feet) lie near the eastern edge of Chugach State Park on the Eklutna Glacier – Moonlight Mountain being the peak that lies just off the West Branch the summit just above a hanging valley that is on the southern flanks of Bellicose Peak. The glacier on the north side of the peak used to connect to the West Branch, but in the past 15 years it has receded and now close to 500' of rock is exposed.

White Lice is the tallest peak on the ridge that separates the Eklutna Glacier from the East Fork of the Eklutna River. Just a side note – USGS data shows that White Lice is 6650' and The Mitre as 6651' – however USGS lists the South Peak of White Lice as the summit and subsequent research (i.e., Ross Noffsinger tromping around all aspects of the peak with a GPS) has shown the North Peak to be slightly higher. Thus I'm calling White Lice as the tallest peak on the ridge.

Both peaks are fun climbs – Moonlight Mountain having a wonderful moderate snow route all the way to the summit which

would be a great intro route for Chugach glacier mountaineers – whereas White Lice is for the choss connoisseur with lots of exposed Class 3+ scrambling, a steep snow/ice slope and a short pitch of Class 4 decomposing rock.

Moonlight Mountain

While Moonlight Mountain is over 6000', it is overshadowed by surrounding peaks that are closed to 1000' taller and much more dramatic. That said – it is situated in a unique spot with a beautiful view of the West Branch of the Eklutna from the summit perch. Likewise the rapidly changing landscape surrounding by the peak makes the route seem wild in nature despite the moderate climbing.

The peak was first climbed on September 11, 1965 by Gerry Garland, Jr.; Frank Godfrey, Jr.; and J. Sergeant, presumably by the northwest glacier ramp which is the standard route. Since then it has seen a fair number of ascents, the majority being by the northwest glacier. In a sad byline to this – Frank Godfrey Jr., who was on the first ascent party in 1965, died of exposure in a storm on the Eklutna Glacier in May 1966 with Ann Kroenung. There's a short snippet in the June 1966 Scree about AMRG's involvement:

On May 8th ARG (Alaska Rescue Group) was called to assist the

AMU (Alaska Methodist University*) students in trouble on the Eklutna Glacier. A helicopter from RCC was summoned to the west end of the Lake, and at 4:00pm seven climbers were air lifted to the Glacier. Unfortunately this rescue mission ended in tragedy as two of the students had perished due to exhaustion and exposure before the ARG members arrived. The helicopter evacuated the remaining students to the Hospital and the ARG members brought the vehicles back to Anchorage.

– Scree, June 1966

Note – Alaska Pacific University was established in 1957 as Alaska Methodist University. It was renamed to Alaska Pacific University in 1978.

White Lice Mountain

White Lice is the hulking peak that borders the east side of the Eklutna Glacier. From the Ovis Peak / White Lice Mountain col to the north and to the Pellet Peak col to the south is a distance of almost two miles and when you're skiing up glacier it seems like you're underneath it forever. First climbed solo by Vin Hoeman in 1961, it has seen a rich history of ascents, routes and controversy over the years.



*Gerrit Verbeek on the approach.
Northwest Glacier and West Ridge (right skyline).*

In regards to the name, Willy Hersman has a short snippet in the September 1987 *Scree*:

"I always misunderstood the name of this peak, it seems so ridiculous. Tom [Choate] said it might have been a joke by Vin Hoeman. When John Muir encountered domestic sheep in the otherwise pristine Sierras he would sometimes refer to them as 'hoofed locusts.' It's possible that Vin was reminded of this when he climbed this peak in 1961 and saw sheep on the ridges below, and called them 'white lice.'"

– Willy Hersman, *Scree*, September 1987

It should also be noted that for years climbers regarded the South summit as the true summit (which is what is marked as the summit by USGS), however in the September 2011 *Scree* Ross Noffsinger wrote a lengthy article where he debunked the notion that the South Peak was the true summit by analyzing photos taken from multiple aspects surrounding the peaks. His conclusion was that the North Peak was slightly higher – and likewise he concluded that White Lice was the tallest point on the ridge.

"From the summit of White Lice, one can look directly over the top of The Mitre and see a lower ridge in the distance, thus establishing White Lice as the high point on the Mitre/Ovis/White Lice massif. The narrowness and extreme relief on both the east and west sides of this massif make it one of the most spectacular geological features in the Chugach State Park. In the vicinity of The Mitre, the relief on both the east and west sides of the ridge exceeds 5,000 vertical feet of rise in less than one mile of horizontal distance."

– Ross Noffsinger, *Scree*, September 2011

This opened a can of worms in the local community given that several climbers who had climbed all 120 Chugach State Park highpoints had climbed the South Peak, and thus their achievement was considered incomplete. A petty argument – but climbers tend to get upset about things that the general public considers insignificant.

Trip Notes

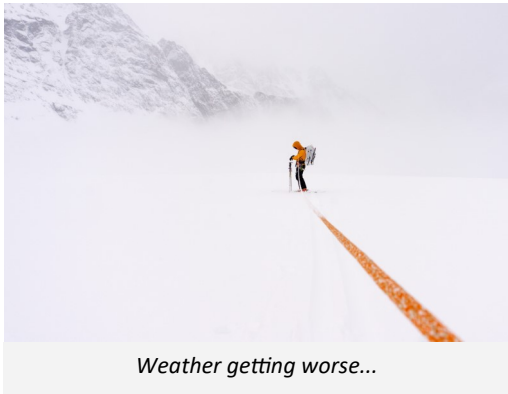
I made three unsuccessful attempts on Moonlight before finally making the summit on July 14, 2020. The zone tends to hold clouds and weather and the storm systems often move up Eagle River Valley and spill over onto the West Branch so you often don't even see them coming until it's too late. On a May 2013 attempt Eric Parsons and I made it to the base of the route only for a storm to move and close off visibility entirely. We descended the glacier on skis by slinging a rope downhill for depth perception.

In August 2018 I gained Transcendence Pass in mid-August with Lee Helzer and balked at the open bergschrund. If you want to climb it late season you'll want good boots / crampons and a rope / pickets for the bergschrund crossing.

In May 2019 Kakiko Ramos-Leon and I skied in from Eklutna Lake one day with the intention of approaching and climbing the route in a single day. We



Kakiko heading up to Moonlight on a perfect day.



Weather getting worse...

made it all the way to the base of the route when the snow started dumping hard and we were forced to turn around. The next day we descended the Eklutna in a total

whiteout while navigating by GPS and probe. The ski descent down the final part of the glacier was a sickening drop where we couldn't tell up from down. And the moraine at the base, which had been bone dry the day before, was coated in a foot of wet powder and we probably each fell a dozen times.

On my fourth attempt (July 2020) Gerrit Verbeek and I biked and hiked in from Eklutna in a day and made it to the base when a storm rolled in and pinned us down for an hour. We cowered under a tent fly and Gerrit told me I was cursed. The weather cleared around 7 p.m. and we ditched our overnight gear and ran up the route, summiting at 8:45 p.m. and back to our camp on the moraine bench above the West Branch by 10 p.m.

As mentioned prior, the Northwest Glacier route itself is straightforward. Gain the glacier ramp on the far climber's right side of the slope and climb up and left. In early season you could probably ski right up the middle of the face, but by June the bergschrund will start to open and by August you'll find bare glacier ice above the 'schrund. Once safely above the crevasses aim for the lower angle slopes that lead to the col between the summit and the sub-peak to the west. Gain the small basin between these peaks and the aim for the gully that is on the climber's left side of the snow slope. When Gerrit and I climbed it the gully had recently melted out and was wet and loose. Gerrit led up the choss and belayed me to the top – and while I was thankful for the rope we ended up not using it on the down since there was no good belay anchor – and found it to be relatively easy descending without a rope. Above the gully I led a short pitch up shattered rock to gain the final summit block and then we put away the rope for the rest of the route (and the descent). We descended the route, stopping to rope up before descending to the bergschrund.

That night we camped on the grassy bench above the West Branch of the Eklutna and were treated to an amazing sunset that turned all the surrounding mountains a deep pink. In the morning we detoured to where the Moonlight glacier lobe is draining into the Eklutna Glacier. Several years ago this was an ice cave, but now the ice has melted back and the exposed ice is cross section of the West Branch towering above your head. It's a wild spot.



Gerrit Verbeek on the Eklutna Glacier.



Gerrit Verbeek on the upper summit ridge of Moonlight Mountain.



Billy Finley and Gerrit Verbeek on the summit of Moonlight Mountain.



The zone where the Main and West Fork of the Eklutna meet. In approximately 20 years this zone melted out and the glaciers will no longer meet.

The day after we climbed Moonlight, Gerrit and I climbed the West Ridge of White Lice and descended the North Ridge. We woke up, trekked across the Eklutna Glacier, dropped our over-night gear in the Pichler's Perch and climbed the route, reaching the summit in 5 hours..

The West Ridge begins with easy hiking from the hut (4200') up grass and scree to a knoll at 5200'. Above the knoll the ridge narrows and from around 5400' to 5800' the route ascends little but traverses around 1500' of Class 3+ rock that is relatively sound (compared to the rest of the route). We scrambled across the exposed ridge carefully, given the rock was still slick in places from rain the night before. Above the traverse, the exposure eased off but the angle steepened. We stuck to the rocky ridge for a short distance and then were able to traverse over to the snow and kick steps to the intersection with the North Ridge. It should be noted that by August the snow will have melted off and the upper part of the ridge may have sections of glacier ice if you traverse too far climber's left.



Approaching the upper snowfields.

At the intersection with the North Ridge we had easy travel for several hundred feet as we traversed the ridge towards the sum-

mit. That said – of all the peaks I've done in the Chugach, White Lice ranks near the bottom in terms of rock quality. In places there are several deep chasms that you have to traverse around / jump over where the ridge appears to be pulling away from the mountain. In other places rock the size of refrigerators are precariously balanced and move when you put your weight on them. Noting this we traversed the ridge carefully until finally

reaching the notch just below the final summit block.

The final obstacle to the summit is a steep chossy notch you must descend for 30m and then climb out of via another steep chossy gully that will take you to the summit. We had been told to carry a 30m rope for this section – and upon reaching the notch we found the chockstone which we wrapped with a long piece of cord. Then I did a careful rap / climbing traverse where I descended for about 20m then carefully climbed across a rock ledge to reach another gully. A slip here would mean you bounce about 15' down into the gully – but the rope should stop you from tumbling the remaining 1500' down the mountain. At the end of the rope we then scrambled up an icy gully to gain easier rock which lead to the summit. A brief rest on the summit and then we retraced our steps back down. A careful downclimb to the rope which we then ascended back to the anchor and then back across



Nearing the West/North ridge summit.

the summit ridge to the intersection with the West Ridge.

We opted to descend the North Ridge which is quite a bit easier than the West Ridge – it being mostly a broad gravel slope with only a few short sections of exposure. The descent down the

North Ridge to the Ovis col took another 2 hours. Gerrit hadn't climbed Ovis so he scrambled up the south gully while I leisurely hiked back to the hut in a total of 8 hours which I'd estimate to be an average timeframe. Note: if you're returning to the hut make sure you ascend the glacier lobe to regain the West Ridge instead of descending to the valley at the base of the glacier. This slope gains a few hundred feet – but will save you a bit of time since the descent to the lower valley is cumbersome due to moraine, and the ascent up the rocky buttress to regain the hut is harder than it looks due to wet and steep rock.

A quiet night at the hut and then down the Eklutna Glacier to our bikes and home – making for a nice 60 mile trek in 60



Meandering around the rock towers on the west ridge.



On the summit ridge. The immense and unclimbed North Ridge of Peril Peak is directly in front. On the center right you can see Moonlight and where the glacier has receded in recent years.



Gerrit up the choss notch.



Down the North Ridge. Mostly an easy scramble with only a couple short sections of exposure.



Summit selfie.

Peaks 5160 and 5560 (Big Bad Wolf Peak*), Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne Todd

With Matt Green, September 5-6, 2019

60.357, -149.184



Matt on Big Bad Wolf Peak. Snow River in the background.

Matt Green and I wade slowly upwards through chest-high wet foliage. Somewhere over here there's supposed to be a trail as told by Kenai Mountain guru Harold Faust. This is going to be an excruciatingly long day getting into upper Victor Creek if we have to traverse-shwhack in there. Independently, we both flounder onto trail feeders which tie into a human-made trail. Hell yeah, now we're set. After my quite shortened Andy Simons loop earlier this year I'm quite keen to actually get into the upper valley.

We were already soaked from the overlaying dewed grass on the last section of Victor Creek Trail, and compounded with the required Victor Creek crossing at Mile 2 (where the main trail ends at a large gully) the additional plant wetness is ignored. **This crossing should only be attempted on a good snow bridge or at low water level such as in late fall.**

This is a side-hilling, devil's club leaf encroached trail but with alder-cut and infrequent flagging it's quite reassuring. In open meadows we take the time to find the trail again at the far end but mostly it's a natural route. Poles are quite useful for added stability.

We completely lose the trail at one point and really grasp how bad the travelling would be without the trail: a thick elderberry, devil's club, alder, willow potpourri, at an angle. At least the leaves are quite colorful in fall display. Back in the open, the seed laden Fireweed provides judicious white cloud making entertainment with the swish of a pole.



Matt still smiling off trail.

We angle down to the gorged creek where significant avalanche debris, gravel covered, provides an easy creek crossing. Matt leads but hesitates at a reasonable looking hard snow bridge. I angle left for a side view and shout "No Go!" as the wide but thin bridge spans a 30' drop into a raging gorge. I get a sickening feeling as to what might have just occurred.

We cautiously explore a bit more from the debris but exit again on the south side thinking we're set on valley ingress. Soon after however, another gorge with cliff that borders up to Sheep Mountain makes us realize we're on the wrong side of the creek. We back track to the snow bridges, cross, find additional trail, and about six hours after leaving the trailhead, are

truly in the level upper valley.

After camp set, we hike to the pass east of Sheep Mountain, crossing the tail of ribbed, rock covered, decaying Mother Goose Glacier along the way. Additional views of our peak objectives provide additional route beta. Two of the peaks look to



The terrifying snow bridge.

have easy ascents and one looks to be off limits this time of year.

We crampon up the gentle mid-section of Mother Goose Glacier and are on Peak 5160 a couple hours after our early morning start. The views are splendid all-around of many more Kenai peaks and confirms that Peak 5300 is a 'can't touch this' for this trip but reveals the easy terrain over to Peak 5560. Snow River, Upper and Lower Paradise Lakes are now in view, the latter being a terminus to a rather dangerous traverse a few years

back. An hour later we're comparing views from 5560, and despite the map indications, glean that East Andy Simons



Matt on a tail of the Mother Goose Glacier.

Mountain would not be easy to climb from the east.

Back at camp we decide on a reasonable egress time but already hatch plans for another trip to this valley to climb East Andy Simons Mountain and Peak 5300. Our egress is mostly as expected knowing how key the trail is, but we manage to lose it at one section (always carry flagging). We help nature once again by dispersing many more fireweed seeds.

Burgers and fries at Trail Lake Lodge in Moose Pass is a fine way to mostly wrap up another great southcentral Alaska mountain foray.

6 hour ingress, five hours for 5160 & 5360, 4 hour egress.

12 miles ingress and egress, 6 miles for peaks (high estimate including route finding).

3600' climbing day, 2600' to camp.

*Unofficially named by Vin Hoeman to correspond with Mother Goose Glacier.

Excerpt from the peak of the month by Steve Gruhn in the January 2017 *Scree*:

"As the MCA's Geographic Names Committee Chairman during the mid-to-late 1960s, Vin Hoeman encouraged the naming of geographical features to be centered on a common theme in a given area. On May 18, 1963, Cliff Ells, Hoeman, Dave Johnston, Pete Robinson, and Don Stockard climbed the tall peak between Victor Creek and Ptarmigan Lake and left a summit register proposing the name Big Bad Wolf Peak due to the peak's imposing looks and its proximity to the Mother Goose Glacier. The MCA's Geographic Names Committee subsequently proposed the name to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. The Seward Chamber of Commerce, however, had already floated its own proposal to name the peak after the local conservationist who had been issued Alaska Master Hunting Guide License No. 1. With the support of Senator Bob Bartlett, the Seward folks won out in December 1963 when the U.S. BGN voted to make official the name Andy Simons Mountain.

Hoeman, though, still thought his proposed name had merit for a peak proximal to the Mother Goose Glacier. So, he dubbed Peak 5560 as Big Bad Wolf Peak. However, he never climbed it and, consequently, never formally proposed the name to the U.S. BGN."



Big Bad Wolf Peak left, Peak 5160 center and flank of Peak 5300 right.



Matt on Big Bad Wolf Peak



Matt on Big Bad Wolf Peak. Peak 5300 to the right.



Wayne wearing Fireweed seeds



Matt descending a good section of trail

East (but not the least) Andy Simons Mountain, Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne Todd

With Matt Green, September 5, 2020

60.360, -149.228



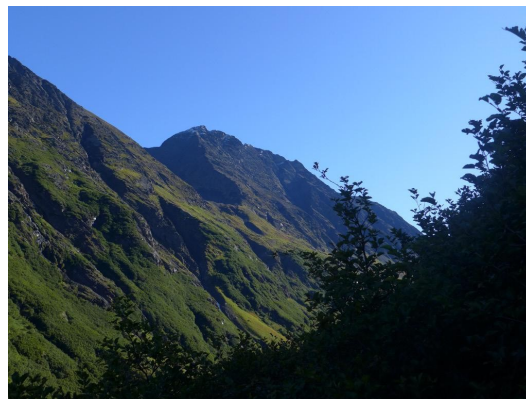
East Andy Simons Mountain center, Big Bad Wolf Peak left and Sheep Mountain right

Now experienced Victor Creek trail users, Matt Green and I briskly make our way until the heavily dew laden, ab high grass. Unlike our trip in here a year ago to the day, we're just day tripping. We're so wet by the first Victor Creek crossing, Matt just wades across in his boots. Thanks to rain pants, I still have dry feet, so partake in the standard boots, socks and pants off routine, reversing on the south side. Our wet hands are nearly numb from the low forties temperatures.

It's reassuring to quickly find the hunter's trail above the crossing. The terrain gain coupled with Devil's Club leaf shwhacking slowly increases body warmth. The foliage is wetter and more decayed compared to a year ago. Consequently, even with poles and on this rough trail, slips are fairly common. Interestingly, the fireweed is significantly less high than last year and completely blown out. Last year, whacking the head high fireweed created huge clouds of billowing seeds. This year, only the dead cow parsnip could be hit, with not nearly the same fun effect.

We slowly pass by snowcapped Andy Simons Mountain and see our objective, East Andy Simons Mountain, also with a snow cap. A reasonable up and right traversing route is gleaned to gain the southwest ridge so we make another Victor Creek crossing, same

venue as before but no convenient snow bridge this year. Redressing now is in glorious sunshine until the sun is rudely blocked by Sheep Mountain. Our route just right of a prominent South gully of Andy Simons is fairly efficient and direct with a few scrambly steps but I'm thinking an easier descent route is preferable. My camera and pictures are a bit foggy from trailside wetness.



West ridge of East Andy Simons, our ascent route.

At alpine we cross to the southwest ridge of East Andy Simons. Glacier-pocked Sheep Mountain dominates the east skyline, Andy Simons the west and to the north, the valley where we camped a year ago. This ridge is quite hikeable (i.e., steep hiking on plated talus) as we'd surmised from a year ago. We cross over numerous ridge bumps and 300' below the top, where snow line starts, the terrain angle increases. The

loose rock over downward sloping rock is now more problematic and occasional short scrambling is required. Moving slightly right mostly negates the snow terrain.

Six hours after embarking we top out to glorious summit views of glaciated and snow dappled rugged surrounding peaks, still dry westerly peaks, Kenai and Ptarmigan Lakes and even Resurrection Bay. Such views are one of the prime reasons for mountaineering. Alas, after an hour we debark (I really like hanging out on sum-

mits) descending slightly left (east) of our upper ascent route.

We'd already spied the easy descent route which is to follow the fall line off the ridge (~3,500') on alpine terrain. This would also be an easier ascent route if you follow the valley trail through brush. We mostly find the trail through brush thickets en route to our water crossing spot. Along the way I can't resist creeping near the edge above the raging gorge but am not willing to visit the very edge so even with arm extended my pictures are of more edge.

At Victor Creek crossing #3 Matt wades across again but I still have quasi-dry feet so deboot yet again. We get shaded by Sheep Mountain (again) as we out valley, pass a black bear in a gully, manage to lose the trail in the same place as last year (always carry flagging), take numerous additional slides even with poles but are back to Victor Creek by 6 p.m. This time I wade across with boots on.

The grass overhanging the main trail is now dry and less grabby. We greatly appreciate this trail especially as it improves toward the trailhead. We are quite content with our eleven hour day trip. I'm not likely to venture back in for gnarly Peak 5350+/- . Matt?

11 miles, 5500'.

Both my Gaia and InReach points show summit elevations well over 5600' so the topo maps might be a few hundred feet low, possibly giving East Andy Simons a 1,000' prominence.

Andy Simons is named after an Alaskan settler, guide and conservationist.



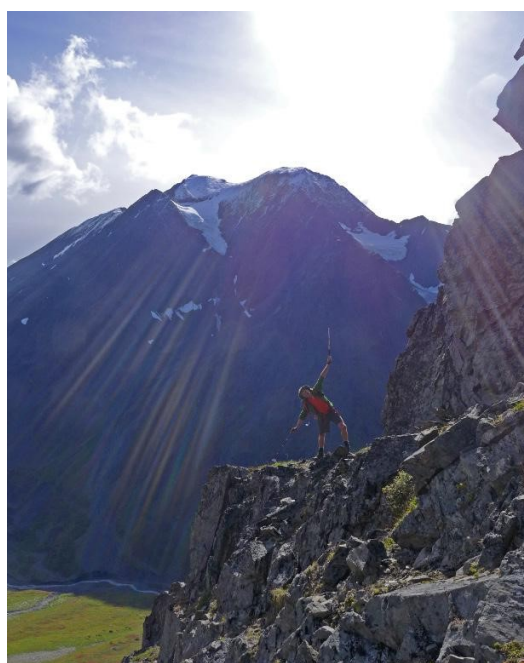
Matt on south side of East Andy Simons, Peak 5300 center.



Wayne and Matt on East Andy Simons



Peak 5300



Matt posing with Sheep Mountain backdrop

Arctic to Indian Trail Cleanup #2

Text Greg Bragiel, photos by Gil Carr



61.242, -149.555



Many thanks to Gil Carr and his youth crew from Southcentral Foundation for helping clear the north end of the Arctic to Indian trail. Gil took a crew of five out prior to Christmas and then again a group of eight on January 9th. In his words "It was great, the kids worked hard and we trimmed and trimmed and trimmed. We made it down about 800 vertical feet, probably about a mile and a half from the parking lot. We definitely overlapped with obvious cuts and trimming from you guy from last month. We really went to town on all the little stuff like spruce boughs and alder saplings. We got 95% of the trimmed stuff off the trail and tossed it out of the way..."

We appreciate your spirit of volunteering!!

-Greg Bragiel

[Ed. Note: The Southcentral Foundation offers "a wide range of health and wellness services for Alaska Native and American Indian people living in Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and nearby villages [as well as] regional support to residents of 55 rural villages in the Anchorage Service Unit, a geographical area stretching 107,400 square miles across Southcentral Alaska – extending from the Canadian border on the east to the Aleutian Chain and Pribilof Islands on the west." <https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/>]

Peak of the Month: Acorn Peak (1864 feet), Wood River Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Wood River Mountains

Borough: Unorganized Borough

Drainages: Igushik River and Weary River

Latitude/Longitude: 58° 59' 23" North, 158° 57' 53" West

Elevation: 1864 feet

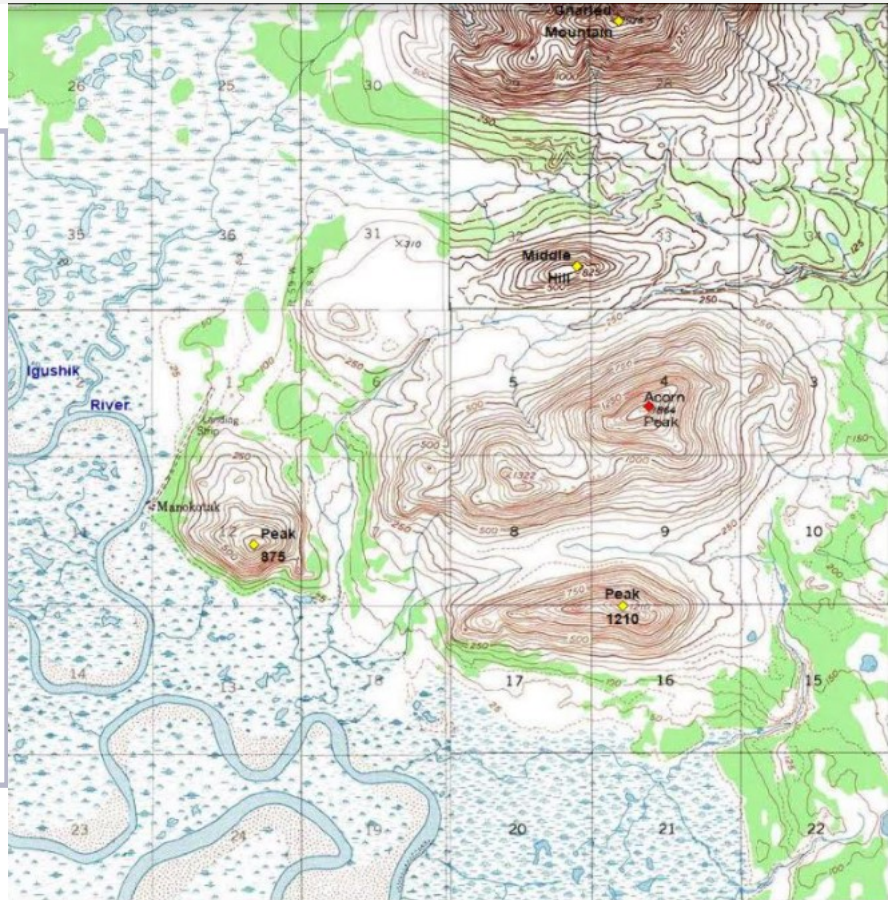
Adjacent Peaks: Peak 1210 in the Igushik River drainage and Middle Hill (825 feet)

Distinctness: 1499 feet from Peak 1210

Prominence: 1642 feet from Gnarled Mountain (1976 feet)

USGS Maps: 1:63,360: Nushagak Bay (D-3), 1:25,000: Nushagak Bay D-3 NW

First Recorded Ascent: 1979 by a Bureau of Land Management party



Acorn Peak is one of a few prominent, low hills on the northwest side of Nushagak Bay that has been used as a landmark for navigation.

Working for the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, commonly known as the U.S. Fish Commission

in the late spring and summer of 1890, Lieutenant Commander Zera Luther Tanner, commissioned by the U.S. Navy, captained the steamer *Albatross* and led the exploration and investigation of the southeastern portion of the Bering Sea from Unimak Pass to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River, sounding out fishing banks and making reconnaissance charts. In June, as part of that work, Tanner and the other officers of the *Albatross* made a reconnaissance of Nushagak Bay (which they called the Lower Nushagak River), making note of Acorn Peak as a prominent landmark visible from Clarks Point.

Upon completion of the investigation later in 1890, Tanner prepared a preliminary report that contained two charts denoting the location and name of Acorn Peak. Those occurrences were the first documented use of the name.

In 1979 a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) survey party Scree—February 2021

established a horizontal control survey station on Acorn Peak. The station consisted of a brass disk tablet labeled “EC 10607 1979” that was cemented in a drill hole made in a rock outcrop on the summit of the peak.

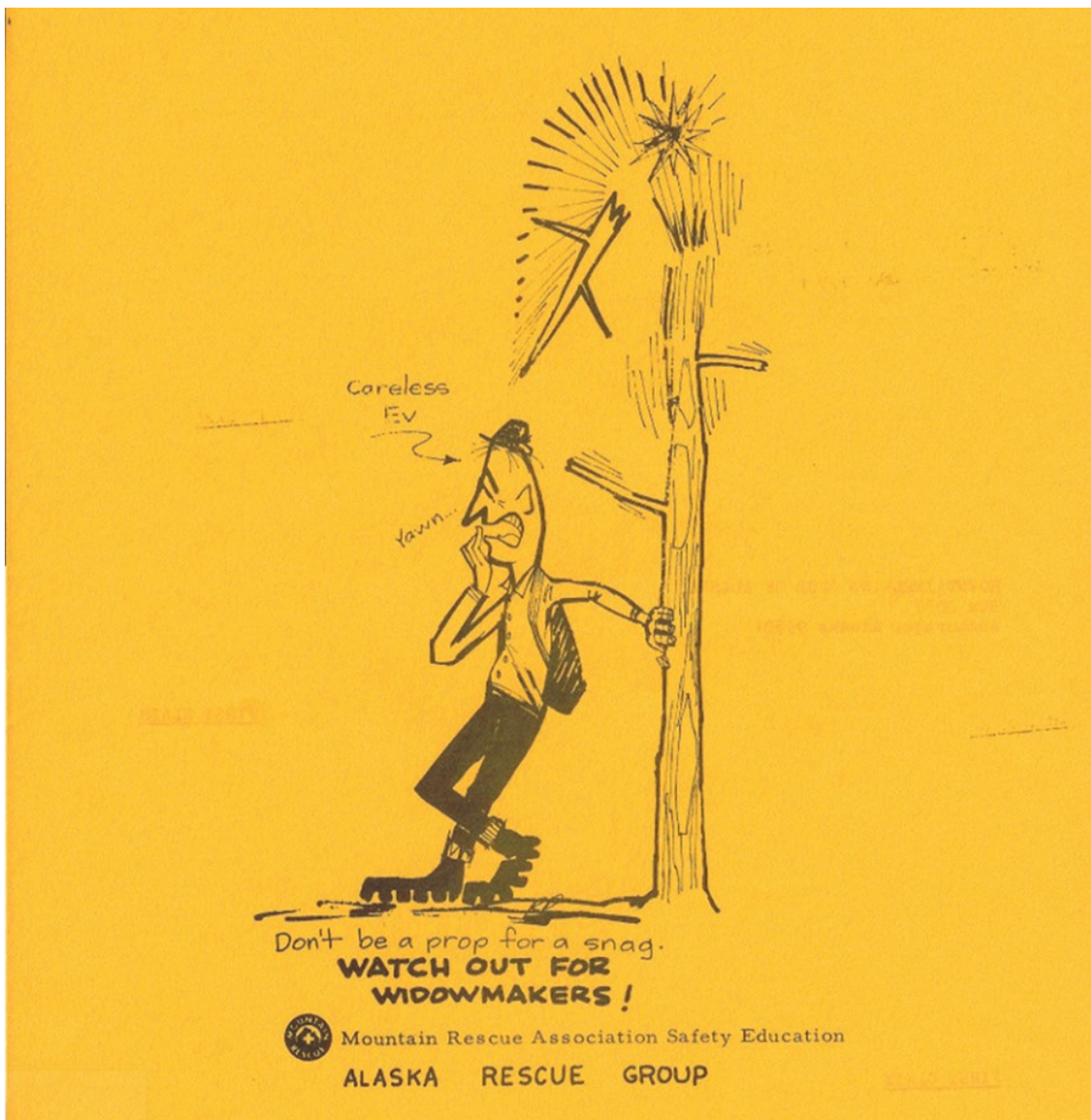
Although it is readily accessible from Manokotak, I don’t know of a second confirmed ascent of Acorn Peak.

The information for this column came from Tanner’s charts titled “U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries Chart of Bristol Bay and Alaska Peninsula, Alaska” and “U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries Chart of Lower Nushagak River, Alaska (Bristol Bay District),” which were contained in his 1890 preliminary report titled “The Fishing Grounds of Bristol Bay, Alaska: A Preliminary Report upon the Investigations of the U.S. Fish Commission Steamer *Albatross* during the Summer of 1890.” Tanner’s preliminary report was included as Chapter 14 (pages 279 through 288) of the “Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission, Volume IX, for 1889,” which was published in 1891. Information from BLM field notes, accessed at <https://www.geocaching.com/mark/details.aspx?PID=UV7301>, also contributed to this column.

The Return of Careless Ev(eryman)

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska was founded in 1958 to “to encourage mountain climbing interest, to instruct on climbing, encourage exploration and form mountain rescue teams.” (the Scree December 1958, quoting American Alpine News)

In 1971 the MCA-affiliated Alaska Rescue Group published a series of cartoons featuring Careless Ev, drawn by Dick Pargeter. Nearly fifty years later, human nature and natural hazards are still the same. So here are a few again, as they were printed on the Club’s signature goldenrod paper. Enjoy, and stay safe!



Reprinted from the Scree, July 1971

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 30, 2020, at 6:00-8:00 p.m., conducted online via Zoom

Roll Call

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

Scribe: Curtis Townsend

Committee Reports

President (Mike Meyers)

- General Meeting order – Budget (Katherine), by-laws, board voting (Gerrit), speaker
- Figure out polling, sharing screen and photos
- Brendan Lee, Luke Konarzewski plan to run for Director
- Nathan Pooler plans to run for Vice President.

Vice President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- January 6th speaker - Josh Pickle
- Lifetime memberships - Tom Meacham to work up a draft of details
- Board voted to purchase an ad for Kelsey Gray's guide-books - \$250 for half page. Nathan Pooler to work on the ad.

Secretary (Curtis Townsend)

- BP energy center is closed through June 2021. They will reassess after that date.

Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- 2021 Budget review.

Liability Committee (Tom Meacham)

- Nothing to report.

Awards Committee (Tom Meacham, Charlie Sink, Max Neale)

- Nothing to report.

the Scree (Gerrit Verbeek, Dawn Munroe)

- Audit of Scree subscriptions possible. Nathan to look into

it. Canceling the REI subscription, had been for the MCA Library which is now at Hoarding Marmot .

Trips Committee

- Nothing to report

Training Committee

- Recording a trip leader training session is in the best interest of the club.

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

- Curtis has the hut trailhead signs and will deliver them to Ranger Dan Amyot.
- Bomber Hut windows to happen in summer 2021. Foyer + more to happen if we receive a grant
- A group of donors has come forward to offer money for a new hut. Board discussion.

Mentorship (Lila Hobbs, Katherine Cooper)

- Nothing to report.

Communications Committee (Lila Hobbs)

- Money has been set aside for a new website but who will head this up?
- Lila can help but is limited by evening work schedule
- Andy Kubic and Heather Johnson will help to manage this project
- Carlene Van Tol to be reimbursed for the payment for listserv. Carlene also needs to be given her mug for volunteering.
- Facebook Moderator conversation – appropriate level of moderation?
- Going digital on all the old Screes (for a fee) is a great idea, Gerrit to put together a proposal.

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

- Calendars are available: REI owes MCA for 25, Hoarding Marmot for 7
- Ordered 10 more

Date and Location of next Meeting

- General Meeting Jan 6th via Zoom, starting at 6:30 p.m.
- Next Board Meeting on Jan 27, 2021 from 6:30-8:00 pm via Zoom.

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President Mike Meyers president@mtnclubak.org
Vice-President Nathan Pooler vicepresident@mtnclubak.org
Secretary Curtis Townsend secretary@mtnclubak.org
Treasurer Katherine Cooper treasurer@mtnclubak.org

Director 1 (term expires in 2021) Andy Kubic andy.kubic@gmail.com
Director 2 (term expires in 2021) Heather Johnson hjohnson2211@gmail.com
Director 3 (term expires in 2021) Tom Meacham tmeacham@gci.net
Director 4 (term expires in 2022) Luke Konarzewski lukekonzewski96@gmail.com
Director 5 (term expires in 2022) Brendan Lee brendanlee718@yahoo.com
Director 6 (term expires in 2022) Josh Pickle joshuampickle@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)

Web: www.mtnclubak.org

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

Near the summit of Nenana Mountain

Photo by Ethan Berkeland

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