



SEPTEMBER 1995

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

Wednesday

September 20th, 7:30P.M.

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: Dave Hart's summer vacation.



TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL

place:	Matanuska Glacier
date:	September 30 - October 1
fees:	\$ 7.50 equipment replacement
fee	\$12.50 access to glacier and
camping	
meeting:	Wednesday, September 27, Pioneer Schoolhouse 7:00 PM. This meeting is mandatory, so plan to attend.
coordinator:	Nick Parker

The ice climbing school is for all levels of experience from beginner to leader. We will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice. We will not emphasize glacier travel techniques.

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED. Sign-ups are at the September meeting for MCA members only. If you cannot attend by the September meeting you may call Nick Parker at AMH, 272-1811. All students should become members by the September MCA general meeting since AMH does not collect dues.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 27th. Students are required to bring their boots, and crampons for inspection. Club equipment will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) Fees will be collected.

Questions will be answered. **ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.** AMH rents boots, crampons and ice tools for people signed up for the school. See the special ad in this issue for purchase discounts for students! Some equipment is sometimes available from instructors, but you should not count on it.

The school will begin at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 30th, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 7:00 am or go up Friday night (no extra charge in the campground).

Course Goals

- ☒ Learn a useful and safe technique for climbing ice in the alpine and waterfall environment.
- ☒ Learn to use modern tools and equipment in order to insure maximum safety and speed while climbing.
- ☒ Learn and practice all of the basic state of the art rope management techniques; including a fundamental knowledge of knots useful for alpine climbing.
- ☒ Learn and practice basic climbing techniques, with emphasis on skills most useful for winter (and ice) climbing.
- ☒ Belaying the leader, through mechanical devices and non-assisted or traditional technique.
- ☒ Building safe anchor systems regardless of the terrain or conditions.
- ☒ Route-finding to rapidly and safely achieve the goal without having unnecessary objective hazards.
- ☒ Achieve a climbing and fitness level to assure basic competency in alpine winter climbing.

Equipment for Ice and Winter Alpine Climbing

Technical gear:

Ice axe - your basic tool, most useful in the 55 cm to 60 cm range as the primary tool. Modern ice tools have curved or re-curved picks with serrated teeth for maximum holding power in most ice conditions. Taller climbers or those who primarily are snow-climbers will prefer a 70 cm axe. The second tool will be in the 45 cm to 55 cm range, specialized for steep water ice-climbing. A great variety are available, so try to use as many styles as possible to find the tool that best suits your style.

Crampons - rigid 12-point are the best choice for ice climbing. The new one-buckle system is far superior to the

neoprene straps for attachment. Footfangs are an obvious choice, also.

Helmet - a must for the beginning to experienced ice-climber; ice hurts.

Boots - double plastic or leather (if you can get them). Plastic boots are the warmest and as stiff as the best leather without breaking down. Alveolite foam inner boots are the best liner yet made, in terms of warmth vs. weight Neoprene socks or booties which are loose fitting are also helpful. Neoprene or cloth/insulated overboots are necessary for altitude and all but spring conditions in Alaska. A margin of warmth must be maintained for safety.

Your boots are the most important piece of gear you use; except for your head.

Harness - must be adjustable with wide leg loops, that will open up to put on over all your various clothing systems. Most modern styles have this capability.

Ice Screws - you should employ a variety of types and lengths to accommodate varying ice conditions. Pound-in and screw-in types of various lengths should be carried on the climbing rack.

Ratchet wrench - is very helpful, especially for leading steep ice with older screws.

Carabiners - you must have three large locking type and several regular carabiners. As you increase your proficiency and the difficulty of the routes you lead, you will require increasing amounts of hardware to protect your leads.

Slings - you will need to carry several of varying lengths, plus you should have a quick-draw for each ice screw you carry on the rack. You will also need several two-meter lengths of 6 mm to 8 mm perlon for prussik slings and other specialized uses for which tubular webbing is not suitable.

Special mechanical devices - jumars, figure-8, and other gizmos will be used and discussed to establish their relevancy to ice and winter climbing.

Clothing Systems for the Winter Alpine Environment:

The clothing system should layer well and be adaptable to a variety of uses and temperatures. Strive to use the minimum amount necessary to reduce both weight and bulk. The use of pile and (gor-tex-et-all) should yield a warm and light suit able to keep you warm in anything short of a blizzard. An expedition parka and/or suit would be the final layer.



Socks - light wool or poly liner, heavy wool or pile outer. Or a neoprene sock, especially built for climbing. Capilene, wool or blends all are used.

Legs - poly or capilene long-johns in various thicknesses. Salopettes or pile bibs. Mountain pants or a mountain suit. Bibs - or a one-piece suit are the best choice because they eliminate the waist hassle.

Torso - Bib pile or insulated suits are the best choice. Poly or capilene t-neck tops. Pile or wool sweater. Down vest. Mountain anorak or parka.

Hats and mitts must be warm and wind proof. A balaclava or face mask should be carried. Waterproof shells for the mitts are necessary.

Gaitors

Everything in the clothing system should have long zips or full side zips, so they can be easily removed or put on.

TRIP REPORTS

Where is Katmai Bay?

by Bill Wakeland



On July 22, nine of us from the MCA assembled at King Salmon for a flight to Katmai Bay and a hike to the Valley of 10,000 Smokes. It was not to be. In fact, we had a series of "unusual events," even more than I reported in Scree for our spring hike in the Grand Canyon!

For openers, Don Hansen was to have led this trip, but was still in a knee brace and asked me to take over. Next, our flight to the coast by Egli Air was way behind schedule, and his Cessna 206 (with tundra tires) couldn't land until the tide went out. So it was about 4:00 P.M. before the first load got off - me, Wendelyn and Kirk Nash, with Sam Egli. He headed for Katmai Pass, which was souped in. And the fun started. It was an incredible flight - for a total of 2 1/2 hours. He tried routes over higher passes - to get to the sea, and hopefully skim the ocean to find Katmai Bay. We flew by the tip of Mt. Katmai, buzzed alongside Snowy Mt. (7100 feet), skimmed Becherof Lake - way to the west. And twice we were on the water, with the shore in sight, only to have the fog close down to zero before Katmai Bay could be seen.

Sam said he could put us down on an ash flow in the middle of the Valley of 10,000 Smokes, and I took that offer rather than camp at King Salmon. Besides, the weather forecast was grim. So once again we climbed over the top, then landed alongside the River Lethe at about 6:30. We three started hiking toward the old Baked Mt. shacks (U.S.G.S.) with full packs and soft footing. The others arrived an hour later in two planes. Later, we learned that the landings were legal - it's just rarely done!

Looking down from Baked Mt. at the other six hikers as the planes were taking off, we noticed they were acting strange, as if they were playing tag or kick the can. Actually, they were chasing the almighty dollar! Janet Lund's money fell out of Stan Aarsund's pack as it was being tossed from the plane - greenbacks were flying downwind. Of over \$100 lost, only some \$50 was run down and salvaged.

The cabins are actually in better shape than I found them on previous trips - the roofs don't leak, and the bigger one now also has bunks in it. They can be lifesavers when the wind is howling, laden with blowing sand and ash. Geologists occupied the smaller, better cabin, Kirk and Wendy put up their tent (which stayed up all night!), and six of us had bunks.

Next day the rain let up enough for us to get over the low pass between Baked Mt. and Broken Mt. to make camp in "the holes" - a well-sheltered series of depressions where we had camped in 1989, located just west of Novarupta, the lava core of the principal source of the 1912 eruption of Mt. Katmai. Jim Scherr, our geologist, explained how it happened. Two of these holes also offered a good source of water. Strangely, most of the ponds and streams in these parts are clear, in spite of the fine silts, sand and ash.

We were there three nights, awaiting better weather, but did climb Baked Mt. and explored Novarupta, which is still steaming and has numerous little fumarols and green patches of plant life. And we found a rare form of animal life at the base - a rabbit! In this barren land of ash and rock, miles from shrubs and trees. Curvin Metzler even found a cave, within a couple hundred yards of camp. It was in another hole, and we ventured in to find a dead end not far (thank goodness) - but what a shelter!

Day 5 was a travel day. Cool, not too windy, no rain. It had been calm all night - so quiet it was eerie. We made good time to the pass, down Mageik Creek and the long snow runs, past the big lava flows of the 1950s eruption of Trident Volcano and into the



upper end of the "green valley" we had marveled over in 1989 (before a violent storm). After scouting around, we made camp in the shelter of willows.

Day 6 was the day! Still blowing hard, but clearing, and no rain. Both Mageik and Trident were trying to free themselves from the clouds, and eventually did. We hiked down the valley past our 1989 campsite and up and around the shoulder of Observation Mt. to a grand view out over Katmai Bay to the south - with a panorama to the east and thence around to the north where the tip of Mt. Katmai - the destination of our 1989 hike - showed. That trip had started on the beach, barely visible, and it had taken us four days to bushwhack and wade some 15 miles up the west side of Katmai River to a camp not far below us. Can't say I'm too unhappy, we didn't have to do it again!

Reluctantly, we started back - all but Jim and Jean Kizer, who elected to venture on down to the valley below. At Mageik Creek, we elected to cross it and explore for a stream Don and I had bathed in. Finding it, we traced it up a little valley to its source in a lava flow. Into a little world of magic - probably seen by very few people. Bright green moss and leaves, contrasted with yellow Monkey flowers, bright red iron stains, black lava and white ash. Kirk and I took baths in a hole where it was 80 degrees - but cooler than it had been six years ago.

Heading over toward camp and crossing more little valleys, we noted some had warm streams, and some cold. And bear scat and tracks were all over - with an occasional "wallow" and huge excavations that likely cost some squirrel its life.

Next day I found yet another surprise. Water so hot I couldn't keep my hand in it - but alas, I'd forgotten my thermometer. Returning, I ran into Curvin and told him where to go to find this other maze of streams. He returned all smiles. He'd taken a thermometer and the water was 120 degrees. So, he'd dammed up an area where cold water had cooled the stream down and took a bath! He even went back the next morning for another dip before we left. He's sort of weird that way.

We rolled up wet tents next morning and headed back up Mageik Creek. At the pass we split off and headed west to find a way to "turquoise" lake at the base of Mt. Mageik. We found the lake - with no camp sites to be seen, but poking around we discovered a neat little sandy beach, out of sight and sheltered. We stayed an extra day to enjoy the peace and quiet. Day hikes revealed some really deep, narrow slot canyons, up to fifty feet deep. A bold

person could jump. There were big washes with huge snow drifts on the sheltered side, and little life of any kind. Sort of a moonscape.

Day 10 we made tracks for the river, on a route Stan and Janet had found, crossing with booties to keep boots as dry as they had been the whole trip! Except Fred Kampfer, who just piles in. The sprint north to "six mile," a sheltering indent, was hastened by a stiff tailwind. In fact, so stiff that within minutes it was picking up the dry sand and ash, and swirling it past us to blank out the valley to the north and east. That night was a long one. The rain started again, and the wind never let up, swapping directions to slam the tent with a loud bang, after which it rattled, whistled and shivered!

The last day was a piece of cake - ambling along the River Lethe gorge on a trail. We crossed Windy River, and then camped early; our pick-up was not until the next day. I went ahead the last few miles to get a message to Brooks camp via a bus driver. And who should greet me at the visitor cabin, but Tom Choate, James Larabee and Wayne Todd! They were on their way to climb Griggs, Katmai, and Mageik.

Next day we hiked to the cabin, and while waiting for our ride we hiked to the falls. We found another thriller place - where the whole system of three rivers was charging through a deep gorge, just three or four feet wide. Cuvin jumped it!

At Brooks camp we cleaned up, enjoyed a couple more days of rain, took some bear photos from the crowded visiting platform at the falls, and pigged out at the campground, refusing to mingle with the hordes of tourists. At one time I counted ten airplanes tied up along the beach, mostly Beavers, with one nine-place Otter.

ADZE



Slide Show

Alex Lowe will be in Anchorage this month to show slides. UAA Wendy Williamson Auditorium. Thursday, September 28th, 8:00 - 10:00 P.M. Sponsored by Alaska Wilderness Studies, Recreational Equipment Inc., and North Face. \$5.00 at the door - all proceeds go to Alaska Mountain Rescue Group. For more information, call 786-4066.



Bob Spurr In Memoriam

It was with great sadness that I recently learned of Bob Spurr's death in Colorado. Bob was an active club member in the late 60's and early 70's, and served as club president then. He was an important "bridge personality" in Alaskan climbing during the period that encompassed the death of the Hoemans.

My memories of Bob are all very vivid. His somber resignation when we got frightened off Montana Peak by glowering weather and falling rock. His anxious concern as waited below while a group of us neophytes tried to kill ourselves descending South Suicide. His stubborn toughness insisting on leading a climb of Moonlight Mountain despite being weakened by illness. His constant encouragement that helped me persist in going to medical school.

These later years Bob seemed more constant, having found his athletic niche in uphill endurance events. I take solace in knowing that he died doing what he loved.

Greg Higgins



Another Hut Goes In

Willy Hersman

Labor Day, 1964 - President Gregg Erickson, Joe Pichler, Dave Devoe, Jim Fraser, Ron Linder, Gayle Nienhauser, David Meyers, Shiro Nishimae and Helga Bading piece together the club's first hut in the classic Western Chugach location: a windy perch staring directly at Peril Peak and overlooking all of Eklutna Glacier.

Labor Day, 1971 - President Steve Hackett, Bill Barnes, John Samuelson, Bob Smith, Nick Parker, Wendell Oderkirk, and Pat Freeny place a new hut in the classic Talkeetna location: an alpine meadow below Mint Glacier.

Labor Day, 1990 - President Neil O'Donnell, Dave Pahlke, Joel Babb, Marcy Baker, Mark Findlay, Mike Miller, Nancy Pfiefer, Jeff Young and Chris Zafren help pull off an MCA coup and place one of two huts in the same weekend, breaking the treasury and ending a 19-year quiescence of hut construction.

Labor Day, 1990 - Dave Staeheli, Gretchen Staeheli, Ron Van Bergeyk, Willy Hersman, Doug White, and Ken Zafren spend several days erecting a new A-frame in the classic Chugach location, in the shadows of the Scandinavian Peaks and in view of the range's highest point.

Labor Day, 1995 - President Mike Miller, Julia Moore, Dave Staeheli, Willy Hersman and Mark Miraglia, soaked to the bone at the end of a rain-filled summer, push the Talkeetna Hut Traverse to the east one more step.

I don't know why it has to be Labor Day. It doesn't seem very prudent to wait until the last minute, but that's kind of the way things get done. If we had waited one more day, the construction would have been put off until the next year.

ERA helicopters put three loads and us on the site just before the rain crept up the valley on Sunday. We worked under the spitting clouds until dark, forcing the walls to cooperate with great wacks from battering rams of spud bars, 2x4's and crow bars (the wood was swollen). The once white interior became covered with dirt and footprints. On the following day, lucky for us, it was sunny. Despite rashes of bent nails, the roof went into place, and then the metal. Mark is sure to remember a term we added to his vocabulary, *au cheval*, as he straddled the ridge to finish the roof.

Termination dust crept ever lower as we worked as much as possible on the last day before leaving. Not enough rocks are yet in place, so others will have to add some. The outhouse was stashed for a later date as well. ERA also did a flight of repair materials to the Mint and Bomber Huts, with Mike along to stow the goods away for later. It took seven hours to slog out on the horse trail after leaving the site, my memory of it is a muddy blur. I looked down at my wristwatch at one point to see how long until dark, all I got was a repeated flash of "HELP, HELP, HELP." It was more polite than I had been.

We have no definite name for the hut. Dnigi Hut was one idea, to match the name of the peak above it (Athabaskan for moose); Moosehead Hut was another idea, matching a pass at the end of the valley. MCA hut names have usually been given for someone who contributed in some way to the huts, but only after they were deceased. I figure the five of us gave enough without going that far. I still wonder at our luck, waiting until the 11th hour.



MINUTES

JULY MEETING

This meeting was during the MCA summer picnic. After everyone had their food from the grill, a brief meeting was held. Mark Flanum called the meeting to order.

TREASURY REPORT.

Money Market:	\$5,682.35
Checking Acct.	2,183.05
Petty Cash	<u>65.00</u>
Total:	\$7,930.40

COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Climbing and Hiking

Julia Moore announced REI is having a trail maintenance day on July 22-23. They will provide tools and food but participants should bring water and a container for it.

Training

Mark Flanum said the annual MCA Ice Climbing School will be held the weekend of September 30 and October 1. There will be some ice climbing equipment available from the MCA cache, and A.M.H. will have several pairs of ice tools to try out. So mark your calendars.

Huts

Julia Moore announced that bears had damaged both the Bomber and Mint huts. The damage includes windows, doors, walls, stove, etc. In other words, the roof will keep the rain off your head but the absence of windows will allow the wind and small critters to enter freely. The club plans to do repairs, but you may get there first, so be aware. The club would also appreciate it if you would bring back a detailed list of repairs you notice anytime, including measurements, stove/lantern model numbers, etc.

The club still plans to install a new hut August 25-28, and volunteers are needed. It is a great way to invest yourself in the club and will provide a great sense of ownership when you use any of the huts.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Bill Wakeland moved that the club purchase an EPIRB (transmitter). He recounted how Don Hansen was injured in the Grand Canyon trip this year and how fortunate they were to get word to the authorities quickly for assistance. The motion was seconded. A discussion resulted in the realization that the club needed more information prior to voting.

The meeting concluded and the picnic feeding frenzy resumed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Moore

