

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

January 2014

Volume 57 Number 1



My most memorable hikes can be classified as "Shortcuts that Backfired."

-Edward Abbey

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Monthly meeting:

6:30 p.m., Tuesday,

January 21

Program: To be announced.

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

www.mtnclubak.org

"To maintain, promote, and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating, and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering."

Join us for our club meeting at 6:30 p.m. on January 21 at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, Alaska.

<http://www.alaskageology.org/graphics/meetingmap.gif>

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Cover Photo

Carrie Wang hiking east from Turquoise Lake.
Photo by Wayne Todd.

Please note: Starting in 2014, MCA meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Article Submission: Text and photography submissions for the *Scree* can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 24th of each month to appear in the next issue of the *Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, January 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Program: To be announced.

Geographic Names: The U.S. Board on Geographic Names recently released its review list of proposed names. That list included a proposal to name a 9150-foot peak in the Colony Glacier drainage 2 miles south of Mount Gannett as "Globemaster Peak" to commemorate the servicemen who died in the November 22, 1952, crash of a C-124 Globemaster transport aircraft en route from Washington to Elmendorf Air Force Base. To comment on the proposed name, contact Lou Youst at BGNEXEC@usgs.gov.

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

⇒ **Flattop Flyer Touring Ski:** Join us for an evening ski from Flattop (Glen Alps) Parking Lot to Service High School. This is a fast, fun, but challenging, ski. There are some steep narrow sections, flat stretches, and sharp corners in the dark. Must be an intermediate skier and be able to snowplow with the best of them! Total one-way distance is about 8+ miles and requires a four-wheel drive carpool. Limited to six participants. Participants with four-wheel drive vehicles will have preference if we are short vehicles. Hosted by Travis Taylor; 382-4823, alaskantrav@hotmail.com.

Date: First Wednesday of every month. January 8th, February 5th, March 5th, April 2nd.

Timing: 5:45 p.m. meet at Service High parking lot to carpool, 6:00 p.m. start vehicle shuttle – car pool with 4WD begins, 6:15 p.m. start skiing at Glen Alps, 8:30 p.m. finish at Service High (alternate is Hilltop), 9:00 p.m. complete car pool.

Things to bring: Headlamp, warm clothes, water bottle, snacks, waxless skis/poles – three-pin touring skis with metal edges work best. Randonee skis work, too, but it will be a bit slower and you will have trouble on the flats. No skinny skis!

⇒ **January 11-12 Arctic Valley/ Ship Creek trail maintenance trip.** Clear first five miles of trail. Camp overnight. Trip leader Greg Bragiel. Email unknownhiker@alaska.net.

⇒ **January 25 Bird Ridge Point Climb.** Contact Steve Gruhn at scgruhn@gmail.com at least 24 hours in advance of trip to sign up.

⇒ **February 8 Portage to Whittier.** Contact Steve Gruhn at scgruhn@gmail.com at least 24 hours in advance of trip to sign up.

⇒ **February 22-25 Seward to Cooper Landing (Trip 1, \$140)--36 miles.** See details below.

⇒ **February 25-March 2 Cooper Landing to Hope. (Trip 2, \$160)--41 miles.** Cabin camping with one possible tent camp. Non-technical ski touring. Maximum of six participants each trip. Participants will share cabin rental fees. A \$20 deposit is required when signing on for each trip. Trip leader Greg Bragiel. Sign up at January MCA meeting or email unknownhiker@alaska.net.

⇒ **April 5-13, Eklutna Traverse/ Bomber Traverse/ Kesugi Ridge Traverse.** We will do one of these classic ski-mountaineering traverses. Order of preference as listed. Sign up at February MCA meeting or email Greg Bragiel at unknownhiker@alaska.net. Mandatory trip preparation day March 29.

Online? Click me!



Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities. Or, schedule one that you want to organize.

Scout Hill

Text and photo by Ben Still



Alpenglow on Minor Peak (5751 feet) from the beach north of Scout Hill.

A Thanksgiving-weekend trip down to Juneau led to a fun hike up forested Scout Hill. This small peak at 899 feet high has a prominence of 866 feet. In the past I have overlooked these small peaks, but being a peakbagger and looking for something to do in the wet wintry weather in Juneau led to this great little hike. Azri-el Sellers and I took a small detour on a family hike out to the Scout Camp and the beautiful beaches near the mouth of the Eagle River north of Juneau on November 29, 2013. We left downtown Juneau in moderate-to-heavy rain and drove north, hoping for better weather. The rain continued until Auke Bay and as we approached the trailhead the clouds began parting! After a quarter mile along the trail, we hiked off into the devil's-club-filled forest through shin-deep, wet, sloppy snow on the northeast

side of Scout Hill. After a five-minute bushwhack, the forest opened up to vibrant green moss-covered slopes with very little snow. We continued up, gaining the north ridge at about 450 feet. We followed this forested ridge to the brushy summit. The western hemlock and Sitka spruce trees towered above us at least 100 feet higher than the summit. A small ray of sunshine illuminated us during our short stay on the summit, making for a more pleasant stay. We descended the north ridge, following it farther along and made it back down to the trail with ease, missing the field of devil's club through which we had ascended. We hiked out to the beaches and met up with everybody for a great picnic in the low winter sun and watched as the clouds parted on nearby higher peaks.

Finding Winter on Fiddlehead

Text and photo by Frank Baker

At roughly 4,000 feet the ridge narrowed and steepened on both sides. It was loaded with wind-driven snow – much more than we had anticipated. It was time for a decision – do we keep going, or turn around and call it “good” for the day?

At roughly 9 a.m. on October 23 we’d started up 4,940-foot Fiddlehead Mountain from about Mile 66 of the Seward Highway near Granite Creek. But Fiddlehead wasn’t our final objective. My climbing partner Steve Gruhn wanted to reach a peak about a mile and a half to the northwest of Fiddlehead, called only by number – Peak 4650.

Gruhn took the lead as we crossed over the top of Fiddlehead and began traversing the long ridge that connects to 4650.

It was a crystal clear day and throughout the climb a thick layer of clouds stretched out

below us, creating a perception that we were on a much higher mountain. We kept thinking that the cloud bank would burn off, but it lingered all day at about the 500-foot level. Above those clouds, visibility was unlimited in all directions as we peered out to the snow-caked summits of the Kenai Mountains, now illuminated in the rising sun.

The first 2,500 feet of the climb was through grass and alder bushes, and would have been much more difficult in summer. We managed to skirt around most of that thick alder and tromped over grass that was now flat against the ground.

Reaching 4650 is optional: As we progressed over Fiddlehead at 4,940 feet and across the ridge, we spotted three goats graz-

ing far below. I noticed that Steve was now moving more slowly, carefully picking his way around a couple of steep sections.

“Wait until I cross this,” he said. “I don’t want to have too much weight on this slope.”

We only moved about one-fourth mile on the ridge and it became much steeper. We both knew it was possible to create an avalanche and started thinking about another route to 4650. One option was to retrace our steps, drop down about 1,500 feet and go up a gentler slope to re-connect with the ridge. By this time it was about 2 p.m. and it would be dark at 7 p.m.



Steve Gruhn descends ridge off Fiddlehead Mountain in the Kenai Mountains.

“It’s a long way,” I said. “I’d probably slow you down and we’d be really pushing darkness to get back.”

Like me, Steve is goal-oriented. I was surprised by how easily he agreed to turn around and call it a day.

“That’s okay,” he said. “We summited Fiddlehead, and

now I’m more determined than ever to get back here for 4650. I think in summer it would be a piece of cake, except for the brush down below.”

Turning around is hard to do when short of an objective, but I’ve done it many times and in retrospect, glad I did.

We descended from winter back to autumn in about 2-1/2 hours and found hoar frost on the trees and bushes from the clouds that had hung over the valley all day. We arrived back at my truck about 4:30 p.m., both glad to have gotten out on such a beautiful day during the “extended” autumn.

As we drove up into Turnagain Pass on the way home, Steve said, “Thanks for getting me off the couch today.”

The Wedge, Western Chugach Mountains

Text by Steve Gruhn

The thread that binds the MCA is the interaction of participants on outings, but of late there has been a lack of trips announced in the *Scree*. People get busy or don't want to plan far in advance or want someone else to lead or don't feel that they're qualified or simply don't feel like it. Guilty of using each of these excuses, it had been over a year and a half since I had led a trip for the MCA. However, as former MCA President and Hoeman Award recipient Willy Hersman wrote in the April 2002 *Scree*, "the person who gives gets more than the people who

receive, a fact that you can only appreciate if you try it."

So, I contacted Vicky Lytle to sign up to lead a trip up The Wedge – the 177th trip I've led for the MCA.

Two people signed up and agreed to meet at

8:15 a.m.



Steve Gruhn (left) and Vince Langmann with the South Fork of Ship Creek beyond. Photo by Denby Lloyd.

Before dawn on December 7, stalwarts Vince Langmann, Denby Lloyd, and I set out up the Powerline Trail from Glen Alps on snowshoes. Anchorage had experienced a spate of ice storms and the trail had a thick coating of ice. The noise of our snowshoes in the pre-dawn cold, still air roused several moose near the South Fork of Campbell Creek as we approached. We crossed on the new bridge and headed up the Hidden Creek valley as the sun began to peer out from behind the mountains. In December Hidden Creek is normally frozen over, but we found quite a bit of open water and had to hunt for a place to

cross with dry feet. Eventually, though, we found a place where we could cross and keep our feet dry.

On intermittent snow we continued up the valley toward Ship Lake Pass and in short order we stood at the north edge of the Rock Lake cirque north and west of The Wedge. We followed the ridge on the edge of the cirque in a clockwise direction. As we reached steeper terrain, we found less snow, but more ice. Even at the elevation of over 4,000 feet ice coated the rocks.

And as if to exemplify our situation, a freezing mist shrouded the summit and coated our clothing in hoarfrost. Vince donned his crampons, but Denby and I managed to continue up the slope on our snowshoes, linking together

small patches of snow. At one point Denby noticed that the crampon from my snowshoe had fallen off. That would make descending the icy route a bit tougher than I had planned.

Soon we were at the 4660-foot top. And what a summit it was – we had emerged above the clouds into a gorgeous blue-sky day! A cloud waterfall flowed over the southeast ridge toward Ship Lake. To the north and east islands of other peaks poked above the sea of clouds. A halo formed in the mist below us; it was a glorious view. We spent a short time identifying the peaks above the scud.



Clouds pouring around Avalanche Mountain into Ship Lake Valley. Photo by Vince Langmann.

I scouted out a descent route down the southeast ridge that promised to be less icy. It was, but the sunlight had softened the snow too much for my liking, so I found a sheep trail across the east. This proved workable, but Denby and I took off our snowshoes to make things a bit easier on the narrow trail. We had to skirt some patches of sun-softened snow, and a couple picturesque white-tailed ptarmigan, but eventually we reached the rim of the cirque and our ascent route and returned to the freezing mist.

The wind increased and the freezing mist once again frosted our clothing, hair, and eyelashes. We returned down the valley, chasing the sun toward the west. The chill of the wind and the thought of returning in the dark kept us from lingering. But eventually we made our way across Hidden Creek as the sun dipped below the horizon. In the twilight we descended to the bridge across the South Fork of Campbell Creek and down the Powerline Trail back to the parking lot. We reached the cars just before we would have needed to use our headlamps.

While not terrible, the weather conditions for the climb could certainly have been better. The memories of the summit views, however, were unsurpassed. And although this was my eighth time to the summit, I enjoyed the mountain again as if for the first time, showing Vince and Denby some of the terrain I love. While I don't know if my enjoyment exceeded theirs, as the trip leader I certainly received more than one might have thought. But I suggest that others test Willy's maxim for themselves; I do think Willy might have been onto something.

If you have been on a trip, received training, attended presentations, stayed at one of the huts, or perused the articles in the *Scree*, I encourage you to lead a trip, help train others, perform a service project, submit an article for the *Scree*, or volunteer in some other way. In this season of giving, I urge you to give back so that you can get the most out of your club.

“Balancing Act” on West Mendenhall Tower

Text by Ryan Johnson



“Balancing Act” – 5.11c, 1,400 feet South Face of the West Mendenhall Tower. Photo by Jason Nelson.

Last summer we had some of the best weather that I can remember. So it came as no surprise that I had to work for most of it. Gabe Hayden was struggling to balance an engineering gig, girlfriend, and an ever-growing obsession with the vertical world. Meanwhile, somewhere in Utah, my good friend Jason Nelson was dealing with a 9-to-5 job, a new house, an 18-year-old son, and unwell wife. Somehow, someway, we managed to sneak a trip into the south side of the Mendenhall Towers in the Coast Mountains.

This is one of the most enjoyable places I’ve had the pleasure of climbing. For a very reasonable price one can fly directly to the base of the curtain in the middle of the massif. From there one can choose between crack systems on seven different towers. The rock is some of the best I have experienced anywhere in North America. You can really let your imagination off the leash. The texture and featured nature of the granite allows for much easier travel on much steeper terrain than one would expect. (After a few complaints, I think it is worth saying that

one should not expect to find the Cookie Crag. This is an alpine environment. There is loose rock.)

I think we let out a collective sigh of relief as we watched the helicopter shrink in the distance. Gabe had made it clear that he would be having a beer or two that evening but he dug into the duffels he discovered that we had not only left the beer behind, but also the majority of our food. At a combined height of nearly 13 feet and more than 350 pounds, Jason and Gabe require a lot of chow. We had about 1,000 calories per day per person. One of these days we'll get it all right.

Route choice was pretty easy. I've always wanted to climb the south face of West Mendenhall Tower. Jason hadn't climbed

the West Tower. Gabe wanted to go climbing. The next morning without much anticipation or expectation, we ascended a striking new route on the south face of the West Tower. We called our route "Balancing Act."

The weather was supposed to fall apart, so we walked out the next day. We chose the westernmost descent ramp to get down the Mendenhall Glacier. It wasn't significantly faster than any of the other descents I've taken, but it was much more technical. Last summer's sun destroyed the glacier above the icefall beneath Stroller White Mountain. The walk out is never fun, but it is worth doing a few times a year. The Mendenhall is rapidly shrinking and the terrain is constantly changing.

Route Overview for "Balancing Act"

"Balancing Act" – 5.11c, 1,400 feet South Face of the West Mendenhall Tower

FA: September 14, 2013, Ryan Johnson, Jason Nelson, and Gabe Hayden

Gear: Cams from #00 to #5, doubles tight fingers to #3, stoppers, and runners (some double-length).

P1 - Cross the bergschrund to begin in the primary weakness in the center of the south face. Climb up into the groove and escape right via a 6-inch crack (#5 Camelot works). Climb the wide crack for 30 feet to a ledge. Escape right into the next crack system.

Watch rope drag. Continue up to a ledge. 5.10, 180 feet.

P2 - Climb final steep crack to reach the ramp system above. Belay on ramp system. 5.9, 120 feet.

P3 - Climb the weakness up the ramp. Easy 5th class, 200 feet.

P4 - Climb up dirt-covered ledges to the base of the wall, just right of the gully and right of a snow patch. 4th class, 200 feet.

P5 - Climb cracks and corners aiming for a triple, right-facing flake system. Belay on ledge below this system. 5.8, 120 feet.

P6 - Climb the left of the three flakes, a clean finger crack layback. 5.10, 120 feet.

P7 - Step left, big reach, into overhanging right-facing tips corner. Above this, the crack gets wider. Negotiate an off-width section to a chimney behind a large flake. Traverse the top of the flake and up a golden, right-facing corner with thin gear, and then traverse right under the roof on some wet holds to a hanging belay. 5.11, 120 feet. (Variation: It might be better to belay at the top of the flake if you can find an adequate belay. It might also be possible to continue out the roof instead of traversing right.)

P8 - Step right from the belay and make difficult moves up the ramp into the prominent right-facing golden dihedral and ledge above the belay. Place some gear and make hard moves left around the arête. Continue up the thin crack on the arête and belay on the ledge above. 5.11, 110 feet.

P9 - Climb overhanging corner to ledge, then up past some blocks and onto summit slabs. Belay on the ridge. 5.11a, 110 feet.

P10 - Traverse lichen-covered summit ridge until you are out of rope. 5.6, 220 feet.

P11 - Un-rope and hike to the summit. 3rd class, 200 feet. Enjoy one of the best summit views anyone could possibly ask for!

Descent: We more-or-less rappelled the line of the route.

Parent Trap II: Lake Clark Mountain Traverse

Text and photos by Wayne L. Todd

With Carrie, Becky, and Deane Wang, July 14-21, 2013



Campsite at Turquoise Lake.

Weather: Often a topic of idle conversation, but weather rules and it can make or break an outdoor excursion.

We aren't willing to commit the full non-refundable airfare for Lake Clark so decide to wait and risk not getting a flight. As our original departure date approaches, the weather is looking good (especially around Anchorage). We book flights, but lose two very nice days.

Receding glaciers retracting upward to steep jagged mountains make for a stunning flight through Lake Clark Pass. A wildfire on the south side of Lake Clark billows smoke to the east. The very courteous Lake Clark Air drops Carrie, her parents Becky and Deane, and me at the east end of Turquoise Lake (within yards of Carrie's and my previous trip here with Fred Beckey [Ed. note: See the cover photo of the September 2009 *Scree*.]). The weather is good with a forecast of two probably wet days, but then improving weather. We plan a loop of traveling for two days, then climbing for two more, then traversing to Twin Lakes. Flying in with freshly cooked pizza is worth making a habit.

Hiking east up the delta the next morning, we carefully keep boots dry by rock crossing or switching to Crocs. As the myriad water channels become one, we diligently stay on the north side of the Turquoise River. At times we hike inches from the river with occasional upward scrambles to bypass steep rock-and-water interfaces. With the coursing brown water and boulder-trundling sounds from within, crossing this water is not an option.

The valley widens, we leave the river and soon glimpse the Turquoise Glacier. Initial views are of "Uh oh, this is going to be interesting getting on the glacier" due to the jumbled toe, but as the left side comes into view, a gradual ramp is revealed. On a patch of sand, an artistic pattern of round objects gains our

interest. Pebbles? Seeds? After finger crushing, oh, very weathered sheep poop.

Not only is the glacier a snow-free walk-up but there are enough in-melted stones that crampons are not needed. AND, the weather is broken high clouds. "Hmm, I could deal with this for the next few days, or the entire trip for that matter." Sheep dot the cliffs to the north. Around 3,500 feet, numerous nearby waterfall sounds reveal moulins (a serious concern for travelers, especially if snow covered). Glaciated mountains border the glacier to the south. Numerous waterfalls streak the plant-barren cliffs. The mosquito (mossie) escort departs up high.

Our glacier exodus is easy, but we amp up for the steeper boulder-and-scrree ascent to a 5500-foot pass north of the glacier. Nearby sheep spook as we bipeds ascend. We're a bit disappointed at the pass as the expected gradual ice and snow descent is mostly rock, and our sky views are getting grey. (Just like hair, you really don't want that color, but it's better than none at all.) Staying to the left of the quickly growing stream, we descend through lush pockets of blooming dwarf fireweed and shimmering light-green moss. We're ready to camp, and when rain begins a site is soon found. Deane takes on outside stove duty with a swollen hand (we presume a sprained finger) as our vestibules are too small for safe cooking. Being in a good tent in the rain is not so unpleasant, it's just the setting up and taking down that sucks.

In the morning, no one is psyched about crossing Trail Creek to search for ruins that J.T. Lindholm had previously mentioned to us, so we continue down-valley in the rain. The rain lets up for a short reprise from rain gear. We pass undisturbed by a hornet nest hanging two feet up in brush.

Our route hangs left (southwest) up a small valley. This is some bear's turf. Much bear scat and dug-up earth keeps our attention. Recent tracks through wet grass have us hollering and

trying to scan into the nearby brush and ravine. I watch our backs as we head up the valley, but never see movement. The bear flower (quite apt) is in bursting-full bloom. An up-and-right route works well onto easy traveling moraine, though we lose visibility. We get a couple glimpses of broken and snow-covered glacier to the west. Squeaky-toy pikas observe our progress. The no-see-ums hold conventions on the rain gear. At the glacial rock pass (5000 feet) we opt for a small down-valley lake camp. The only decent camp spot is quite close to the lake edge and the way it's raining ... We scrape a flat spot amidst boulders to camp up a bit higher. Cards are quite worth the weight. We're expecting better weather tomorrow (old forecast).

It rains all night and morning. The good campsites are under-water. Over large, wet, slick boulders, we head south for another pass. At the 4600-foot pass most of the terrain is ideal



Deane (left) and Becky Wang hiking up the Turquoise Glacier.



Mountain glimpse on hike northeast of Turquoise Lake as Deane, Carrie, and Becky Wang (left to right) approach the second pass.

for camping (level, graveled, and with water [in a dry season?]). Continuing southward, the brush-free, low-angle valley is suited for speed hiking (good activity for rain). Just below cloud ceiling, large colorful boulders dot a scree slope (wonder what's above?).

As this valley steepens, we glimpse Turquoise Lake. The pace slows as we descend wet, waist-deep brush. Dry boots are no longer an "issue."

Back at our drop-off camp, we extricate our bear cans and set up for the night, noticing the tents that had been across the valley are now gone. We have a surprise visit by Lake Clark Air, but they are after the group across the delta. A lake duck is still here and now there are three beavers swimming about. Head nets keep the mosquitoes and red flies at bay.

We don only underwear and Crocs on our lower bodies for the delta crossing. One, two, three ... stream crossings ... was that 12 or 13? The feet are getting numb. Toward 20 we break to let feet recover. Last one, oops, nope, good thing just Crocs are still on. As we get pinched between water and mountain, we don boots, decide to travel on the north side of the raging stream that exits the valley to our right, which is our intended route. We note a solitary tent. On a rock-covered bench I no-

tice much activity around my feet and as I refocus inches below my feet, HORNETS! HORNETS! I scamper off and no one gets stung.

Hiking poles are one of the 10 essentials on this trip, punctuated as we side-hill along the “stream” on wet rock. Small benches are a nice break from side-hilling, though most of them are covered with wet über-slick lichen. The small alpine foliage glows with water and side streams cascade into the main “stream.” Head nets are still worthwhile. Above a booming waterfall, the angle decreases, as does the plant life – and the visibility. I frequently check compass, map, and GPS to ensure we’re headed for the 5600-foot pass. In a steeper section, an attempt to cross a stream on rocks quickly reverts to just wading in boots. Another water crossing is avoided by working up and over on snow. This chilly, windy, wet area lends to short breaks. Numerous sheep tracks are prevalent in silt. We head up steep, wet rocks into dense cloud.

At the pass, with only 10-yard visibility, we head south, but soon turn about as the descent looks cliffy. A reasonably steep scree slope is found to drop onto the low-angle valley. The walking is excellent again and soon we debate where to camp.



Carrie, Becky, and Deane Wang (left to right) cross another stream of the Turquoise River delta.

Continuing to descend, our visibility slowly improves. After a ravine with a small stream crossing and “just one spot farther,” we camp in a green meadow with nearby stream and spring, and green down-valley views. We set up without rain. I note my unused crampons are rusting. Bare feet on tundra, or in Crocs, feel great and allow them to de-prune. Light pierces clouds to spot small stages across the valley.



Carrie Wang crosses a stream on the Turquoise River delta.

As we wait for a lull in the rain to break camp in the morning, someone yells, “Bear!” A sow and cub are headed our way and drop into a depression out of view. We group up, gather pickets for noise making (at least they get some use on the trip), and as she tops out, we make sufficient noise

that she slowly drops back. A chilly up-valley wind sends our scent the wrong way, but at least keeps the bugs off.

Continuing south, we keep a good over-right-shoulder watch and pass them strolling and the cub swatting at her head. Entering brush, we find a game trail as rain comes on hard. A food break out of the wind in a stand of trees is quick and cold. The brush thickens, but a trail persists. At a large ravine crossing, the roaring brown stream concerns us but we find an only-knee-deep spot. White and bi-colored lupines join the plant mix. Topping out, we see Twin Lakes, another trip milestone. After a viewing stop at the high Thundering Falls, we hike down a biped-utilized trail to the spruce forest. The mossies get intense and bug nets go back on.

The turquoise lake, with dark mountain border and back-dropped with grey sky, is stunning. But we need to cross the Twin Lakes connecting stream. We walk the entire border channel, discuss at various places and finally commit to a spot. I go first as a scout and as I'm slowly sliding downstream in waist deep water and about to abort I get overtaken by the triad (at least the water is slower moving here). We all clamber out on the far shore, very relieved.

A gorgeous site is chosen at the mouth of Upper Twin Lake in the wind so as to keep the bugs away. Deane and I, not getting totally wet in the crossing, take a quick lake-dip rinse. It rains hard off and on, off and on, most of the night (after cards, of course).

We make our way mostly along the lakeshore, though at numerous places we mini-bushwhack or traverse tundra to avoid walking in the lake. We're all relieved the many water crossings are over as is the hiking on slippery boulders on angled terrain. And it is gorgeous with the whitecapped, turquoise

Upper Twin Lake to our left side, lightly treed alpine to our right, rising to nearby mountains. Back to avoiding soaking boots, we time lapping waves to run along the shore. A rainbow adds even more splendor.

An older cabin and outhouse are first encountered. Then we find the abandoned tent sites, it seems oddly quiet. After set-up, we explore nearby trails and find another stream crossing, albeit tame, to visit Dick Proenneke's cabin. The detail and use of all material, and care of the cabin is most impressive. The famous wooden door and wooden hinges still work well. I especially like the crampons made out of a metal barrel lid. Two cabins later, we visit Kay and Monroe, the most hospitable and dedicated caretakers of this national park. Hearing firsthand stories about Dick and of their adventures here fades some discomfort of the last week. They report two inches of rain in the last four days and that the lake is a foot higher (that is bad timing) and it's so windy from the west that no planes are flying.

The next day's travel is the easy trail to Teetering Rock (a relaxing change). Making the large-tent-sized boulder 'rock' and thud the ground stone provides ample entertainment. Hiking further up-valley, we spy a grazing black bear.

We listen in on a presentation at Dick's cabin. Many planes are flying today. Catching an empty earlier flight back to Port Alsworth, we note the wildfire is out. On the high-route flight back to Anchorage with just peaks punching through the clouds, I wonder how much rain Anchorage received (none!). Three months later Deane is wearing a hand brace to heal a detached finger tendon.

Forty miles and 9,000 feet of elevation gain.

For a parallel story that started a day behind us just across the Turquoise River delta, see Carl Battreall's write-up "Neacola Nightmare" in the September 2013 *Scree*.

MCA Summer Trip July 2013

By Sarana Schell

"Falling!"

The shout came from the back of our rope team. Instantly, we threw ourselves forward onto the snow, axes biting into the snow.

The random guy who'd just hiked over Snowbird Pass looked on in surprise, eyebrows raised as he watched us, well clear of any crevasses, pretend to arrest a fall.

Our trip leader, Greg Bragiel, called done with our test and belatedly noticed our onlooker.

"Just practicing!" Greg called in explanation.

No doubt the nice bystander then loaned Greg his phone because he was so impressed by our Swiss-clockwork-like response in the scenario.

OK, maybe we weren't quite that smooth, but after nine days, we learned a lot and the many opportunities we had to practice helped build a solid foundation of basic mountaineering skills.

This past July 6 to 14, students Alex Geilich, Steve Stralka, and Sarana Schell enjoyed a great summer mountaineering course. (A few last-minute bail-outs left us short of the minimum number, but kindly lead instructor Greg chose not to penalize the rest of us by canceling the trip. Thanks, Greg!) Greg was joined

by a swirling pantheon of co-instructors, which made for a fun and sociable trip.

We started with the slog to the Mint Hut, practicing route-finding along the way. The next day we practiced self-arresting from falls in every orientation – feet first on our backs, on our fronts, head first front and back ... our confidence rose with every slide stopped.

Snug back in the hut, we learned from Steve that spaghetti sauce dehydrates down to a fruit-leather like substance, and then rehydrates in the field to a hearty and delicious dinner. Dinner was followed by knots and rope-handling instructions.

Austin Hess and Eric Berglund joined us later, and the next day took us through basic glacier travel, belaying, and ice climbing. Heavy fog meant we got route-finding practice in, too.

The next day we painted the front of the Mint Hut a fabulous bright red.

After Austin and Eric left to adventure off to their first year of college, our next guest instructor, Will Burton, showed up.

Tuesday we headed out, up, and over Back Door Gap for more navigation, glacier travel, and crevasse-rescue practice, this time roped up. The next day we practiced our raising systems and rescue techniques on the tundra at the Bomber Hut to avoid getting soaked ... it worked fine, and made for a happy rope team.

Another day we hiked up the Bomber Glacier to see the name-sake plane crash site, and peer over the pass to the Reed Lakes.

Dinner talk ranged over various ultra-light backpacking, food-dehydration, and packing techniques. After dinner, we watched a bear making its way down the slope next to the hut, reminding us why there's a policy of not leaving food or anything else that makes interesting smells in the hut. (Greg shared the story of the visit of a bear to the hut – it came in easily through a window, but then apparently couldn't find its way back out, so it went out a corner of the roof.)

Will headed out to get back to Seward in time to work, taking with him our thanks and wishes for safe travels.

The sun came out the following day in time for a full-service day of painting and caulking followed by bouldering in the evening.

The sunny weather held for a day hike up Rainy Day Knoll, practicing more route-finding skills, both with map and compass and with GPS.

The day we left the Bomber Hut and headed for Snowbird Lake was so darn warm and sunny it was a sweat-fest carrying packs

that were lighter after eating several meals, but still definitely not ultra-light.

Bushwhacking through willows led us to more open terrain after crossing Bartholf and Snowbird Creeks.

After dinner the night we camped at the lake, a downpour hit.

Day eight instructions were rappelling and rock climbing on the cliffs above Snowbird Lake. Then it was up to the big beautiful Snowbird Hut.

Our last day out and over the pass down to into Archangel Valley was another beautiful one.

The trip finished with an extra dose of fun company, when Greg's wife Mary Beth hiked up to meet us with the person who was originally slated to co-lead the entire trip – celebrity Tom Choate, fresh off his 50th-anniversary ascent of Denali.

Mary Beth, bless her heart, had brought delicious treats, and Tom regaled us with tales of his recent expedition.

We descended past the ruins of the old Snowbird mining operation through tundra and boulders that turned to fields of ferns and wildflowers.

We wrapped up with a mandatory stop at Taco Bell, and then parted ways, equipped with new skills and new friendships.



Sarana Schell paints the front of the Mint Hut - and has fun doing it.

Peak of the Month: Mount Cardozo

By Steve Gruhn

Mountain Range: Chugach Mountains

Borough: Unorganized Borough

Drainage: Yale Glacier

Latitude/Longitude: 61° 21' 25" North, 147° 12' 45" West

Elevation: 10958 feet (although the new 1:25,000 map indicates 10840±40 feet)

Prominence: 508 feet (the new map indicates 580 feet) from Mount Witherspoon (12012; the new map indicates 11940±60)

Adjacent Peaks: Mount Witherspoon and Peak 9250 (9240+40 on the new map) in the Yale Glacier drainage (the new map indicates Peak 9240 and a Peak 10760 in the Yale Glacier drainage)

Distinctness: 508 feet from Mount Witherspoon (the new map indicates 560 feet from the Peak 10760)

USGS Maps: Anchorage (B-1) (The new 1:25,000 map is Anchorage B-1 SW.)

First Recorded Ascent: This peak might be unclimbed.

Access Point: 8,000-foot level of the Yale Glacier

By my count, Mount Cardozo is the 186th highest peak in Alaska and the 19th highest peak in the Chugach Mountains. A portion of the state has recently been re-mapped and new 1:25,000 maps have subsequently been published for those areas, so the elevation rankings could change as more maps are revised. However, the new map series contains some significant and obvious errors. Therefore, I'll continue to use the data from the older 1:63,360 maps until those errors are corrected.

In 1957 Lawrence E. Nielsen named Mount Cardozo for Benjamin Nathan Cardozo (1870-1938), who served from 1932 to 1938 as an Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Nielsen had led an expedition to the central Chugach Mountains from mid-June to early July 1957, landing at the 6,500-foot level of the Norse Branch of the Columbia Glacier. Nielsen's map on page 492 of the December 1957 *Appalachia* identified Mount Cardozo, although the name was misspelled as "Mt. Cordoza." Nielsen corrected the spelling of the peak on his map that appeared on page 135 of the June 1963 *Arctic*.

Nielsen had also been in the area from mid-June to early July 1955, landing at the 3180-foot level of the East Branch of the Columbia Glacier. But neither of Nielsen's parties set foot on Mount Cardozo – and as far as I know, no one has yet to do so. The closest I know of anyone approaching Mount Cardozo was

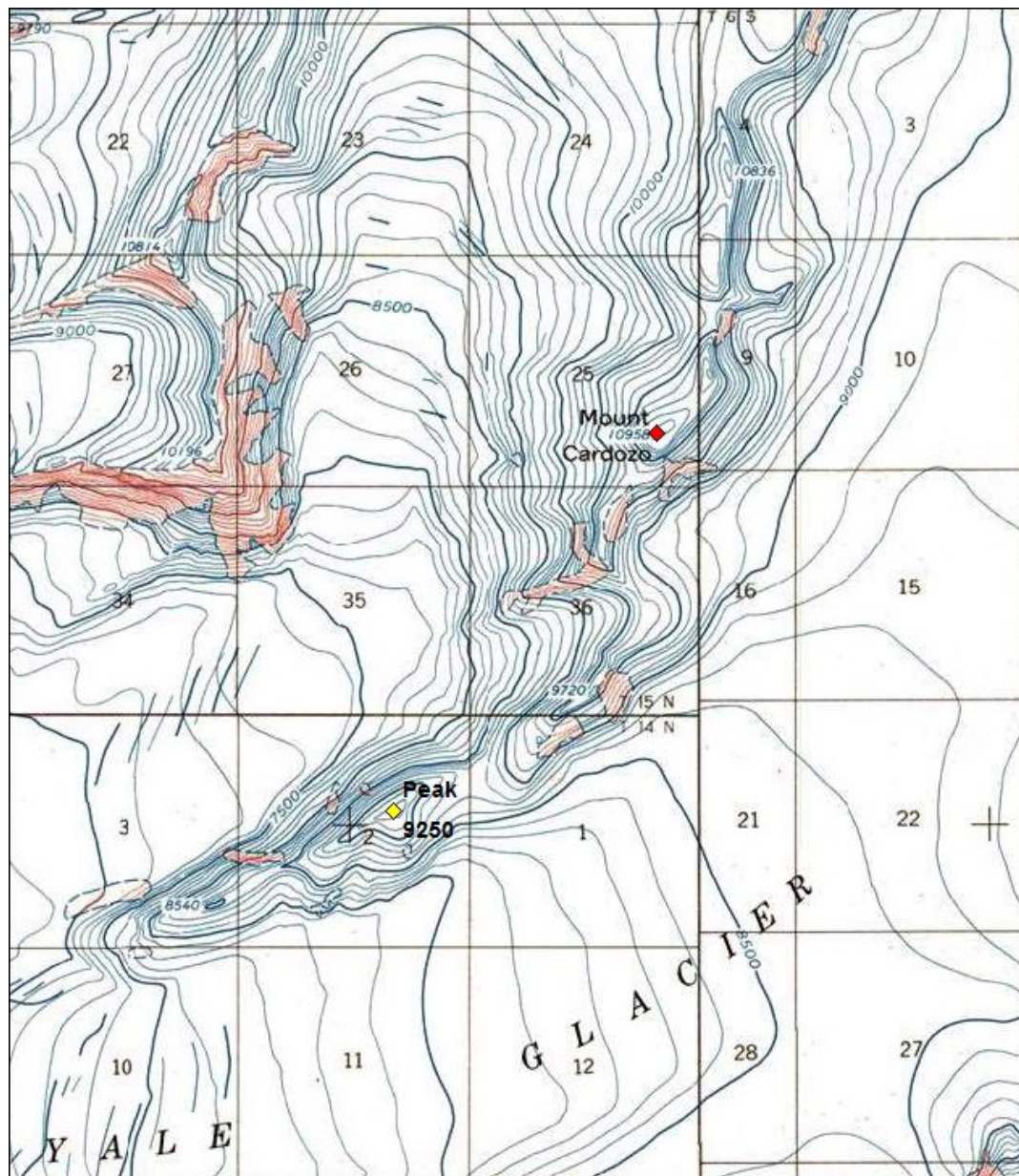
The northeast aspect of Mount Cardozo. Photo by Dub Bludworth.



an expedition that came within a mile and a half of the summit in early June 1968. Harry Bludworth, Dub Bludworth, and Vin Hoeman landed at about 8,000 feet on the Yale Glacier on June 2, 1968, and proceeded up the glacier to establish a camp at the 8950-foot pass between the Norse Branch of the Columbia Glacier and the Yale Glacier before going on to tackle other objectives. They traveled within a mile and a half of Mount Cardozo's summit, but didn't attempt to climb it. Dub Bludworth, however, photographed the north-eastern aspect of Mount Cardozo.

Mount Cardozo would make for a rather nice appetizer for those who hunger for first ascents in the Chugach Mountains.

The information for this article was obtained from Nielsen's article titled "Attempt on Mt. Witherspoon, Alaska," which appeared on pages 533 through 537 of the December 1955 *Appalachia*, from Nielsen's article titled "Climbs in the Central Chugach Mountains, Alaska," which appeared on pages 491 through 497 of the December 1957 *Appalachia*, from Nielsen's article titled "A Glaciological Reconnaissance of the Columbia Glacier, Alaska," which appeared on pages 134 through 142 of the June 1963 *Arctic*, from Vin Hoeman's trip report titled "Main Chugach First Ascents," which appeared in the July 1968 *Scree*, and from my correspondences with the Bludworth brothers, Dub and Harry.



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA) was formed in 1958 to promote the enjoyment of hiking and climbing in Alaska and the exploration of its mountains. We welcome all who wish to become members.

Participate and Learn: The MCA conducts scheduled hikes and climbs led by experienced club members, technical mountaineering and climbing courses, and other instruction throughout the year. The club maintains seven mountain huts in the nearby Chugach and Talkeetna mountains. The MCA's Vin Hoeman Library contains hundreds of books, numerous periodicals, bound volumes of the **SCREE**, and a 'Peak File' with information on local climbs. The club has climbing gear for trips and training, including ice axes, helmets, crampons, snowshoes, and avalanche beacons.

Stay Informed: The MCA publishes a monthly newsletter, **SCREE**, and emails it to all members. The **SCREE** contains announcements of upcoming events, the hiking and climbing trip schedule, and trip reports written by club members.

Monthly meetings: The third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the BP Energy Center at 1014 Energy Court (in Midtown Anchorage just south of the main BP building). Special events or changes to the meeting will be noted in the **SCREE** and on our website at: www.mtnclubak.org.

- **Complete both pages of this form. Write neatly!** To participate in club-sponsored trips, **EVERY MEMBER** must read and complete the Release of Liability Agreement on the back of this application.
- Please make checks payable to **Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.**
- Mailed **SCREE** subscriptions are \$15 additional per year & are non-refundable. (1 **SCREE**/ family).
- Annual membership is through the 31st of December.
- Memberships paid after November 1st are good through December 31 of the following year.
- If applying by mail, please include a self-addressed, **stamped** envelope for your membership card.
OR you may pick it up at the next monthly meeting.

Our address is: **PO BOX 243561, Anchorage, AK 99524-3561**

- **Note: Mailed applications may take up to 6 weeks to process.** Thank you for your patience.
- **To join right now, sign up online at www.mtnclubak.org**

New		Date	
Renewal		Name	
1 YR. Individual \$15		Family Members	
1 YR. Family \$20			
2 YR. Individual \$30			
2 YR. Family \$40			
How do you want your SCREE delivered? (check one or both)			
Electronic (free)		Email delivery	
Paper (add \$15/YR.)		Postal Service (not available outside the United States)	
Street or PO Box			
City/State/Zip			
Telephone			
Email Address			

_____ I am interested in joining a committee (Circle which ones: Programs, Hiking & Climbing, Huts, Geographic Names, Peak Registers, Parks Advisory, Equipment, Awards, Membership, Training, or ad hoc committees).

_____ I am interested in leading a trip.

Do not write below this line:

Pd: ☐\$15 ☐\$20 ☐\$30 ☐\$40 ☐\$15 for paper **SCREE** ☐\$30 for 2 years of paper **SCREE**
on Date: ____/____/____, Cash or Check Number: _____

Membership Card Issued for Yr: _____
Address Added to Mailing List ☐

Revised 1/10/11

SIGN AND INITIAL THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY— READ IT CAREFULLY

I _____ (print name) am aware that mountaineering and wilderness activities (including hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; ski mountaineering; rafting and packrafting, kayaking, and use of remote backcountry huts) are hazardous activities. I wish to participate and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. ("MCA"). I recognize these activities involve numerous risks, which include, by way of example only, falling while hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; falling into a crevasse or over a cliff; drowning; failure of a belay; being struck by climbing equipment or falling rock, ice or snow; avalanches; lightning; fire; hypothermia; frostbite; defective or malfunctioning equipment; and attack by insects or animals. I further recognize that the remoteness of the activities may preclude prompt medical care or rescue. I also recognize that risk of **injury or death** may be caused or enhanced by **mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct** on the part of either my fellow participants; MCA officers, directors, instructors, or trip leaders; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. I nevertheless agree to accept all risks of **injury, death, or property damage** that may occur in connection with any MCA activity, including use of MCA furnished equipment and MCA backcountry huts. **(As used in this agreement, MCA includes its officers, directors, instructors and trip leaders.)**

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage is provided by automobile insurance policies) and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. **I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct of others.** I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until I provide a signed, dated, written notice of its revocation to the MCA.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE I will not sue or otherwise make a claim against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except as noted above for automobile accidents); and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, for **injury, death, or property damage** which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or this release shall only be filed in Anchorage, Alaska. The provisions of this release are severable and if any part is found unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY I agree to release and discharge the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, from all actions, claims, or demands, both for myself and for my heirs, dependents, and/or personal representative, for **injury, death, or property damage** occurring in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY I will pay all expenses, including attorney fees and court costs, that the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of **injury, death, or property damage** suffered by me in connection with any MCA activity or the use of any MCA backcountry hut.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT I consent to any hospital or medical care that may be necessary as a result of my participation in MCA activities. I understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue costs.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT, AND RECOGNIZE IT IS A BINDING LEGAL AGREEMENT

Dated: _____ Signature: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 18): _____

Revised 2/19/09

Hatcher Pass Mountaineering Huts Group

We would like to introduce our newly formed group. The Hatcher Pass Mountaineering Huts Group (HPMHG) has been formed to reach out to all users and raise awareness of the history and purpose of the mountaineering huts operated by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska and the Alaska Section of the American Alpine Club.

The HPMHG was formed in response to a tremendous increase of snowmachine activity in the spring of 2013 on the Snowbird Glacier and other surrounding areas including the Snowbird Hut, Bomber Hut, and Mint Hut. This increase in activity is associated with the implementation of new boundaries in the updated Hatcher Pass Management Plan (adopted November 2010 and implemented December 2012). The snowmachine activity on the approach to the huts and in and around the huts constitutes a clear safety issue and certainly changes the experience. The solution to this problem will require effort and understanding by all parties.

Our group is focusing on education and outreach as the path to having **all** users enjoy the bounty of the Hatcher Pass area. We have been joined by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska and the Alaska Section of the American Alpine Club in supporting this cause.

We are asking you, the members of the MCA / AAC to help with the following:

- Educate yourselves as to locations of the boundaries and areas closed to snowmachining. The boundary map can be viewed at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/hatcherpass/hpsnowmobiling.htm>
- We ask you to interact with individuals riding in closed areas in a respectful manner. Last spring, there were numerous cases of individuals that just followed an established snowmachine trail and did not know it led through a closed area. Others, not so respectful, had destroyed boundary markers and pushed the trail in. The unaware just followed. Many of the violations centered around the Goodhope Creek boundary in the Reed Valley/Reed Lake drainage. If folks are receptive, talk with them and show them on a State Parks brochure where they are.
- We ask you to assist State Parks in reporting boundary violations on the attached form (Incident reporting form). Please email the completed report to the addresses listed on the form.
- Please help and volunteer with outreach, education and reporting.

Thank you for supporting the HPMHG, the State Parks and all users of the Hatcher Pass area. For more information, contact Ralph Baldwin, Cory Hinds, Jayme Mack, Cindi Squire, or Harry Hunt at: hatcherpassmountaineeringhuts@gmail.com.

This form used to report problems, concerns or incidents that occur between users in the Hatcher Pass Recreation area. Please complete the information below (electronic is preferred) and email the form and any pictures of the incident to hatchepassmountaineeringhuts@gmail.com and to Chief Ranger Dan Amyot, Mat-Su/CB Area Office, dan.amyot@alaska.gov. Thank you for providing this important feedback to benefit all users.

The boundary map can be viewed online:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/hatcherpass/hpsnowmobiling.htm>

Date and Time of the Incident:

Location of the Incident (GPS or Map Coordinates, name of area?):

What was your Activity?

What was the Activity of the other Party?

Describe the Incident:

Describe the Public Safety Concerns involved with the Incident:

Identifying information for your party (Names & Contact Information):

Identifying information for the other Party (Number of people, snowmachines, names, group names, snowmachine/trailer/vehicle descriptions, license or registration numbers. These details help with follow up):

Contact information for the person filing the report ~ name, address, phone number & email.

Additional Information, Suggestions? Or Comments?

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Greg Encelewski	360-0274	Board member (term expires in 2014)	Andy Mamrol	717-6893
Vice-President	Carlene Van Tol	748-5270	Board member (term expires in 2014)	Elizabeth Bennett	830-9656
Secretary	Matt Hickey	651-270-4492	Board member (term expires in 2015)	Rachad Rayess	617-309-6566
Treasurer	Stacy Pritts	538-7546	Board member (term expires in 2015)	Joshua Clark	887-1888
Past President	Jayme Mack	382-0212			

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the Club Membership Committee at membership@mtnclubak.org.

The *Scree* is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to MCAScree@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted by the 24th of the month to appear in the next month's *Scree*.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to vicepresident@mtnclubak.org.

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by the monthly meeting to pick one up or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Stacy Pritts - membership@mtnclubak.org

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Vicky Lytle - hcc@mtnclubak.org

Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 or huts@mtnclubak.org

Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127 or stugrenier@gmail.com

Scree Editor: MCAScree@gmail.com Steve Gruhn (344-1219) assisted by Elizabeth Ellis (elizabeth.anne.russo@gmail.com)

Web: www.mtnclubak.org

Mailing list service: MCAK@yahoogroups.com

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