



OCTOBER 1993

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.

Volume 36 Issue 10

Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

OCTOBER MEETING

Wednesday

October 21, 7:30

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Annual Meeting: Election of officers. Gear swap.
Bring in your unwanted gear,
mountaineering and otherwise, to sell.

TRIP REPORTS

Hulahula, ANWR

by Don Hansen

The warm and sunny weather we experienced in the Anchorage area continued in the Brooks Range during the first week of our trip. We arrived in Fort Yukon late Saturday morning, July 24th, but needed to wait until that afternoon for Roger Dowding to fix the rear wheel strut on his airplane before leaving for the Hulahula gravel bar airstrip. All five trip members made it to the Hulahula that evening and we camped near the airstrip for the next two nights. We spent Sunday exploring the river valley near camp, looking at Dall sheep across the river and investigated a pingo crater lake near camp.

The following day we back-packed upriver past the major fork where Itkillik Creek flows into the Hulahula from the southeast and where the river bends from the east and flows north. We camped near the fork of Itkillik Creek and No Name Creek which flows down from Guilbeau Pass, our future destination. We spent the next day climbing up a ridge leading to a 7302-foot hanging glacier mountain in the hope of summiting from the ridge.

The ridge turned out to have a lot of ups and downs on it and most of the group decided to settle for a lower point on the ridge. Charles Lane and I proceeded up the steep scree to a higher point on the summit ridge. However, after we got into a "foot race" to that point he slipped on some sharp rocks and lacerated his leg. In my effort to reach the high point first I did not notice his injury until he asked, from below, if I had a bandage. After bandaging his leg we both reached the high point where we could see the summit and the glacier, still a few hours away, but "do-able." We decided to turn back, given his injury and the time involved.

We returned to where the group was waiting for us and headed back to camp. The next morning we headed south up No Name Creek about seven miles to where it bends east and set up camp. Pam Page and I went on an afternoon hike from the camp to a mysterious, very narrow canyon, no wider than the small stream flowing through it. This little canyon was intriguing with its steep, rocky, layered walls and steep scree slopes descending several hundred feet from ridges above. I was hoping to see some sheep on the slopes above, but only found tracks where the sheep came down the steep, rocky slopes to the creek to drink.



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The next day we headed further up No Name Creek to about a mile from Guilbeau Pass and camped for two nights. The weather turned cool and we woke to frost and ice on our tents, with snow on the upper peaks above Guilbeau Pass. On July 31st we went over the Continental Divide through Guilbeau Pass and headed down "Guilbeau" Creek to the Chandalar River, where we set up camp on a tundra bluff. We spent two nights there and Breck Tostevin had great success in catching grayling in the stream coming from the pass. We enjoyed roasting the catch on willow sticks. While Pam, Fred Kampfer and I went on a leisurely day hike up the Chandalar River to an ice patch, Charles stayed in camp and enjoyed seeing the only big game of the trip (other than the sheep at the airstrip). A brown bear sow and two cubs went through the camp area and toward the pass.

We headed down the Chandalar River the following two days and spent two nights at a greater campsite on a spruce tree/tundra-covered bluff overlooking the river. The weather was turning cool and rainy. Fred, our expert fire-builder, kept things cheerful on a rainy day spent on a gravel bar, while Breck brought in the grayling. We backpacked the last six miles to Red Sheep Creek and the airstrip on Thursday, when there was a break in the rain. Friday the 6th was sunny enough to encourage another easy day hike out of Pam, Fred and me, this time down the Chandalar to a bluff overlooking the river. Again Breck provided grayling for dinner. The next morning was cold, windy, but clear enough for Roger Dowding's assistant-partner to fly in and take us back to Fort Yukon in time to catch the flight to Fairbanks.

The two most enjoyable aspects of this trip for me were the solitude, we had both the Chandalar and Hulahula drainages to ourselves, and the company. That included Pam Page, Fred Kampfer, Charles Lane and Breck Tostevin.

The members of this trip were shocked and saddened to hear that Roger Dowding of Yukon Air, the pilot on all our ANWR trips for the past eight years, was killed on August 29th in a plane crash in the Colleen River area. His skill and experience in flying the Brooks Range will be sorely missed by all of those who enjoy these mountains.

Peaks 4960, 4950 and 4010 Western Chugach Mountains

by Tim Kelley

(Anchorage A-7, T 12N, R 1W, Section 34 & 35, between Indian Creek Pass and Bird Pass.)

On the northern end of Bird Ridge there is a cluster of rugged little peaks that see minimal climbing activity. These peaks are all nearly the same height with elevations of 4950, 4960 and 4970 feet.

A few years ago Jim Saylor climbed Peak 4970 from the Bird Pass area and found a cairn on top. Two years ago Jim and crew ascended Peak 4950 for the first recorded ascent. Peak 4960 remained as the mystery mountain of this cluster. There were no *Scree* records of an ascent and Jim knew of no previous ascents of this mountain. Though the summit of Peak 4960 is only $\frac{1}{2}$ air mile from the summit of 4950, the ridge is knife-edged and precipitous.

On June 5th Tim Miller and I ran the Indian Pass trail to a point one mile from the pass. We then traveled east to the lakes in next valley, climbed the ridge in section 3 to the main ridge and then traversed to a col between peaks 4950 and 4970. Descending north to the valley floor we then climbed gullies on southeast slopes of peak 4960 to the summit. On top no evidence of previous ascents was found. We built a cairn and descended the ascent route.

Next we climbed peak 4950 and found the cairn that I had built in September of 1992. Heading due west we down-climbed a steep ridge and ascended Peak 4010 (Shaman Dome!). No evidence of previous ascents were found here either. We built a cairn and flew down almost 1500 feet vertical on firm snow in less than five minutes. Good fun!

Thirty seconds after crossing the stream on the valley floor an Army 'Huey' helicopter came blasting up the valley, following the stream, about 20 feet above it. We could hear it coming back so I got ready to take a picture. This time the chopper was only about five feet above the stream. So low in-fact that, from our vantage point, only the rotor stuck above the stream bank as it screamed by. Some crazy chopper-jockey!



Peaks 4900+ and 5390 Western Chugach Mountains

by Tim Kelley

(Anchorage A-6, T 11N, R 3E, Section 34 & 35, Winner Creek Drainage.)

A great way to get mentally toughened for the summer peak-bagging season is to flog yourself with alders until you reach a senseless stupor. What better place to do this than the Winner Creek drainage. Actually this was an enjoyable foray into the Chugach, though we didn't reach our intended destinations.

With an intent of climbing peaks 4955 and 4955 in the Twentymile River drainage Tim Miller, Bill Spencer and I began hiking from Girdwood to Winner Creek Pass on June 12th. The trail along Winner Creek eventually peters out on the back side of the Alyeska Ski Area. At this point you are left with choices of busting through alders on the creek bed, alders on steep slopes or, higher up, alders in snow. We sampled all of these options and finally made it to the snow-covered Winner Creek divide.

We got to within three air miles of Peak 4955, but soft snow and the imposing alder choked Twentymile River valley made us decide to turn back. We camped that night near Winner Pass.

The next day we ascended the ridge to the northwest of Winner Pass and climbed the 4900+ foot peak in Section 32. While ascending this peak we were surprised to find a monument in a small col several hundred feet below the summit. A bronze plaque had been mortared to a large cairn. The plaque was in memory of Thomas D. Ellis who died in 1982. The monument commanded astounding views of Girdwood and the Western Chugach to the east and the coastal Chugach and Kenai peaks to the east. On top of the peak we found a small cairn.

From the summit of Peak 4900+ we descended to the east and then climbed the ridge to Peak 5350. Though there was no sign of this peak being previously ascended, the ridge to the peak didn't have much exposure so it could have been climbed quite easily in the past. We left a cairn on top.

Peaks 4555+ and 4955 Western Chugach Mountains

by Tim Kelley

(Seward D-6, T 10N, R 4E, Section 6 and Anchorage A-5, T 11N, R 3E, Section 25, Twentymile River Drainage.)

The previous week we were thwarted in our attempts to reach these peaks, so we decided to try a different approach. Bill Spencer and I started this climb, June 19th, from the main fork in the Twentymile River, Section 13. From the river we climbed a rib northward through a virgin stand of large hemlocks and Sitka spruce. Just a short stretch of underbrush separated the forest from snow filled gullies and snowfields that we followed to the ridge line.

Once on the main ridge line we scrambled up Peak 4555+. On the topo map the summit of this peak is depicted by a long, narrow 4500 foot contour line. On the east edge of this contour is a brown mapping reference 'X' with a 4555 foot elevation. Looking at the map one would think that this is the high point of the peak, but it's not. The high point is on the west side of this contour. We found no sign of previous ascents on top of this peak and we left a cairn.

From the summit of this peak we traversed a long snowy ridge that lead northward towards Peak 4955. We dropped off the ridge near the upper alpine lake (it was still frozen solid) in Section 30 and climbed the southeast ridge of Peak 4955 to it's snow-free summit. On top we studied and photographed the panoramic view of a part of the Western and Main Chugach that is rarely visited.

Though tracks showed that a wolverine had been working the ridges near the summit of this peak, we found no sign of two-legged mammalian visitors. We left a cairn and register on top and launched off for some world-class running shoe glissading back to the Twentymile River. We refer to this mountain as Hover Peak.



Peaks 3850, 4450(1), 4350, 4450(2) Kenai Mountains

by Tim Kelley

(Seward D-7, R 1E, T 8N Sections 10 & 4, T 9N Sections 28 and 22, west side of Seattle Creek Drainage.)

Though Kenai peaks were not originally on my climbing list for the summer, several peaks on the west side of the Seattle Creek drainage enticed me into some challenging ridge scrambling. These peaks receive quite a lot of snow and are glaciated on their west sides. The access to these peaks is not convenient as they don't border roads or trails.

For peak bagging in the Seattle Creek Drainage it made sense to go with Greg Jacobson who was here from Seattle, Washington. From the Turnagain Pass parking lot on June 27th we headed west to the top of the ridge that borders the Seward Highway. From the point that we topped out on the ridge, it was a quick scramble to the top of Peak 3850. As this peak borders the road, we found a large cairn on top as expected.

From the summit of 3850 we planned to traverse the six miles of ridge line going northward and hit our three destination peaks. The ridge line traversing bit didn't pan out too well. We did a lot of down climbing to avoid high exposure sections followed by climbing to regain the ridge. Because of this we put in a lot more vertical for this 11 hour trip than planned. But we also were treated to a lot of great couloir glissading that we hadn't planned on.

We summited on the 4450 foot peak in Section 3, the 4350-foot peak in Section 28 and the other 4450-foot peak in Section 22. In addition we climbed all of the sub-peaks between these mountains. No sign of previous ascents were found on any of these peaks. We left cairns on all of the true peaks. To exit the Seattle Creek Valley we contoured (i.e. side-hilled) our way to the head of the valley and then climbed a large snowfield on the north side of Peak 3850.

Peaks 3850, 4350+ Kenai Mountains

by Tim Kelley

(Seward D-7, R 1E, T 8N Sections 16, Gulch Creek Drainage.)

On a Seattle Creek trip earlier in the summer I noticed a peak that stood out in the upper Gulch Creek drainage. This peak had what looked like a 'hunter-proof' ridge that led to the main ridge paralleling the Seward Highway. On the evening of July 14 I hiked from Turnagain Pass to the top of Peak 3850, dropped down into the Gulch Creek drainage and then climbed Peak 4350+.

Summer evening and night hours are my favorite traveling times. This cloudless evening, with seemingly perpetual alpenglow, confirmed that time spent in Alaska's mountains is indeed a privilege. The highlight of the trip was coming face to face (100 feet away) from a large wolf. Compared to my 120 pound malamute, this guy was taller - and very muscular. He was quite nonchalant about our meeting and I got several pictures of him as he loped away. I was in awe.

Refreshments Person Needed

Roy Smith and Tom Choate say it's time for someone else to take over the refreshment duties at MCA meetings. If you are interested, contact Joel Babb. And if no one is interested, look for lean times at the back of the room.

ADZE



Lynne Salerno Climbing Wall

Tom Walter Traverse Wall

Alaska Pacific University, Outdoor Program, Atwood Center basement
Offers all levels of climbing, with three cracks, a chimney, an overhang, a roof, a "slab," and a rappelling station.

Regular hours: M-F 11am - 1 pm
and 4 pm - 8 pm, S-S 12 pm - 5 pm.

Women Climbing 1994 Engagement Calendar

Profits go to fund outdoor leadership projects. \$12.95 plus shipping. Women Climbers Northwest, Box 20573, Seattle, Wash. 98102.

An example will be available at the next MCA meeting (a novel item).

Annual Elections

Held every year at the annual meeting, in October.
The following offices are available:

- President - 1 year; presides at meetings, appoints committee chairpersons, represents MCA, calls board meetings
- Vice President - 1 year; gets entertainment, fills in for the president
- Secretary - 1 year; takes minutes, secures the meeting place
- Treasurer - 1 year; rakes in the dough and spends it; very important job
- Board Member - 2 years; votes at board meetings, does whatever (real easy stuff)
- Board Member - 2 years; ditto

MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips.

NON-TECHNICAL: Following are a few standards used to classify non-technical trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

CLASS A: Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

CLASS B: Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

CLASS C: Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

CLASS D: Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

CLASS E: Hazardous climbing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

TECHNICAL: Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.

GLACIER TRAVEL: Trips requiring roped travel over glaciers. Knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. Basic understanding of ice and snow anchors is also required.

FIFTH CLASS: Trips which involve fifth class climbing. A Basic Mountaineering course or equivalent is required. Knowledge of belay and rappel techniques and placing anchors is required. Climbing difficulty varies widely with each trip.

TRIP PARTICIPANTS have the obligation to acquaint themselves with the nature of the trip and to verify that it is within their capability and experience. Anyone wishing to participate in any trip above CLASS A must have completed one or more trips of the next lower classification, or the equivalent.

Approved by MCA Board, March 1987

General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment follows this list.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. The leader's suggestions are to be followed. Do not go off alone, return or rush ahead without his (her) permission, and don't ford a stream before the leader assesses the situation. Remember, this is a club trip and the leader must know where all participants are. Anyone separating from the group without the leader's approval is no longer considered a participant in the MCA Sanctioned trip.