

SCREE

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May, 1967
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA
P.O. Box 2037
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Wolverine

which mountain?

EVENTS TO COME

MAY MEETING: Willow Park Community Center, 9th and Fairbanks, May 15, 8 p.m. Dave Johnston (now officially released from Alaska Native Service Hospital, where he recovered from his frostbite experience) and Clarence Serfoss will present the program, with slides and commentary, about rock climbing. At coffee break time, prior to the program, the two will give a Five-Minute Session on climbing hardware.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: Tuesday, June 6, 8 p.m. 3104 W. 30th.

EKLUTNA CABIN - PICHLER'S PERCH, May 20-21, Saturday and Sunday. LEADER: Gayle Nienheuser (no phone--see him at next MCA meeting). Probably will require four-wheel-drive vehicles to get to base of glacier. Severe winter conditions may be experienced. Stay overnight in spacious (12 comfortable, 16 jammed) MCA cabin.

ROCK SCHOOL, June 1, Thursday evening. See Rock School Schedule

SUICIDE I & II, June 3, Saturday. LEADER: Leo Hannan, 277-4748 (home), CO-LEADER: Gayle Nienheuser. Long one-day climb. Five-mile hike in, up couloir on Suicide I, traverse over Windy Gap to Suicide II, rope for short distance, descend down couloir on Suicide II. Time approximately 15 hours.

ROCK SCHOOL, June 8, Thursday evening. See Rock School Schedule

BODENBURG BUTTE, June 11, Sunday. LEADER: Marie Lundstrom, (272-0846 (home)). Short relaxing less-than-half-day stroll. Magnificent views of Matanuska Valley, Pioneer Peak, Knik River system.

MCA ROCK CLIMBING SCHOOL

Ron Linder [phone 272-5968 (hm), 272-4401 (wk)], chairman of MCA Rock Climbing School, has established the following schedule of instruction sessions.

June 1, Thursday, 7-10 p.m., Basement of Student Union Building, AMU.

ALL -- Lecture, discussion, practice, and film for beginners and up. Practice session details will be covered.

June 8, Thursday, 6-dark. "First Something" area ("The Rocks"), Seward Highway.

BEGINNERS -- Practice--beginning rock climbing (balance climbing), rope handling, signals, party management, belaying, anchoring, and rappelling.

June 15, Thursday, 6-dark. "First Something" area, Seward Highway.

BEGINNERS AND ADVANCED BEGINNERS -- As above, including climb of "First Something" by advanced beginners.

June 22, Thursday, 6-dark. "First Something" area, Seward Highway.

INTERMEDIATES AND ADVANCED -- Practice--the use of rock hardware for protecting the leader and direct aid.

June 29, Thursday, 6-dark. "First Something" area, Seward Highway.

ALL -- Climb--"First Something" 1. Beginner's route, 2. Advanced beginner's route, 3. Intermediate route.

Other practice sessions and climbs will be scheduled.

BYRON PEAK

April 15, 1967

William E. Hauser

Byron is a beautiful, glaciated peak above Portage Lake and the Placer River Valley. We left Anchorage at 5:00 AM: members of the party were Bob Spurr, Nick Parker, Chuck McLaughlin, and I. At Portage Lodge it was clear and cool. After leaving the cars at 6:30, we skied to Byron Glacier and followed the windslab-covered moraine on the right. We roped up in pairs with prussiks and slings and left our skis just below the first icefall to the left. The rope teams were McLaughlin and I on one, and Spurr and Parker on the other. Working slowly through deep powder and rotating leads, we negotiated the first icefall into a large flat area. Here we climbed to the base of the north ridge. The sun was hot but the higher we climbed the more ferocious the north winds became. The ridge became quite steep in some places, and I led two short pitches on steep, hard snow around rock slabs. After gaining the col, we experienced more winds and sections of deep snow. Arriving on the summit we all welcomed the rest and fantastic view with our backs in the wind.

The 4500-foot vertical climb was completed at 2:30 PM. Without warning, a dynamite-like explosion shattered our tranquil perch. The wind, sun, and snow blurred our senses until it was obvious that only two of us remained on the summit and two were being hurled toward Skookum Glacier which is at the base of Byron's 4000-foot west face. My rope to McLaughlin promised to pull me into the void. I grabbed it with my bare hands and managed to heel into the snow. An ice axe was rope-wrapped four times, jammed into the hard snow, and held with the feet. Here I had 12 inches of rope left and held McLaughlin on belay. Spurr luckily grabbed an ice axe until he skillfully transformed his stance into a sitting hip belay. Two packs were gone. Two ice axes were gone. Two of our friends were dangling below the cornice overhang. All we could do was hold our friends and hope for the best. This is too much responsibility for any man, and the anxiety was overwhelming. An hour and a half passed by. I had 120 feet of rope out. Spurr had 100 feet out. We couldn't communicate because of the wind. All of a sudden we could hear Parker. A surge of hope began to replace our despair. An ice axe popped up over the brink; next came Parker. We heard McLaughlin. He had no ice axe and was stopped about six feet from the top. With Parker holding Spurr on belay, Spurr tied a bilgeri loop into the rope, crawled to the edge in order to distribute his weight and lowered the ice axe. Soon we were all united and somewhat stunned, not able to understand why we were so lucky. With Nick Parker doing admirably without an axe, we belayed down safely and arrived at the lodge about 8:00 PM, just as the sun set.

Analysis: We were ten feet from the edge of the cornice. These cornices are quite thick but the action of the spring sun and weight of the cornice itself causes these formations to be unpredictable. The line of fracture divided our party into perfect roles. It seems easy to think of a positioning that would have sent two of us on one rope over the 4000-foot west face.

Parker prussiked up 80 feet with two prussiks. He went up ten feet and over five feet to retrieve an ice axe which stuck like an arrow into the hard cornice. The rope cut deeply into the overhanging face. Parker jammed the ice axe under the rope and moved up the prussik knots. He was able to get over the last three feet by stepping up into a third rung in his prussik sling. Without the ice axe, Parker would have been unable to negotiate the overhang.

McLaughlin prussiked up 90 feet. He was unable to get up the overhang and the cut-in rope. He had three slings and two rungs in his prussiks. McLaughlin took some good photos of Parker and the 4000-foot view.

The climbing code should be changed to include "rope up with prussik slings on all glaciers and ridges".

This drama displays the genuine indifference of the natural forces and the Promethean qualities of man against the odds.

Scree is published monthly by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Scree staff: Marie Lundstrom, Marge Maagoe, Callie van der Laan, Carol DeVoe. Articles on trips and other material to appear in Scree should be sent to Marie Lundstrom, Box 4-964, Anchorage 99503, or call 277-0846 (home) or 272-0554 (work).

see Scree 9:3:2,3

ASCENT OF 6532'

March ~~25-29~~-30

Nick Parker

Isthmus

Sitting in the Moose Pass Inn, we three travelers, Bob Spurr, Ron Linder, and I, were finally able to put our first day's climbing in its true perspective. The fact that we were in an inn may tell how far we got. It was Saturday, March 25, the first day of our Spring Climb. So far as yet, all we had been doing was springing in and out of the car. We had left Anchorage the first time about 4 a.m., but on arriving in Moose Pass, we discovered that it was -15°F , and Ron felt the need for warmer boots, so we went back to Anchorage, stopping at Girdwood to see about making an airdrop on Trail Glacier. No one was in the flight shack, however, so we proceeded post haste to Anchorage, where we got K-boots for Ron and borrowed a pair of skis to go with them. We then left Anchorage again, bound for Girdwood and, hopefully, Moose Pass. At Alyeska, we found Jim Cassady, who flew Bob and me over Trail Glacier, where we dropped two beer cases full of food at about two miles from the glacier's snowy snout. We flew back to Alyeska, jumped in our car, and rumbled on to Moose Pass. Hoorah! A few beers and hours later, we were firmly entrenched on Trail Lake.

With Sunday came clouds and warmer temperatures. We left Trail Lake and followed the railway for approximately $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles before we were given a ride for 4.6 miles to the site of our airdrop. (By "ride," I mean traveling in a railroad line car.) The weather was rapidly deteriorating, but we were optimistic about putting in a camp high on Trail Glacier Monday.

As it happened, the weather was beautiful when Monday dawned. We packed our food, including the material in the airdrops. Ughhh! Heavy packs caused us to travel slowly, but we reached the snout of Trail Glacier in good order about 11 a.m. A quick snack later, we roped up, ready to move to our base camp. We moved for several hours to put a camp at about 5 p.m. five miles up the glacier. The weather still was fair, and skies promised to stay clear for the next day's climbing. We pitched the tent and cooked a scrumptious meal before retiring to our bedchambers.

Tuesday brought groans of anguish from the tired and shouts of glee from the weather-conscious. Perfect weather awaited us: on the slopes of every peak a sunny spectacle greeted us as we climbed from our tent. We left early, traveling on skis for 212 miles to the base of our peak, 6532'. We made a one-mile traverse across the flank of our peak to reach the south ridge. Three exposed, belayed pitches brought us (after some ridge-walking) to the summit. We lingered for quite some time on our summit, absorbing only a small portion of the beauty which lay around us. We saw the Spencer Glacier and contemplated various routes to our peak from it, as did a party in December. However, we were luckier than they. The summit euphoria stayed with us as we descended from the ridge, traversed back, and finally came again to our skis. Down we trudged and walked into camp just after sundown. We were all happy because we had achieved our aim in a probably first ascent of the third highest peak in the Kenais. There is rumor of a party of two flying into the peak and climbing it in one day about 5 years ago, but they are unclear about just which peak it was they got, so for the time being, we will say we are the first walk-in climbers to ascend the peak.

Wednesday we spent a lazy day skiing down Trail Glacier and then following the railway to a cabin about 1.4 miles from our airdrop site of the previous Saturday. This cabin had a stove, heater, and telephone, all of which we used. We spent a toasty night in the cabin, and when we got out of bed Thursday, the weather was still fabulous. This was the fourth day that we had had such clear warm weather. We skied for 4.4 miles before we got a ride for another 5.6 miles on the line car. The line car took us through a series of tunnels before it had to return to the community of Tunnel. We had to ski 10 miles to Portage, but the weather remained fine, and we all were out by 5:30. Our rides came down from Anchorage, and we had a happy reunion in the Portage Cafe. We could really appreciate our climb now that we were to civilization, and for a moment the call of the high places was silenced. But we knew the silence would only last for a little while, and we were glad.

MISCELLANIE

The Alaskan Expedition of Hokkaido Alpine Association, Japan, is currently on Mt. McKinley. They have planned to do the Italian route -- the central ridge on the south face. Leader of the expedition is Dr Takao Sasaki. Other members of the party are: Kausaku Keira, Akio Kawagae, Yashitaka Akimoto, Masahiro Shukuin, Kouichi Hirakawa, Isukasa Yamanaka, and Hideki Ujiie. Most are from city of Sapporo.

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Steffen and Marge Maagoe are leaving May 14th for two weeks in Europe, then two weeks in New Hampshire.

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New members since last issue of Scree are: Dr. & Mrs. Richard S Kloehn, 456-C Dyea, Ft Richardson, home phone 862-2142, work phone 862-9100; Helen Ranson, 2440 W 67th, home phone 344-5685, work phone 272-1401, ext. 14; Charles A McLaughlin, 456-H Dyea, Ft Richardson, home phone 863-7251, work phone 862-8104.

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Another party on Mt McKinley at present (also being backed up by Alaska Rescue Group, as is the Hokkaido expedition noted above), is being led by Dr Richard Hechtel of Redwood City, California. The original party was to consist of the following: Kurt Bittlingmaier, Anchorage & Denali Ski Patrol; Peter Hennig of the MCA; Bernard Segger, British Columbia; Fritz Hieber, Germany; Manfred Hummel, Germany; and Lowell Smith, Palo Alto, California. Their plans were to ascend McKinley by the West Buttress, Kahiltna West Peak, and, if time, to do Foraker by the NE ridge. The party reportedly made McKinley's summit on the 3rd or 4th of May.

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Mountain silhouette (fuzzy though it was) in April Scree was Mt McKinley.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING was held May 2nd. Bob Hansen is the chairman of the MCA Mountain Conservation Committee. Conservation-minded people may go together with him to organize committee at next regular MCA meeting May 15th... The book, Thirty Hikes in the Western Chugach, Talkeetnas and Kenai, will be out sometime in June or July. Callie van der Laan will be in charge of distribution of the book in Anchorage... Cabin progress and plans were extensively discussed and a report will be given at the next regular meeting about just what position MCA is in on the cabin situation...

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Ruth Schmidt's telephone number is wrong in the membership list, published last month. It should be 272-2887.

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Correction to membership list: Howard A. Schuck's address has been changed to 1009 Bradbury Drive, S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87106.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Hans and Callie van der Laan's SUPERAPARTMENT on the road to Flattop will be available for renting as of the first of June. Views of the Inlet, the city, Iliamna, Redoubt, the Tordrillos, Alaska Range. One bedroom, stone fireplace, dishwasher, garage, and a surprise bathroom. Ideal for mountaineers. Landlord (Pat Moore) wants one-year lease. Call Hans at 277-7525

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SPECIAL PROGRAM to be given by Boyd Everett on June 15 or 16, with slides of the Southwest ridge of St. Elias (1965) and a movie of the West ridge of Logan (1966). Exact date will be given at next regular meeting.