

## MOUNTAIN CLIMBING CLUB OF ALASKA

## EDITOR

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1215 8th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska  
BR 4-7833

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## SECRET

("the publication of an outdoors  
club of some kind")

## SECRETARY

Lois Willard  
1107 I Street  
Anchorage, Alaska  
BR 8-5929

September 1961

## MEETING, MONDAY, OCTOBER 2

The annual meeting of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska will be held on Monday, October 2 at 8 p.m. at the Willow Park Recreation Hall. Dues are due! Membership fees are as follows: \$5.00 per person, \$7.50 per couple and \$2.50 for juniors (age 14 through 18) and non-residents (those living beyond a 50 mile radius of Anchorage and therefore unable to attend meetings). A form is attached below which can be filled out and mailed to the Secretary-Treasurer: Lois Willard, 1107 I Street, Anchorage - with dues attached.

The election of new officers will be the main order of business. The program will be the slides which the Italian party took of their ascent of the south face of Mt. McKinley. These are presently in the possession of Mr. Nicholas Dintelli who has kindly offered them to the Club for this meeting. It is hoped that Bob Goodwin, who accompanied the Italian climbers to the 15,000 ft. level, can be present to narrate the showing.

## CLIMBING SCHEDULE:

Sunday, September 24 and Sunday, October 1st: Work party at the hut below Crow Pass. Jim Branch of Alyeska has offered generously to supply the lumber, etc. if the MCA will provide the muscle. If you have a Sunday to spare, please give the Club a hand. We'll all benefit. Workers will meet on both Sundays at the Little Dipper in Girdwood at 9 a.m. Don't forget raincoats!

Sunday, October 8: The Powerline Pass. Lois Willard (BR 8-5929) will lead a group from Indian House to whatever level of the Powerline Pass the snow conditions permit. Meet at 8:31 a.m. at the parking lot of the Safeway Store - 9th and Gambell.

Skiers have decided that after the 8th it will be time to ski so there is no additional climbing schedule. If you don't agree with this opinion or have a good idea about where a trip could go (at a low altitude because snow will prevail in the mountains) please come on October 2nd and tell us.

## JUNEAU LAKE

by Irma Duncan

Sunday, September 16th, Lois Willard, Ruth Schmidt, Irma Duncan and leader, Howard Schuck left Anchorage at 5:15 a.m. to drive to Kenai Lake. We were joined by over-night hikers and guests, Marcie Broyles and Ruth Morley at the Juneau Trail road which is just before the highway crosses the river. This road turns to the left, a little before a graveled king area for a rifle range, and continues about a mile further to a small clearing where Forest Service signs mark the trail to Trout Lake and Juneau Lake. Another trail going to the left and to the river is not the trail although the Juneau Lake sign had been turned this direction. The trail is wide, easy to follow, almost level (most un-Alaska like) very wet.

The valley was like a park, the foothills pretty with the yellow and red of fall and mountain tops snow frosted. Bear and moose tracks were frequently seen. Howard, using binoculars, spotted a black bear on a ridge. A hunter and his son had also seen the bear started to climb after him.

About 4.5 miles up the trail is a Forest service cabin with a stove, saw, several sets of bunks and food. A trail to Trout Lake is to the left from here. We continued on main trail 2.5 miles and arrived at Juneau Lake about 11:30. A cabin with bunks and cresses, a large stove, tables and chairs was occupied by hunters who had flown in. The cabin said that permission to use the cabin was given by the owner, Dr. Howard Romig. The trail narrows, becomes less easy to follow and continues about four miles to Swan Lake. We did not go beyond Juneau Lake but started down the trail after lunch. We met the men who had climbed after the bear. After an 2 hour climb to reach the bear, the man was so tired that he couldn't steady his gun. The shots sent the bear loping away. --- We stopped frequently to pick blueberries which were very ripe and abundant. Howard spotted a shiny black coat of another bear on another slope. About 5 p.m. we welcomed the end of trail and relaxed in the cars for a very quiet ride to Anchorage.

\* \* \* \*

NOTE: 1 pair (Gary King) Italian mountain boots used, size 9, with new 12 point Eckstein crampons that fit the boots. \$25.00 by Howard Schuck 114 SK 29448.

enclosing \$5.00  
\$7.50 for my 1961-62 Mountaineering Club of Alaska dues.  
\$2.50  
mailing address: Signed: My phone number:

by Bob Byhre

The morning of Sept. 1, 1961 came early to the five members of the climbing party as departure time from Lake Hood was scheduled for 4:30 a.m. when Rod Wilson and Gregg Erickson boarded a 180 and were ferried to Strandline Lake (Upper Beluga Lake). Passing safely over the duck flats at 6:30 this was repeated for Helga Bading, John Dillman and

Bob Byhre, an indebted visitor from Seattle.

A hike parallel to a stream into a glacier basin lush with greenery and blueberries, then up the headwall of the basin to the right hand snout of the Triumvirate Glacier was interrupted when the lead pair found themselves surrounded by a wolverine.

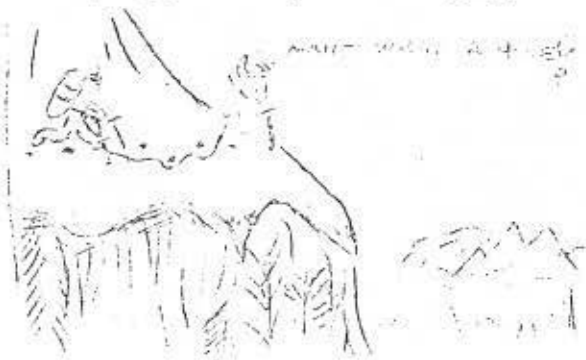
Successfully escaping, they rendezvoused with the balance of the team and continued on as a unit for the next five days. The route involved lacing crampons to Korean boots and proceeding to traverse "Old Intermittent" at 3,900'.

At nightfall, a 2-man tent was erected and a lightweight plastic tarp over a shallow dugout in the snow completed the accommodations. The evening meal was comprised of an exotic one-pot-dinner which laid a stimulating aroma equalled only by its delectable flavor (honest) and which had been prepared and graciously served by Helga.

Up and atem at shortly after daybreak, awakened by the humming of an Optimus stove, the four male climbers were greeted with breakfast fit for a King - oatmeal with/or without sugar. The morning was lovely with just a hint of clouds on the perimeter. After breaking camp and a slogging after-breakfast-stroll, the party turned left up a glacier juncture which would lead into the basin at the foot of the ultimate goal - Mount Gerdine, standing silent and ominously guarded in the brilliant sunshine. Guarded by her lower icefalls, broken rock bulwarks and severe avalanche armaments. Proceeding to a vantage point judged to be 4½ miles away from the base of Gerdine, the party determined because of time, a dropping barometer and the mountain bastions, that prudent judgment demanded the institution of the alternate plan - to complete reconnoitering, mapping and photographing of the area for a future trip and to climb a subsidiary ridge and its snow dome, and generally exploring the area.

Turning to a new route, the party maintained a slow, easy pace along the rounding upper edge of a snow-covered, broad terrace, 700' above the valley floor.

Continuing up on the flanks of the ridge to an elevation of 6500', the climbers sought a sheltered campsite for the oncoming night and at 7 p.m. with the temperature at 24 dge. a large fracture in the sloping snowfield offered pure hospitality. A platform was constructed for the 2 man tent, and two snowcaves, one single and one duplex, were chiseled out of the compacted overlayment.



Gregg, being of curious spirit, climbed a moderately steep snowfield to the top of the ridge (7,050') and reported a possible ascent for the next day. With this thought in mind, and having consumed a macaroni-cheese-meat-dinner, the party retired.

To the north Mt. McKinley appeared in the distance, swathed in its mysterious mood as though in a Sidney Laurence painting; and the bright stars glittered - more companionable than any times before. Periodically throughout the night Gregg awakened with a start, seemingly sliding out of his snowcave and bounding down the mountain wearing his sleeping bag, while roommate John revelled in blissful sleep.

Rising to another glorious morning with clear skies and sunshine and after being fortified with oatmeal, applesauce and butterscotch pudding (mmm) the team ascended the ridge, rounded a wide corner and stood in silent wonderment at the scene suddenly revealed - a tremendously deep chasm of broken vertical brown and black rock spires and pinnacles piercing the clean whiteness and sloping gradually upward to the extended apron of Mt. Gerdine, whose majesty chose to remain aloof. The distant thunder of avalanches punctuated the quietude and the occasional plummeting of a falling rock sliced the stillness - to be witnessed only by these five companions.

Turning, after a few precious moments, a route was selected up the ridge behind and thence down a series of benches to a high snow saddle where lunch was eaten. Realizing that only a few short hours remained, the party divided with Helga, Gregg and John proceeding to get a little steep snow and ice practice and Rod and Bob walking to the ridge to the uppermost dome, having an elevation of 7650'. The outlook from the point was, again, tremendous with Mt. Gerdine rising unveiled for the first time. Mt. McKinley and Foraker were in full blossom far to the north with the Chugach to the east across Cook Inlet and south appeared more of the spectacular sharply upthrusting rock and ice pinnacles. Down below lay "Old Interminable" awaiting the return of the group.

Upon returning to camp, Rod tried his ice axe technique at snow cave manufacturing. All went well with muffled sounds being emitted and perspiration beading when there appeared an opening in the floor of his cave - yep, he found a crevasse and became the only landlord of a cave with built-in cross ventilation.

It was shortly thereafter that Gregg tested a principle he had dreamed of (once) and was vastly rewarded with the performance of his snow vehicle whose flight characteristics exceeded his fondest hopes. (Note: air mattresses tend to become somewhat strained over sharp ice and breakable crust).

Evening crept over the snowfield and the temperature went to 20° with a slight wind picking up. Heavy dark clouds appeared to the north and were forerunners of a storm. The stars were intermittently visible and hopes were high for one more bright day.

He got Helga out of her sack before the still morning light gave way to the sunrise in order to get a photograph of the birth of a new day. As the sun peaked over the mountains to the east and brightened their valley with the pink-orange first light, two catters snapped and it was gone - the pink under grey clouds, the sky flaring and the subtle purple shadows hiding the glitter of diamonds in the snow.

Applying Gregg's idea, packs were placed on air mattresses and guided by (or rather pushed for a ride) Gregg, Helga and John the sleds were speedily transported down the mountain (like a cannon ball). The return to camp had begun. Back down the glacier, across crevasses and on down to "Old Interminable". A long four-hour walk, bumping over the suncups and frequent stops to look back and remember



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the raw beauty. Up the last roll and over the top to pause - looking back to the last four wonderful days, looking forward to the green valley and running water and blueberries - and tomorrow.

Down across the moraine to the alpine meadows clinging to the mountain shoulders, down the old stream winding among boulders on its restless journey to our lake.

Our camp in the valley where nature has not known man. One black bear browsing in the early morning dew; a flight of ptarmigan already changing to winter dress and the birch trees turning yellow, leaf by leaf.

Only a mile to go to the appointed meeting place for the ride home - then the rain came, gentle, as it dows, at first, and clouds settling lower to nearly touch the glacier damming the lake. The morning clouds looked thick and ominous directly overhead but in looking back at "old Interminable" the sun was shining - soon to be blotted out of view.

The same route was retraced and travel was easy to the lake. The rain became heavier and the wind quickened. A plastic tarp was erected as shelter and a fire was soon blazing. Ding things helps the waiting time to pass so the lending library was open, wood was gathered, a little exploring and then it was night again. The tent was pitched and better shelter provided with the tarp.



The rain came down and the wind came up. A restless night, a torn tarp, wet gear, and morning came - and with it, an airplane. Helga and Rod were hustled into the 170 and went away. The other three settled down to await another plane. The gear was all packed and moved to a sand bar to be ready. The two-man tent went up and the remaining three went in. A stove was ignited and beef broth made. Soon an engine was heard over the glacier and a plane was seen. The three were loaded and off in four minutes for the final leg of the journey.

The trip was a good one - one of the best - the climbs were fun and the bare beauty was spellbinding ..... and the mountain will be there tomorrow its secrets known to these five.