



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

AUGUST 1990

Volume 33, Issue 8

AUGUST MEETING

August 15 7:30 pm Wednesday, top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse,
Third and Eagle Sts., downtown Anchorage.

SLIDE SHOW No details at press time.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- August 11** PIONEER PEAK
Climb the landmark of the Matanuska valley. 6300' elev. gain.
No brush. Need helmet, harness and ascender, and extra water
bottle. Class E.
Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069 h 276-1700 w
- 18** HOMICIDE PEAK
Mountain bike through Powerline Pass and scramble up this
Chugach climb. Class C.
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184
- 18** PESTLE PEAK
Located on the Kenai Peninsula above Crescent Lake. Class C.
Come along for the hike and go fishing; the climb is optional.
Leader: Tom Choate 333-5309
- 24-26** SALIX PEAK
Located in the Talkeetnas. Hike in Friday night to Hatcherhead
Pass, climb Saturday. A pleasant trip for those who do not wish to
climb. Elev. gain 2500', 8 miles in, Class E for the climb.
Leader: Willy Hersman 338-5132
- Sept 1-3** LOST LAKE
Traditional MCA trip. Excellent trail and campsites. Climb of
Mt. Ascension for those interested. Class B for hike, D for climb.
Leader: Karen Cafmeyer 345-7546
- 8-9** BIRD PEAK
12 mile round trip. Elev. gain 2500'. Hike in Saturday and
camp in alpine valley near small lake. Sleep in Sunday or climb
the peak (additional 3000'). Return Sunday afternoon. Some
brush and side-hilling. May use mountain bikes, if interested.
Class C to lake, Class D to summit.
Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069

Sept 29-30 ICE-CLIMBING SCHOOL

Matanuska Glacier tradition. Beginning and intermediate ice training for waterfalls and steep gullys. Members only. Sign up at the August and September meetings.

The Hiking and Climbing Committee is always looking for leaders. If you have an idea for a trip, whether an afternoon or several weeks, give Tom Brigham a call at 279-4444. H and C Committee: Tom Brigham, Chairman, B. Wakeland, D. Hansen, K. Cafmeyer, T. Choate, N. O'Donnell, W. Hersman.

TRIP REPORTS

Mt. Monarch

Don Hansen

Friday evening we left Anchorage for the Hicks Cr. trailhead at about mile 99 on the Glenn Hwy. We were going to car camp at the trailhead but the weather was nice so we hiked into where the trail reaches Hicks Cr. near the base of the mountain (about 5-6 miles in) that evening setting up camp a little before midnight. The following morning we started up a ridge toward the mountain in heavy fog hoping it would break soon. Using map and compass and some orange flagging we marked our route through the brush in case we had to descend in fog. We hiked up the ridge that we figured would lead us to the base of the mountain. We startled a moose in the bush at the base of the ridge and reached the brush line in about 2-3 miles. There we decided to take a break in hope that the fog would begin to clear.

We took about a two-hour nap in the fog to catch up on our sleep. When the fog appeared to be breaking we started back up the ridge and traversed over to an adjacent ridge which we figured would lead us to this lake near the base of Monarch. The fog would break momentarily to give us glimpses of our route and ghostly images of several caribou bands moving up and down the ridge. After about another hour of hiking in the fog we reached a plateau that we thought would include the lake but didn't. The weather finally began to clear showing us a peak in front of us which we first thought might be Monarch as it began to appear from the fog. But there was no lake and the mountain was not nearly high enough to be Monarch, which is over 7000 feet.

As it cleared and after further discussion we figured out that Monarch was the much higher peak in back of the one in front of us. By then we spotted another party of three (Mindy Baum, Neely Taylor and Beth Taylor) coming up the ridge. They had hiked in Friday afternoon and were planning to camp at lake near the base of the mountain. Our party included Margaret Stock, Pam Kirk, Ken Zafren, Stan Aarsonud, Bill Cole and me.

We began our ascent after reaching the lake and made the summit in about two hours from the lake. The ridgeline up the left side of the mountain from the Hicks Creek approach was an easy but fairly long walk, but loose small talus slopes made progress up the ridge slow at times. Lighter patches of fog continued to pass over the mountain as we ascended. The mountain consists of a series of spires on the north and east faces from which the name must have been derived. The weather finally cleared and the sun came out as we descended the mountain. We had great views of the

Aug. 1990

Matanuska Glacier framed by the fog clouds from the summit and we saw sheep and caribou as we descended. We met the other party of three on their way up the mountain. The weather turned great that late afternoon and evening when we reached camp after retracing our steps and picking up the orange flags. Sunday morning we broke camp and were back at the cars within two hours.

Lost Lake

Bill Wakeland

July 13-15

This was to have been the Crow Pass to Bird Creek traverse, but due to a report on conditions, plus the Crow Pass race, and other factors, we all trooped off toward Seward. All but Pam, that is, who tried to find Lost Lake somewhere down by Cooper Landing. Anyway, all three cars eventually arrived at Primrose, where we dropped Fred's limousine and all 7 of us piled into my little pickup and Pam's errant car, and parked them at the lower trailhead at mile 5. We had reason to believe that we would have no trouble using the forbidden parking area and trailhead at mile 5, and that proved to be the case, although the Forest Service has removed all signs. Hikers besides me were Pam Page, Fred and Ann Kampfer, Bruce Abramson, Bill Cole and Janet Wagner.

Fred, Bill and Pam barged up the trail to arrive hours before the last one, gaining about 2100 feet before descending a couple of hundred to the lake. We camped on the south side, closest to Mt. Ascension. The trail is good and a huge help through the sidehills and alders. A new addition was added in 1984 by the American Hiking Society, that forks off south of the lake and goes around the east side to connect up with the old trail up Porcupine Creek, with a bridge across Lost Creek. The scenery was outstanding, even on a dull day, with a great variety of flora, perhaps the most outstanding being what Ann determined to be a heather, in great bright yellow patches.

Saturday we went three different ways. Only Bill and Pam wanted to climb Ascension, which was in clouds, while Bruce and Janet followed the lake shore to the northwest and crossed the low pass over into the Martin River valley, finding even more outstanding flower patches. Fred, Ann and I followed them a ways and eventually walked all around the lake, finding many nice camping spots, marmots, ptarmigan and even an old mine tunnel.

Bruce spotted a mysterious blue object from the hillside, and we all eventually went over to inspect an abandoned camp. A blue tarp partially covered an assortment of water-logged gear, including three sleeping bags, an ice chest with putrid stuff in it, fire grates, lantern, propane cylinders, ax, saw, clothing, etc. and a half gallon of Canadian whiskey. We speculated that perhaps other, more valuable items had been removed and/or the "campers" vacated on short notice, and that they may have been a bunch of young cheechakos, perhaps set down at about the worst camping spot on the lake by a green pilot. Or maybe "old cheechakos," I also found a can of false teeth adhesive!

Well, we all accomplished our objectives, although Bill and Pam discovered the next day that they reached the summit of the east peak, 5100

feet and the west, higher peak might take a little more time and perhaps some equipment. And Bruce and Janet got to watch a black bear sow and two cubs cavort across the valley.

The sun was out the third day, and we first hiked back to the high point on the trail in, marvelling over the scenery before heading out the north trail with packs. More great scenes over Lost Lake, as we strung out along the trail, each at his own pace. I took another roll of slides that day, only to learn later the camera suffered from an operator malfunction and I lost them all. From the Primrose Mine, the last three miles of trail is ATV, and there has been some recent clearing work in progress there. This trail is also threatened with a proposed new road to the mine.

Fred and Ann delivered drivers to mile 5 and headed home, while the rest of us tried out the good food and grog at Trail Lake Lodge and headed home, satisfied we'd been in one of the prettiest spots in Alaska, and among good company.

Scandinavian Glacier Recon

Willy Hersman

Neil O'Donnell, Tom Choate and I spent some time in July poking around the upper Matanuska to confirm the new hut site. The weather was great as usual for that area. After a few days of picking out different sites we came to an acceptable compromise near the Scandinavian Glacier. The view will be one of the best for any of the MCA huts. You can look down the Mat, up the Mat across the Mat and get a panorama of all the Scandinavian Peaks. There is also an unobstructed view of Marcus Baker and many of the peaks up that branch of the Mat. The site is on tundra with water nearby. Sheep frequent the area and a gravel landing strip is only 20 minutes away. Skiing will be excellent right out the front door and there are ample hills farther away for skiing. But the real draw will be spring and summer climbing.

On July 6th Neil, Choate and I climbed 9405-foot Finland Peak and 8960-foot Norway (a subsidiary of Finland actually) in a long day. We traveled across the Scandinavian Glacier's south branch, up a small icefall to the bench between the two summits and postholed to Finland's north ridge. The narrow ridge went well to the summit, where we built a cairn and dropped in a register during an hour-long stay to take in the views. Sweden Peak seems to offer the most challenge in the immediate vicinity, but we declined on this trip to test it. It was a short jaunt to Norway where we discovered a register left in August 1975 by Dennis Schmitt. His poetic entry is reminiscent of the one left on another peak across the Matanuska Glacier on the same trip (see AAJ, 1976, p. 437).

We also checked out the site near Peak 6430 as noted by two winter expeditions and found it lacking in all regards but access, being but a gravel pile. We camped nearby, and put up with the winds, a gust of which had me racing full steam in pursuit of a runaway VE 24. Thoughts of ever putting a hut on the high plateau above the icefall were diminished as we discovered on July 8th. There is no suitable flat place off the ice without the use of dynamite. We did, however, find our way up there to check the ridge near point 8610. The most splendid crevasse was seen en route, a 100-foot deep chasm with a picturesque lake at its bottom, breath-taking to step across.

Aug 1990

Neil flew out on the 10th with Mike Meekin. Tom and I worked on the foundation and site description and then went climbing. On the 11th we made ascents of Greenland Peak (8445), Iceland Peak (8870) and Latvia Peak (8410) along the ridge connecting them. No evidence of previous ascents were found but it seems likely that hunters may have been on one or two of them. Weak snow bridges were a problem for us on the 12th as we traveled up the north branch of Scandinavian Glacier en route to Peak 9405. If not for lost time and faulty route-finding along the NW ridge we might have finished the climb; another day perhaps. The rock on all these climbs is the usual Chugach quality, nothing to write home about, but they are wonderful climbs otherwise.

We took two days to walk out to the parking lot, checking out different routes down the Mat. It's a pleasant walk beside the moraine for several miles until one is advised to get onto the ice at Fog Peak. From the base of Fog the most direct line would be to head across to Mt. Wickersham, perhaps camping on the tundra east of the peak, and then exit via an easy moraine trough which takes one to the terminus of the glacier, with hardly a struggle and only occasional use of crampons.

In our wandering we ran into many tiring detours, but found a pleasant old hunting camp along the east side of the glacier. Along with the usual abandoned trash, left in the 50's, we also discovered nearby nests of yellow jackets and honeybees! We also discovered, the next day, a trail from the camp to the last bend in the ice, a point where a lake recently stood and several rock towers now stand. One could make a nice exit to the north here if he had the means to cross the South Fork of the Matanuska River, a boat rendezvous perhaps. Walking down the glacier works fine, but one should get all the way over to the last moraine trough near Wick or face delays and deadends.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING

The June meeting was held on the 20th. New visitors introduced themselves. It was great to see lots of new faces and Neil strongly encouraged people to join the club.

<u>TREASURER'S REPORT:</u>	Money Market -	\$2906.69
	Checking Acct -	973.39
	Petty Cash -	<u>52.10</u>
	Total	\$3932.18

COMMITTEES:

Huts. Marcy Baker announced that many gear donations to the new huts had been promised, but that monetary donations were still welcome. Volunteers are needed to build the huts on site. No date has been firmly established, but early August has been tentatively set. If people sign up they will be called once the date is decided. Marcy also encouraged people to buy club t-shirts and mugs.

Parks Advisory. Ken Zafren brought us up to date on the National Heritage Park, Denali National Park road and Hilltop Ski Area.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ken Zafren mentioned seeing brown bears at Glen Alps.

A Polish visitor announced he had titanium ice screws for sale.

Alan Julliard has 1990 membership cards, so he's the one to see if you don't have yours. He asked for anyone interested in helping clear a new trail along Bird Creek to contact him. Also, he is looking to rent or borrow a survival suit and would like anyone willing to get in touch with him.

Willy requested that those people who have not picked up their freeze-dried food orders to do so.

Neil said that several mountaineering publications were available. He also discussed the paperwork necessary to get permits for the new huts.

Alan Julliard announced that he needs slide shows for the meetings.

Claire Lattimore shared the results of her research in mountaineering accidents. And Neil showed slides of the new huts being built at Staeheli's, the proposed sites and his trip from the west boundary of Denali National Park to Wonder Lake.

MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING

The July meeting was held on the 21st. There were quite a few new faces and new members, they seemed to outnumber the rest of us.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$2920.67
Checking Acct	-	931.77
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$3904.54

COMMITTEES:

Huts. Marcy Baker said that the huts are ready to go but our free air transportation fell through. We need to finance the airlift ourselves or arrange new free transport. If anyone has any ins on air transportation contact the Hut Committee. Monetary contributions are welcome and don't forget to buy those wonderful club shirts and mugs. On the 28th the Scandanavian Peaks Hut will be taken to Meekin's Air Service, and help is requested for this effort.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Alan is looking for slide shows.

Karen Cafmeyer showed slides of her trip to Mt. Logan and her climbs in the South Fork of Eagle River.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mindy Baum

Aug 1990