



NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday

November 18, 7:30 pm

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Slide Show: Daryl Miller will show slides of the
circumnavigation of *Denali*.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Nov 22 King Mt.
Chugach Mountains.
Leader: Wendy Sanem 694-0825

TRIP REPORTS

East Ridge of Polar Bear Peak

by Cory Hinds



"How's it look?" asked Dave as I brought him up to toward the crest of the ridge. "Not too good" I replied honestly while trying to hide the fear creeping into my head, "but it may go..."

"How long from here to the summit?" someone had wondered out loud as we approached the bottom of the ridge. "Two hours max said Richard." "I hope you're right, 'cause I was thinking more like five," said Dave. That was five hours ago. I had thought three hours. We were about 30 vertical feet from the summit of Polar Bear on the sharp East Ridge. Before us the ridge disappeared before rearing up in a vertical rock step topped with a snow covered slab. After that, an overhanging block. The

exposure was hideous on both sides. Was this really the same climb that Vin Hoeman had cruised more than 20 years ago? It looked really bad and I mentioned the word rappel. Richard's dogs were down there somewhere anyway. Dave mumbled something to the effect that blind rappelling was "slightly concerning." We agreed.

The evening before, October 6, Richard Baranow, Dave Hart and I left the Visitor Center at the end of the North Fork of Eagle River and hustled to Echo Bend then opted for the direct route up river on the gravel bars to cut off the winding trail. This, of course, involved multiple river crossings. Dave and I weren't too keen on Richard's plan, but he ensured us that this approach was "much faster" and since the views were fantastic from the open river bars, we didn't complain too much. We wore tennis shoes and carried boots. We watched Richard's dogs to see where the river got really deep. We picked up the pace as civilization vanished behind us. Past the Heritage drainage, Richard picked up a faint trail that brought us directly to a comfortable camp in the woods adjacent to Squatters Creek just as it got really dark.

A 3-hour moderate bushwack brought us to the base of the ridge. We got loud to alert a black bear feeding on berries at the 3000-foot level. What had started as overcast burned off; we stripped down. The weather was good!

The lower half of the ridge had been an enjoyable scramble. But now we were "in the business." The rock steps had gotten steeper and we had begun the game of fishing for hand and foot holds under the snow. We had been moving well, simul-climbing with two ropes, each climber a rope length apart. There was some protection in the rock and we weaved the rope back and forth on the ridge crest. The ridge had forced us off to the left about a hundred feet below and we had carefully traversed some snowy ledges. The protection was scarce here; Dave didn't like the looks of my belay; a manky hex half sticking out of the crack. I climbed a bit higher and slung a horn and we brought up Richard and exchanged gear. Unfortunately, we were soon cliffed-out and forced back up an ice-choked gully to the ridge and the snowy perch we now gathered.

The sky had clouded over a bit and some light snow was falling. As we looked up at the ridge, we decided to stop the talk and get down to business trying to climb it. This was the easiest way off. I toe the ridge then dropped over the right side on some snow to the col. The rock step looked better up close. I got some decent protection and felt better. I used my knee moving to the slab; style points meant nothing. At the top of the step I cleared the snow and moved up slowly on edges. Now

the block. A traverse to the left looked thin but protectable both for leader and followers. I slung a block and headed across to a small gully. Halfway across, I pulled off the gloves, kicked snow off the edges and tried to remain calm. At the end of the traverse I fired in a small cam and headed up; now I knew it would go! Five minutes later I reached the top and slung the summit block with the rope for a belay. Dave yelled to Richard that I was on top. Dave was climbing carefully in his plastic boots. Richard moved carefully crossed the traverse and soon joined us on the summit. The ridge had taken 6 ¼ hours.

Luckily, Richard had the descent totally wired. We strapped on the crampons and quickly bypassed the first rappel, down-climbing to the left then moving back to the second station. One rappel put us on the 45 to 50-degree slope of the upper glacier. We glissaded roped down to the flats then cruised to the edge of the glacier. Here we unroped and down climbed for a long ways. The angle on the northwest face doesn't ease up for a long ways.

Miraculously, Richard found the remnants of a trail leading down out of Heritage drainage just as it got dark. At one point we descended a grassy slope that had some kind of rotten cabbage-like vegetable on it, slippery! We soon lost the trail (was there really a trail?) and found some high quality bushwacking. We got loud with the bear noise. Two hours later, we exited the brush near Heritage Creek, and crossed the river. We quickly changed back into tennis shoes and dry clothes. Putting Dave in front to set the strong pace, we switched to autopilot with bear noise and soon found ourselves back to trailhead.



ADZE



For Sale

- ♦ Patagonia Gridman 1-piece goretex suit - Large. Never used - original wrapping. \$325 (\$725 new)
- ♦ North Face Westwind 2-person expedition tent. Bombproof. 5 years old, 3 expeditions. \$200 (\$375 new)
- ♦ Koflach Valluga Randonee ski boots. Size 10.5. 10 years old but functional. Make an offer!
- Sportiva Makalu leather hiking boots. Size 10.5. Good shape - too small. Make an offer!

Call Dave, 338-0554

For Sale

- ♦ Lowe Expedition Pack, old but serviceable. \$35
- ♦ Lowe Alpine Pack, excellent cond. \$35
- ♦ Kelty Frame Pack, nearly new. \$55
- ♦ North Face Down Sleeping Bag, summer weight. \$25
- ♦ North Face Polarguard Sleeping Bag, 3-season. \$25
- ♦ Early Winters 2-person tent, very stable in wind. \$45
- ♦ Headlamp, lithium or 4 AA. \$25
- ♦ Lowe Compression sack. \$15
- ♦ Duffel bag, large, unused. \$15
- ♦ Strap-on crampons. \$15
- ♦ Bicycle speedometer. \$5
- ♦ Altimeter, good to 16000'. \$15
- ♦ Vintage AMH calendars, 1983-1987. \$5 for all

Call Willy, 561-7900

MINUTES

OCTOBER MEETING

It was a full evening. Elections were held, awards were handed out and slide show was presented after the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

Kirk Towner reported revenues and expenses. If you wish

a detailed report, please call Kirk.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing

Steve Gruhn is handing over responsibilities to **Wendy Sanem**, the new chair. **Gary Runa** reports on the upcoming Basic Mountaineering Training, November 26-29. The emphasis of the training will be on safe mountain travel, rather than climbing skills. On November 22, Wendy will lead King Mt. Sign-up sheets were available.

Huts

Mark Miraglia reported that the Mint Hut needs a new generator and fire extinguisher. Anyone going up there please contact him.

Parks Advisory

Scott Bailey mentioned that the ban on fixed anchors is in effect on a trial basis in the Sawtooth Wilderness only. A one-year moratorium is in effect for the rest of the U.S.F.S. wilderness areas while a review panel is formed to study the issue.

OLD BUSINESS

A reminder that **ice climbing permits** need to be renewed each year. Go to the Alaska Railroad station to get yours for free, 327 Ship Creek Ave. (8:00-5:00). This is required for Candyland and must be with you when you climb there.

NEW BUSINESS

Election results:

Richard Baranow, President
Tom Choate, Vice President
Cory Hinds, Secretary
Kirk Towner, Treasurer
Nick Parker, Director
Dave Hart, Director
Kathy Zukor, Director

A gift certificate was presented to Mark Miraglia for his outstanding job as **MCA President** the past two years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Alaska Rock Gym is allowing a **free admission** (one) if you present one of the fliers available at the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helga Bashor

