



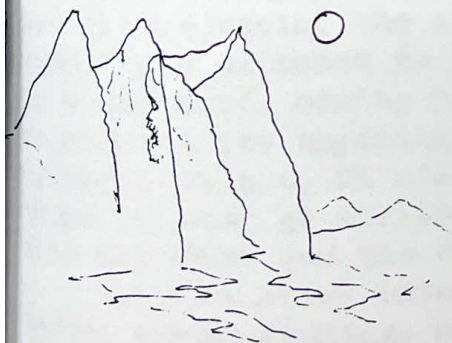
DESCENT

Well fancy that will you, I was sitting out at the Dog talking to some of those local mountain climbers and I came to learn that not all of the hundred odd people who get this rag are currently climbing mountains. Well that explains the dearth of serious mountain action literary contributions. But if I don't get some more related material (however vaguely related, or however vague), I, Montag, will fill the pages with these hackneyed pleas. And speaking of that, the contract with our famous Seattle line cartoonist is up for renegotiation. Your choice, you send in some border size line drawings etc., or the dues go up again.

DESENT
is published quite often by mistake
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editor/censor: montag a limwitter

this is one good issue
don't believe those who have already read it
this is one good issue



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*
things become basic, direct, intense
limits are approached
and sometimes reached
*

There was going to be a good moon so this was the weekend to take a couple of days extra and use the light, of course the weather would be good too.

This is spring in the Alaska Range. The Delta River is chilly, fast and deep, but luckily it is also frozen and we didn't need to swim. It was pleasant in the sunshine and we were getting warm in our thermal underwear and double boots. Then a shout from the bank told us that all this exertion had pulled Rick's bindings off his skis. The next time we looked back there he was walking behind us. The big advantage in having one person go back at this stage is the saving in weight for the rest of us, so we loaded him with a stove, pots, fuel, rope, tent, and everything else we could get out in time. But not the shovels.

Then suddenly a piece of the river jumped up five feet and hit Coert on the nose, breaking his ski pole (how?)(don't ask) and leaving a six inch deep hole in the ice, let alone his face.

We reached the moraines, 3:PM. With such a fine moon we could ski 'til midnight and get in a high camp. So we did. Until 8 o'clock that is, when the wind went from nothing to gale force in fifteen minutes and there was no choice, no turning back, we had to dig. There wasn't much slope, it had to be down. We looked for a wind scoop to dig into the side of, but with 10 yards visibility it wasn't there. We hadn't given the shovels to Rick.

It was more enjoyable to be a miner than a surface worker, at least your legs were out of the blowing snow. I wished mine were in wind pants but it was too late now, you couldn't get them on anyway. It took me ten minutes to get my down jacket out of my pack without disturbing anything else. Everything was saturated with spindrift; balaclava, jacket, camera.

The cooking pot became our excavator bucket to empty the two shafts we had penetrating the ground. It appeared out of the ground full of snow with a hand attached to it, shaking it out, then a gust of wind came and it disappeared, moving horizontally in the direction of I don't know what, we couldn't see anything. Ah, that's better, my balaclava had fallen over my eyes. No pot, 11 o'clock, and we can stand in both holes. Now the tunneling must go horizontally. One side was going through harder snow than the other and the hole enlarged, asymmetrically.

The snow blown into our cloths was beginning to melt, wool and cotton became armour plating, nylon was fine, what would gortex be like? must ask Cliff.

Cave now six feet square and two feet high, does it need to be bigger, yes, no, indecision, yes it does, we can't even roll over. Found a nice place to rest and was standing in the mineshaft with wind over my head, breathing spindrift, head bowed down, couldn't decide whether to cry or sleep. Ah, sleep, yes it was midnight and I'd hardly slept at all the night before, that's another story.

I was beginning to feel at home, home isn't comfort, home is like how you grew up, and this is like climbing in Scotland, but that's why I escaped to come to Alaska. Mind wandering, someone still digging, no pot, anyway, no stove could be started either, use hands, no, they will freeze, blowing snow stings, close my eyes, try to think of Hawaii, grass skirts,

Macadamia nuts, ah yes: Macadamia Ternifolia, Australian, stop, my mind is wandering, so am I, I am looking for skis, poles, packs, will they blow away, time to get into hole, can't fit, take off pack, can fit, full of spindrift already, only 7 hours until its light.

I know this snow will melt as soon as I get into my sleeping bag. So I do. It does. 6 hours of shivering. Four feet of snow above my head, one foot of air above my head. Not much communication. Others are having the same feelings, candle burns steadily. I couldn't take it if it was dark. Look at watch, not there, brush off snow, 4:30, 3 hours to go.

Its not blowing, the sun's out. Ten minutes. Warm, forgotten about climbing, have cup of hot chocolate. Didn't eat yesterday. Looks like a good day for a climb. No energy. Seven hours ski back to road. Delta River is a mile of ice.

Must have been a good weekend, good moon.

Peter

A WILDERNESS DIATRIBE

Feb. 18

Actually is is now the 19th, the early morning following the all night. The others are asleep now, only I remain awake, recording what may be the final, but no, I mustn't think of such things. We are huddled in a snow hole. It is miniscule, none can sit erect. Outside howls the storm. The wind is raging so fiercely that it pushed me across the glacier as if I were on ice skates. And here in this blasted cave it is so warm that the ceiling is melting, forming drops on the many irregularities of the roof and dripping into the works of my typewriter. I fear it will rust my precious machine.

Feb. 19

Such a beautiful day, so calm, peace flowing through the mountains, contrasting starkly with last night. Yet I felt uneasy from the start. Upon awaking this morn I had the unsettling sensation that someone was missing. A count of heads revealed that someone in fact was. Who, I never determined, perhaps he is still in the cave, perhaps he strayed sometime yesterday. Then tonight after cooking dinner I stood outside of the tent, gazing at the scenery, moonlit peaks, ridges and icefalls, when it struck me that, instead of the two tents we would need to house the remainder of our party, there was only one. Further investigation revealed that we had, in fact, lost two more members of our party. Most unsettling. And there were voices, or a voice rather. It sounded like it came across the mountain from McGinnis Glacier. I distinctly heard someone calling out, "Well, sure, come on over. There's beer in the fridge and blueberry muffins too." Curious.

Feb. 20

A shitty day to be sure. Couldn't see our asses if we bent over such was the visibility, so we rolled over and went back to sleep, got tired of that so we went skiing, got tired of that so started packing up to leave, got tired of that so we finally broke down and went climbing. Steve thought

these little sticks he carries around with orange plastic tied to them would insure our safety, so we went slogging up the avalanche slopes and cramping on up a little ice here and there as Steve faithfully stuck all five of his little sticks into the snow in the first fifteen minutes. Seeing as we needed more to climb higher he sent me back to retrieve the ones already placed and we used them again. In this manner we managed to climb most of the day but can't find our way back down. Luckily, I had the foresight to recognize the possible need to bivouac and slipped my typewriter into Steve's pack. I hope it clears up tomorrow so we can see where we are.

Febperiod 21

Well comma just imagine our surprise to awaken and find ourselves on top of Denaliperiod Quite a shockcomma I must saycomma all the more so when we realized how far we were going to have to ski if I was to attend classes tomorrowperiod A strenuous daycomma but given a pair of Ramer bindings and Trucker skis one can accomplish miraclesperiod I fell into a crevasse coming through the upper icefall on the Muldrow and smashed my typehyphen writerperiod It wonapostrophe produce punctuation marks anymorecomma which is somewhat of a hassleperiod

Brickthrower

ANNUAL ALASKA RANGE WINTER EPIC MOUNTAIN CAMPING TRIP

Same old mundane trivia you know. Had to throw together thirty eight days of food, an air drop, a gaggle of pins, pickets, nuts, screws, flukes, runners, a raft of fixed rope, this, and that, the jews harp, a cheese cake, greasy hamburger, frozen chillis, a diverse stock of paperbacks, road map, enchilada sause, and yellow ski wax.

Then right off a storm forced us to bivouac for ten days in the Sandvik house. Sitting that one out was an ardeous and dangerous endeavor (an adventure in itself) but we survived, barely. Our critical condition (mental) forced us out before the storm had abated. We drove off in several directions in quest of what no one knew; no one would even tell us.

We found mountains. Not knowing where or why, we threw out some of everything. And I; I the writer, discovered amidst the shit I was supposed to carry: a file. I mean a FILE; a ten pound file, the biggest file I've ever in my life seen. This other camper thought we should take a file to sharpen crampons. I mean this file was originally used to trim the hooves of the Trojan horse. If I went on to tell you everything I thought of this insane file the editor would throw the article out for excess obscenity. Speaking of throwing obscenities: I did. Damn near wrenched my arm throwing that "obscenity" out of my pack. Threw it out into the woods, knocked down three trees, before it hit the pipeline, and stuck.

Well we beat it out of there in a hurry, crossed the Delta river after a long long search for a frozen place. Heavy packs and two sleds we hauled for days and at long last stood there by a mountain, above the icefalls, next to the part one might be enticed to climb with all that heavy stuff we laborously carried there.

Fortuitous indeed we had come only to camp for the sky cleared, the wind stopped, it was warm. Ergo we were forced to retreat. All that shit we carried back down and back up high on another side of the hill. Anticipating a stretch of good weather we dug a ten person castle in the snow and camped in it. Fun camping, slept-in each morning. Had a party, chilled the drinks, whipped up some muffins, went outside and invited the neighbors, but the closest ones, just across the ridge there, seemed to be a bit oblivious, excentrics you know, writers, ecology freaks, odd lot, so I just ignored them and went back in for some serious snow cave camping. It was there I discovered the rest of the repair kit I had been carrying: five pound pliers and a roll of silver tape big enough to tape a hanging glacier to a mountain. Damn near threw the repair kit owner out of the cave, through the floor.

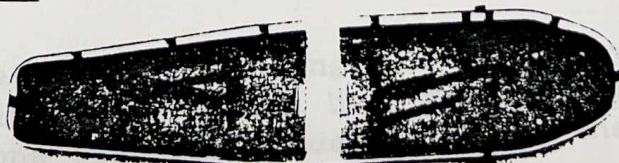
Well the weather did indeed get good so we packed all that shit up and skiied out for a couple days.

I the writer

ALASKA ALPINE RESCUE GROUP

Its existance remains as a local call list. With luck it will never be used. A serious shortcoming of local rescue capability has been the lack of a rescue toboggan. For this land of long flat glaciers and glaciated peaks a toboggan is ideal. Stokes litters are cached at the huts. But stokes litters are very limited in this terrain. Cascade Toboggan Co. in Washington makes a superb 20 lb., 2 piece, mountain rescue toboggan that has proven itself on many serious rescue operations. It is mummy shaped fiberglass with a steel tubing rail. The two halves nest together. An informal decision was made by the Alaska Alpine Club officials to spend "hut equipment" money on one. It was bought for about \$200. It was the last one available before a price hike. Whereupon the decision was recinded. So the AARG has this excellent rescue toboggan along with donated long ropes and a sleeping bag, all in a canvas sack at the U of A Fire Station. It is available 24 hours a day for rescue. Your name must be on the mt. rescue call list to pick up this equipment. If anyone is interested we can get up a financing effort for this or we can charge rent to the first victim rescued: so many \$ per vertical foot lowered, or per yard horizontal travel. Of course this would be multiplied by a factor of 10 for Alpine Club officials. But you need never consider mountain rescue; if you never go in the mountains.

Doug Buchanan



Feb. Monthly Meeting

Ah, yeah, the one in Feb. Ah, good meeting. The pres. requested a volunteer to call it to order. There were several decided refusals. But it happened anyway. The Glacier Stampede will be April ²²15-²³16 unless its changed. The date was selected with reference to the state of the moon, and finals, and spring break, and other inconveniences. A reminder to apply for the remainder of the club climbing grant. The proposed purchase of the Thayer Hut land was brought to mind. Gene Wescot volunteered to obtain some technical info. on the subject. A call for Desent articles. The slide show, a good one. There are actually mountains in East Greenland. Peter McKeith did a lot of fine climbing and some minor effort on some sort of scientific endeavor. Outrageous post function at the Pub. the man in the back row

THE GLACIER STAMPEDE

Indeed this year the stampede will be April ²²15 & ²³16. Fine social function that it is, join the horde skiing up to the lower Canwell hut for a fun weekend. The trail from Miller Creek Bridge, up the creek, and up the Canwell glacier will be marked. If you are not familiar with the glacier, stay close to the trail elst befall the cracks of doom.

Do have: skis in fair order (snowshoes for the masochists), shelter (group up on tents, there'll be no room in the inn), good sleeping bag and pad, food, warm cloths, sunglasses, sun cream, ETC and COMMON SENSE. Ask for advise if you are new at it. The club cannot accept any legal responsibility for this voluntary outing. Depart from the hut by noon Sunday, we don't want any neglected bodies left wandering about the glacier (poor taste you know).

Group up on cars to avoid conjection at the bridge parking area and Trims Creek Hiway Camp. This year take some extra non perishable food to leave at the hut. Last year the Hut's emergency food stock was wiped out by inconsiderate stampeders. This year take a good stout stick to clout those slobs who left all the trash up there last year.

REGISTRATION: A paltry fee of just one dollar is needed to cover the cost of wands etc. (hey, wands are getting expensive, I kid you not) That and a piece of paper (registration form) on which is:

Name, Adress, Phone (print neatly or you will be sweared at)
send it to: Alaska Alpine Club Box 81200 College Alaska 99708
or drop it by the Sandvik house

This info. is needed in case the function is called off at the last minute due to bad weather. Late rumors and details will be available at the April meeting.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

The next somewhat monthly meeting will be Monday 10 April, 7:PM in the Schaible Auditorium. There will be a fantastic slide show if we can find one. (OK, someone dig your slides out, blow the dust off, line 'em up)

In an effort to protrait the evils inherant to structured organizations I herein take leave to write whatever I like with little fear as to whether or not it will get published. I'll not take much of your time in such an effort; however, I do have a few things to say.

First: the ratdog who absconded with the newly pruchased Chunyard screws & axe is forthwith ordered, on pain of excommunication, to return said items to Mike Davis, S.O.S. office, fifth floor Bunnell. Those wishing to throw off the chains of lesser crimes, ie. overdue axes, crampons, etc. are also instructed to seek guidance from Mike.

Second: as for the stampede, we will all get off our asses & "relax" for a couple days. Consider: should wine best be consumed from the lip of a sierra cup or straight out of the jug?

Third & last: a sorrowfull note to the Fairbanks delegation of the renowned F.A.A.C. (Fourth Ave. Alpine Club). Though great victories were gained by our noble strike forces in Valdez in early December, I regret to inform you that, though still capable of a formidable ralley, word is drifting in that our prestige suffered greatly at the hands of the Anchorage club. So it is with pride that I offer them the honor of a hearty "good show". Though we faced comparable perils, never did we extend ourselves to the point of police seizure in the bar.

THE PRESIDENT

Letters ?

Dear Editor,

I have found some of the articles in the Desent somewhat unclear as to specific times, places, events, and people involved. Wouldn't it be better if you insured that the articles conformed to the accepted standards of modern perioticals?

George C.

Hey you George.

I got barely no smart to carry this papers to printers. Don't go no ask me to read none of them to.

Montag

Just too many local climbs, both major and minor, have been inconvenienced by orders from REI being Back Ordered. REI built its image on mountain climbers and still uses the mountain climbing image, at the expense of climbers. In an effort to get BIG and please everyone a little bit it usually leaves the mountain climber out in the wind. If you need a pair of snappy new blue jeans, buy REI (if you can wait for the Back Order). Otherwise buy local or small shop. Its worth it.

BRIDAL VEIL FALLS

A Winged something;
zooming, streaking, flashing,
shining.

Mostly blue, a little orange; Black.
Hard meets harder,
and the potential increases.

the bridge goes 'toot, toot';
Heads float to Simsimia.
Dimensions advance on unity as
Density regresses to primal values.
Intricate carvings please
the hands,
and the potential increases.

Bathe in eggnog; get drunk;
Dance in the night; travellers pass.
Be wild, go crazy; Rally.
Rhine arang arain!
Wedge some foam.
and the potential increases.

Meanwhile, two chop down the Hanging Tree.

Numbness begets warmth, and in return
cold hands feel,
brains awaken.
Thirst is quenched too easily,
High winds freshen the
illuminating lunacy;
And the potential increases.

Carl Tobin

And there was a notable attempt on McGinnis that struck out into the dark of the night. Their ride having driven away they found themselves cold, in a howling gale, on the far side of the wind swept Delta River plain; but on the near side of the open water. All while their tracks were sought by the owner of some of their equipment. That failed but not without consolation. A questionable camp and a day to discover the vast extent of the open water; and return.

But that greater, than many local attempts that never get out of the house or beyond the map.

TRACKS

Tracks up the glacier. Ski tracks, almost far enough down to be in the glacier. The five made those tracks all the way to a hut known as Thayer. Two days of work and many electrons coursing through lite bulbs.

There were other tracks, too, in the mountains. The elusive avalanche had obviously passed by in the nite. One, not so elusive, darted down the hillside across from the hut. One track reaching for another.

Blackcap soared up above tents. Alien odors mixed with moonlite on Christmas Eve-cheese, wine, french bread with cold, pale brilliance.

Long ski tracks gave way to small, deep foot tracks. Three-foot deep holes leading toward, but not reaching, Sunday Summit. Blackcap ignored the proceedings.

Twelve miles of tracks up the Castner ending below Blackcap. A wind, though, an obliterating wind, erased the record of passage leaving broken tent poles and lost sleep. Then Snow. A world buried with no tracks. Three feet of white in twelve hours.

More tracks finally, far below the surface, made by unseen skis. Slow moving tracks. Fast moving avalanche tracks nearby.

Ski tracks went up the hut slope only to be cut by the tracks of the sudden and ominous Whoomp. Cracks for tracks.

Foot holes ventured toward Mary's Rock. The flushing of a napping avalanche below the summit created a new track but turned the foot holes back on themselves.

Tracks, ten days of the things, led back to Trimms Camp. And then were blown away.

El Rojohombre



KANGCHENJUNGA OR BUST

Darn near busted by bladders.

The Alaska delegation sporatically camped at the Sandvik house waiting for the last minute arrival of oxygen apparatus from the factory. Bladders this time. The female cocks for the french nipples arrived on time.

FEAR & LOATHING ON THE KEYSTONE EXPRESS

OR: Bridal Veil Falls sometime in december

To the best of my recollection we were in Valdez. The local stick & drinkhouse was cronically empty due to obscure labor relations we had nothing to do with. It was a shame too for there was a big town band rocking hard in an effort to keep us within those unfamiliar surroundings. We were all in love with the vocalist. She not only sang but she danced just as good as she looked. Fine group this was. The tavern closes down & we're forced into the arctic darkness. Luckely Jim Jennings' V.W. square back was equiped for A.T.V. use, in that Jim was driving and Carl Tobin & I know how to push. So we're out for the count somewhere west of town. The morning comes cold & none too pleasant. We all knew at this point why we were here. The cry went out, "Coffee!" and we were off.

Overlooking the water with cups in hand we began to formulate our approach. Instead of writing the day off entirely we would go beat away at the base of the climb & hit it hard the next day. Right!, & we're off. Two pitches up & its not so bad. Steep enough but good ice. "Too bad we don't have more time." "You know, that vertical section doesn't look that bad." "Yeah, we'll get it tomorrow. Rap off!" Well, I hate to admit it but we didn't get to sleep early that night either. Same woman, same band, same bar. So it goes, and goes, and.... Cold & windy, as usual, the next morning but a bit earlier than yesterday. As we round the corner things become all too clear. My rope! Ah, it had served me long and well & now it stands enshrined in ice. Carl goes up the first rope & reclaims the frozen-in section by methods I never will quite understand. But believe me, from the car it looked like hell. I'm on deck & up I go with another rope & a heavy heart. Have you ever been standing in your ascenders with knife in hand? Carl puts me on as Jim starts up. The third pitch is more of the same up to a resort ledge complete with cave, running water, & a view; not to mention bomber protection. Here we are below the crux but alas its once again too late & we're forced into a death rap down vertical alders. No more last ropes for this crew. Just rock fall & hung-up ropes. At this point we encountered two days of "weather". Carl suggests that the next pitch may have been a contributing factor in the weather forecast but Jim & I held with the fear that should we leave the car unattended it might blow away. Maximum coffee consumption. "Well, its better than sitting in a cave." Or is it? Fifth & last day & the weather's OK at best. So now I'm back at the cave after a grueling but eventless ascent of the ropes. What the hell's taking Carl. It seems like hours when Carl limps over the edge & into the cave looking like a ghost & mumbling something about only getting a few inches out of each step, "are you up for this lead?" Great! I've never climbed vertical ice before, but it couldn't be over 80 feet. Great! For the first 20 feet I was swallowing retched up moths. In with an ice screw & rest. I look up. Immediately I realize that looking up was an ill advised step. Nothing but ice & Sky. Obviously overhung, or close to it. Close enough. My right leg started to shake

as I fought for control. Carl: "I can take it from there if you like."
Me: (incoherent then gathering composure at the sound of salvation)
"Well, if you want to." Carl ran out the lead for who knows how far
above that screw & he's above the worst of it. I free on past him to set
up the next pitch as Carl brings Jim up. Its getting late you know.
Jim finishes the climb on a long pitch with the long rope & becomes
irate upon discovering both Carl & I on belay. "But Jim, the other
rope's too short." He just raves on about tied off alders & what not,
gives me Carl's belay rope & walks up the creek looking for the pipeline.
Its just about dark when Carl tops the falls & goes into a paroxysm of
anguish as his hands feast upon the long lost supply of blood. Jim
listens in terror, sure that Carl is mourning an unfortunate mishap at
the top of the ice. Not true, & we're all together joyfully romping up
the last few steps & through the trees in search of the path to end
paths. The moonlight walk several miles back to the road was filled
with mystery & peril. As is customary the bar closed at two, but this
time we hit the road destined to undergo more of the same.

More Ice

Clifton Moore

In December, as I was investigating the ice offerings of Keystone Canyon, my
attentions were embraced by a South-facing waterfall of magnificent construction.
The heavy winds off Prince William Sound had architected ice "balconies" which
overhung from two to four meters in several places on this 80 degree, 85 meter high
formation.

Steve Clautice and myself, having perhaps better things to do, but neglecting
them nevertheless, decided that this waterfall, called "Hung Jury" by the enlight-
ened, should be climbed.

Taking the lead, I found the first pitch of about half a rope length to be steep
but straightforward. No complications arose here, and I set up a belay stance below
the first balcony.

The second pitch was a trip that extended beyond the realm of psychedelic. Tra-
versing right, underneath the balcony, I reached a portion of said balcony that had
an arm-sized hole in it. Jamming my left arm through the hole, I was eventually able
to gain a purchase with my hammer on the upper side of the balcony. This proved to be
a worthwhile move, and gaining the upper side, I placed a screw.

The route continued directly up from this point, at an angle approaching 90 de-
grees, for about 25 to 30 meters. I placed a warthog during this section, and eventu-
ally came to another balcony. After placing a screw below it, I traversed right and
led directly up about five more meters.

At that point, I decided that I was in an optimal position to belay Steve up. I
placed the "Terrordactyl" in my left hand well, clipped in to it, and had a comfort-
able seat. After backing this questionable anchor up with a large Chouniard screw,
Steve began to repeat the experience.

Sitting in my harness belaying Steve, the day's silent snowstorm enveloped me.
The quiet was occasionally broken by the swooshing and calling of ravens and magpies.
Far below, on the highway, people were stopping their cars. What did they think of
the two little people so high above them? My dreamy experience came to an end as Steve
approached. Had I been hanging there an hour?

The final pitch was near vertical to vertical, but presented excellent ice. We
almost ran up it, sensing the approach of evening. But our haste was in vain. No hum,
nothing but fun abseiling in the darkness.

Wet, tired, thirsty, and stumbling, we made it to the car. As we sped toward
the ocean of beer at the Totem Inn of Valdez, Steve was obviously contemplating the
day's events as I frantically tried to remember the name of that cute, friendly wait-
ress.

Carl Tobin

There are hard symbols for the lofty illusions of people's minds, today and always. Eagles, mountains, whales, prairies. These were the first to come to my mind when writing this. There are others, but look at these, not even contrived. What have we done to the eagles, the whales. Where are the prairies.

And the mountains, or; But the mountains. They will remain, but there is an aspect of them more delicate and easy to destroy. They are great symbols in the minds of people.

That which is there, is there by virtue of their defiant solitude. Other terms can be used. The mountain's aura must remain for those who wish to seek or allude to it. The Christians may find the realm of the pure spirit of the Lord. The Buddhists may see more clearly the thoughts of Buddha. The Hindus may find inspiration for mystical contemplation. And for those who yet do not know; that which is there; is there.

It can be destroyed. It has been, in places. Package the mountains and sell them. This route goes for \$100 a page if accepted. \$50 for each accepted 8X10 color glossy. That mountain is good for a \$10 short but it has a \$1000 per head guide route, 12 man parties, 2 week climbs, 3 month season. This expedition is good for a front cover name that will get a 10 lecture tour at \$300 per show plus expenses. That ascent is worth 3 free tents, 2 cases of whiskey and 4 new waterproof vapor permiable one piece climbing suits. This climb will make me known and get me one with the big boys over there. And that area needs regulation to insure a wilderness experience for those with confirmed reservations.

The guides, the ego seekers, the merchants, the bureaucrats: paracites of the mountains. But paracites are equal creatures in the world and have an equal place; it they don't destroy their host.

The vibrations of the frantic living surface are intense, and they are good, of worthy note for humanity, individuals, us.

But intense respite is needed for a few to maintain reference; touch with a stable base; a counter to keep some individual minds clear. Their thoughts permeate societies and individuals in governments, else we would have already lost all touch. They are those who seek that which is there.

That which is there in the mountain solitude must remain available for any who are willing to seek it; by foot or mind. It has been sold here and there. We are one of the "advanced" cultures who are selling it fast. We need take it off the shelf, else we sooner lose touch.

John D.

"WE COULDN'T HAVE MADE THE SUMMIT WITHOUT WHAT'S THEIR NAME BOOT SOLES."

When the 1977 Expedition to Kimosabi set out to conquer this perilous frozen northland monolith, they couldn't have been so comfortable without the money and free equipment from their sponsors. None of whom they can remember; which is just as well, they didn't make it anyway.

Famous Mountaineer

ATTEMPT TO CONQUER MT. LETHARGY REPULSED

The waxing of the first quarter of the year witnessed the transpiration of discoveries, several to be precise, of some not quite inconsiderable import. These portentous revelations, uncovered in the company of one impertinent imported Briton and a fair haired mountain nymph, could well alter the character of weakened outings in the Delta Range. The most exciting and ingeniously conceived of of of these notions concerns approaches, that much maligned if not totally ignored aspect of mountaineering. Two possibilities are generally recognized, the first being the Bay Hotel and the later the Club Evergreen. Being as it am hungry and we was late at night we stumbled upon the prospect of the Trophy Lodge, or the trough as we refer to it in our more maudlin moments. Fine dining, but that's not the half of it. The half of it is to approach, not at Ogawfulhundred in the morning but just rounding the corner on towards midnight when the music's playing and the legs are shakin' and the rugs they are a bein' cut. A whole new range of Delta type activities was thus opened for us when we realized the inherent advantages in a cup of coffee (Irish), a grease bomb and any old dancing partner you can latch on to. We did nonetheless end up alongside that troublesome contraption what has no heater by the bridge across Miller Creek. It's cold down there by the creek by the river. Makes it hard to get up, no less so when the previous night was danced away. But hard core and frozen to the AA Clubbers that we were we were on the trail by noon and paused to make camp shortly thereafter, secure in the knowledge that we were far enough from any peaks to excuse ourselves when we didn't climb one of them. Dog tired, we supped and slept, having managed to stay awake a full eight hours. The repercussions of that exercise in the noblest of deadly sins, sloth (no one died, though we practised all seven) were dreadfully apparent the following morning when, come the break of day, we were no longer able to sleep. Sooner than we thought possible the morning sun was twinkling down upon six skis caclackclattering 'cross the stroogy. As the day wore out reality pressed ever less gently on our mutual sensibility; we could no longer ignore the proximity of the mountain. We chose the most cavernous of our rucksacks, left our skis and set out to bag that mother. It was then that our genius came to fruition, for only one of the three had been fool enough to laden himself with metal boot grips. So with one pair of ski und bergschuh, an overbooted pair of X-country ski shoes and our sturdy glacier nymph clad in her ripstop nylon bedroom slippers we tripped daintilly up the mountain, intent on filling our bag. The slip shod fairy stopped short of the ridge, just the high side of the steep section, whilst we went on to bag a false summit. A spectacular perch, old falsey. We rested atop the world, a small fart-like wind playing about our shoulders as Peter sang St. Matthew's Passion by Bach, or was it Matthew singing about Bach's passion for St. Peter. Ginny said she heard someone screaming, but figured it was just Bach singing about St. Matthew's passionate peter. It seemed a pity to descend, such a clear day, so near the top, so much sun remaining, a brilliant moon in the offing, but we well knew the danger of epilepsy at such times and deemed it wiser to turn back. The heater didn't work any better driving home.

J. Mouse

Oh no; this story isn't even worth reading. I'm not all that sure if its even true. It happened during an outrageous storm and the actual events, as they happened, were blown about all over the glacier and lost in the white-out.

But one lonely wand remains in the middle of a glacier. One hundred thirty four miles, eighty three meters, and a short walk across the slough to the northwest; the two involved waited, ready. It was during that cold snap in December. Big time climbers that they were they were going to fly in, but the plane was in the cold snap too. Three days they waited and would wait no more. They drove to Tanacross and slept in the airplane, a Helio Currier. It worked. The next morning was clear and calm and only thirty two below. They flew.

Arrived within view of the wand. But so had the storm. It shrouded the mountains in ominous grey-black and sent its vanguard to lash the glaciers below. Nerve and daring and skill were void in the two who clung to their breakfast with mixed success. Pleasant thoughts of the warmth of Fairbanks appealed to their reason. But the driver (Ron Warbelo) knew the storm and deftly landed on its threshold, an accepted guest.

The story travels into illusion, into the face of the storm. Two days for four miles. Somewhere near the wand. A feeling of the presence of a mountain but only awesome grey-black wrath towering above. A deceptive smooth wave rolling over and screaming down with heinous distain.

A moment of weakness in the storm, they strike out west, past the wand not yet there, and up. "Whack!", the slope greets them, a crack zigs off into the distance, and they move hither with question. Crashing roars descend from above unseen. A place, black wall, contorted ice, resounding thunder of restless mountain, two small figures, a patch of nylon, rest.

A lull of sorts and they travel up. Moments on passing treks: joy, fear, exuberance, serious, humble, joke, command, relax, tension, fatigue; the crest; elation; the summit; subtle, quiet. Grey-white blandness; images there but barely. Son of a Bitch Spire dolefully leaning out over the void between. Ninely four sixty's wall of sheen-white ice flanks its pillowy white high basin. Wind brings the evening chill early and they descend by headlamp. Each place its moment. One place their tracks, and there beside, now a deep jagged crack. Fear casts a larger shadow in the dark. The three descend.

Another day and the storm awoke first; fresh from its nap. Down and out and across and around but nowhere the cave. The storm took notice and seized its chance, lashing out with contempt. They ducked and braced and edged in clinging to their tenuous stance. They needed the cave.

The wand. From there straight east, four rope lengths (but they couldn't tell), turn left; there, no, not sure, abandon the pattern. The cave; respite.

A magnificent gift of beauty was bestowed, too great. The spector of peace glowing from the tempest of violent rage. A moment of being so subtle and complex it could never be shared. But the seeds were told for cultivation of an approach.

A full moon in a sky sharply clear to the tumult at hand. A glistening glacier across which raced and dashed monster plumes of sparkling crystal ice. Towering ridges embroiled in sinister cloud. A window of illumination on an entire mountainside of radiant silvery jumbled ice. Peaks emerging with swirling mist. Cascades of gilt edged clouds absorbing the mind into changing mountainscapes of vapor. Standing alone distant above a flat glacier cave.

Attempts at other things but the storm had granted its Christmas gift and now was not to be bothered, for the dead of winter was its time and it was free in its realm.

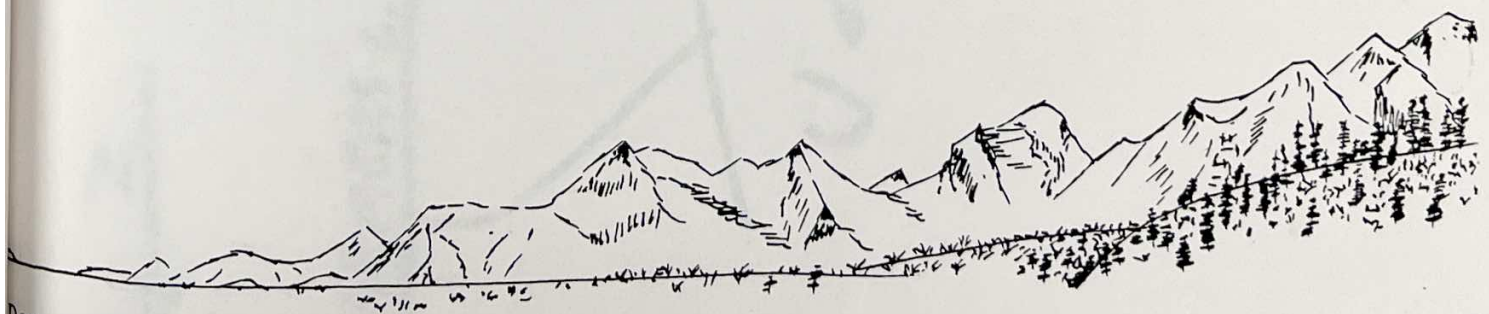
The two journeyed down slowly, passing other realms. Ghost white rams gazed down from wind swept ridges. A pair of gyrs winged up and rolled with the invisible force they shared. Fresh tracks skittered and darted from the brush and back.

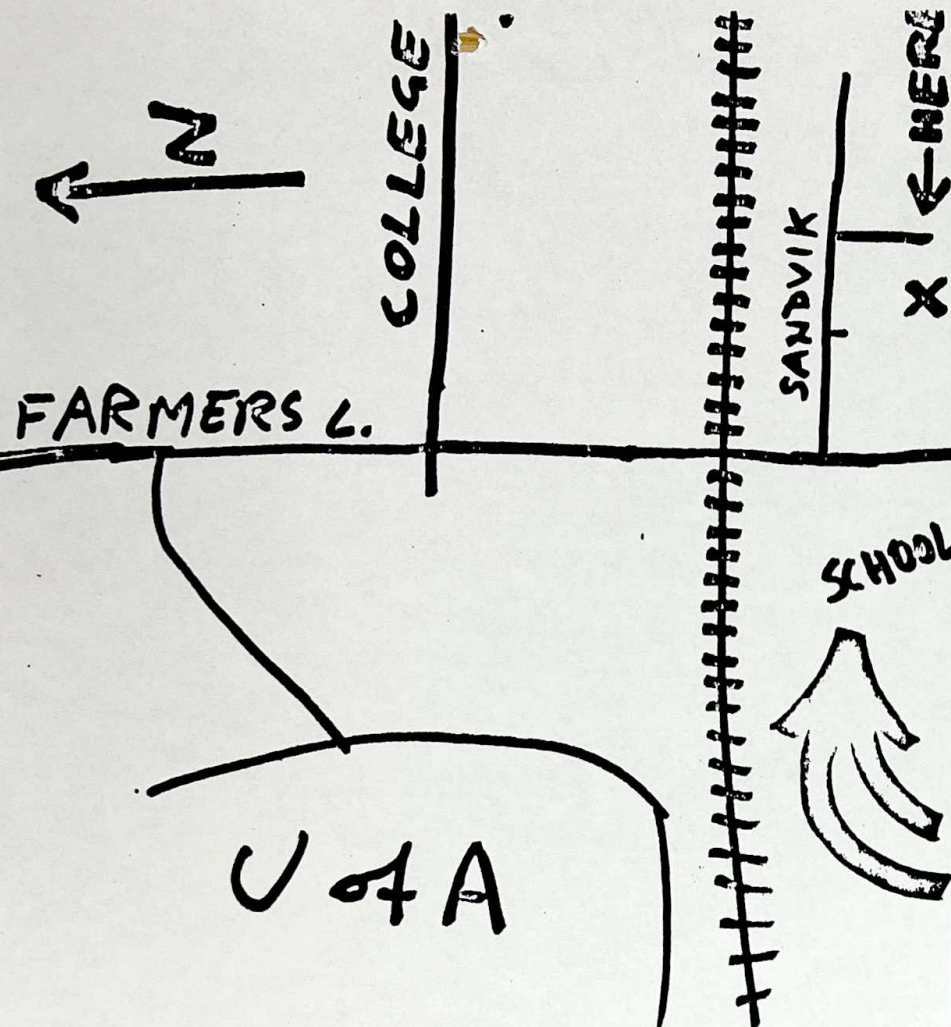
Long and hard and cold and miserable, to an amazing place of warmth and friends. Still some distance from the desolate road, a log house in the trees by the river. Sonny and Sharon and Erica and Royrik. Good times. A different realm of encompassing joy.

The last stretch of miles in rapid light style. The heavy packs whisked out behind eager dogs of lustrous strength.

Just images held by a wand across the slough.

the wand.





FULTIVE CLUB

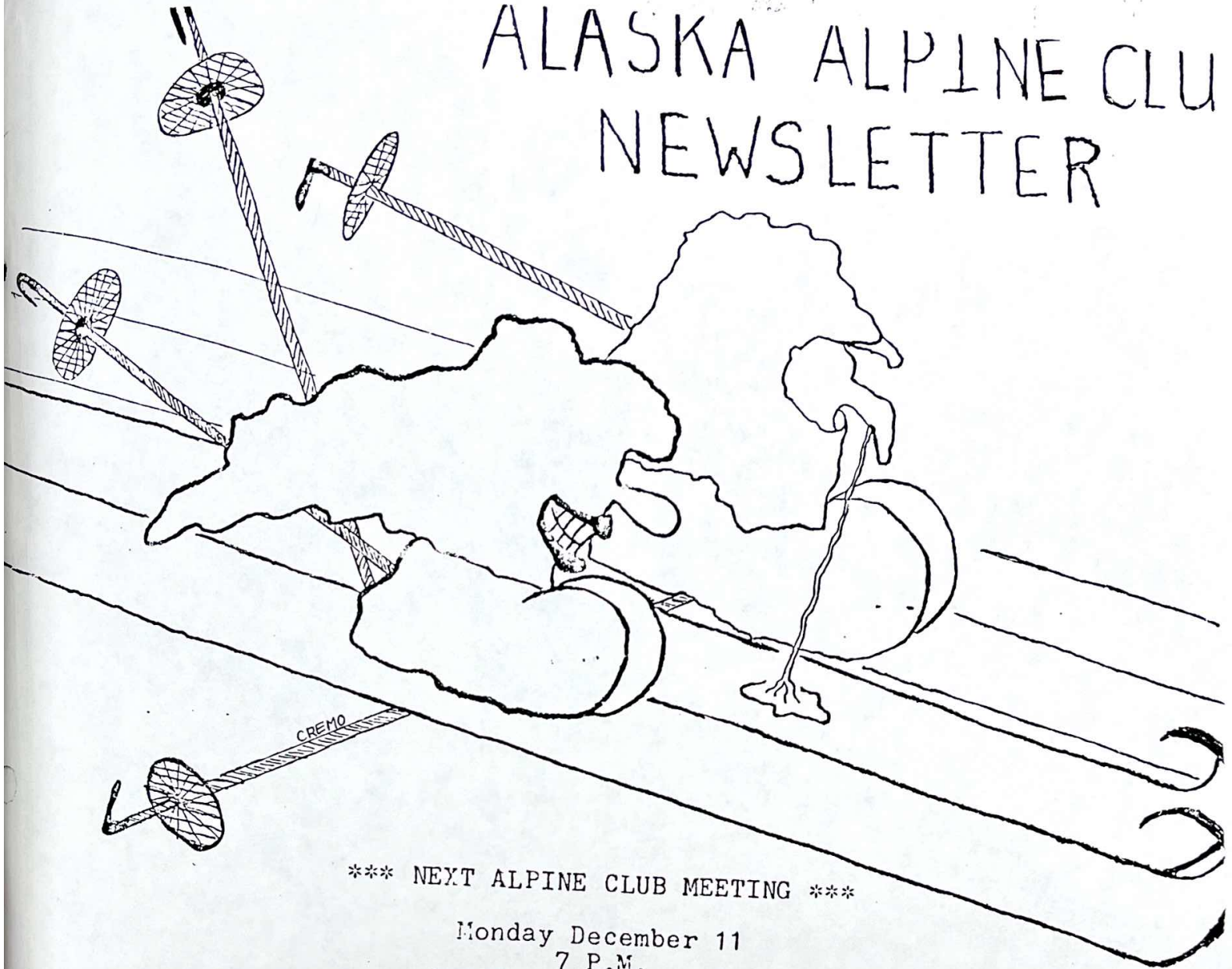
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

TUES 20 FEB 8 PM. SCHINBLE.
BILL BABCOCK : ON ALASKAN
 EXPEDITIONS
 SLIDES, TEA & COOKIES.

TUES 13 MAR - SANDVIK HOUSE 7-30
 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
 ELECTION OF OFFICERS ★ BRING BEER

DESCENT IS COMING!
 WE WANT ARTICLES.

ALASKA ALPINE CLUB NEWSLETTER



*** NEXT ALPINE CLUB MEETING ***

Monday December 11
7 P.M.
317 Duckering Building