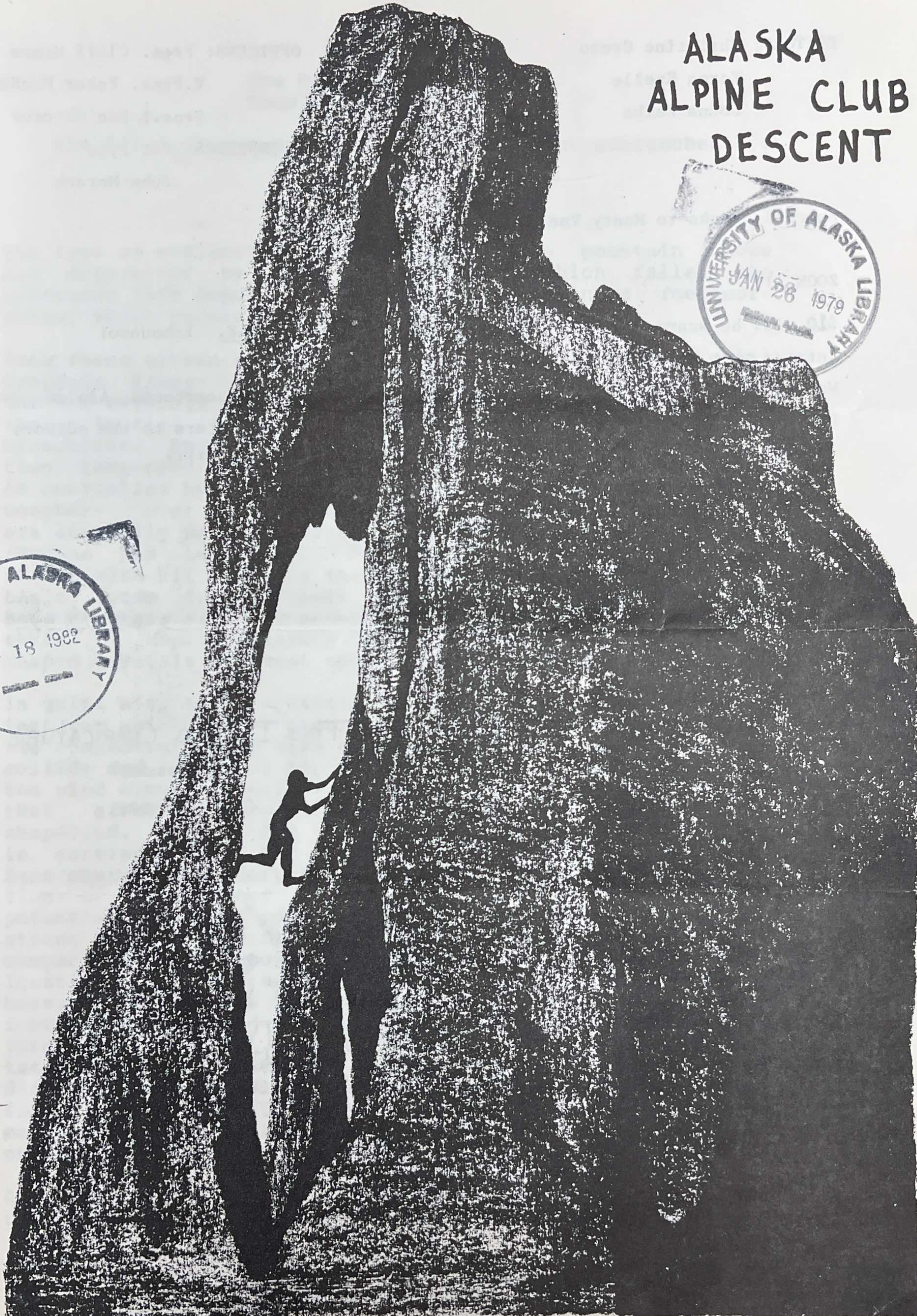
ALASKA ALPINE CLUB DESCENT



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Special thanks to Monty Vanderbilt for computer help.

ZOOM !!!

$10 will be awarded to author of the next FEATURE ARTICLE. Yahooooo!

Entries must be in by Feb I5 !!!!!!

We need your contributions to Descent! Any form you like; cartoons, Alpine Experiences, poems, cover artistry, equipment reviews, letters to the editors drawings of any kind, photos, ANYTHING!!! Ping Ping Pong !!!!!

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This Issue's Charicature
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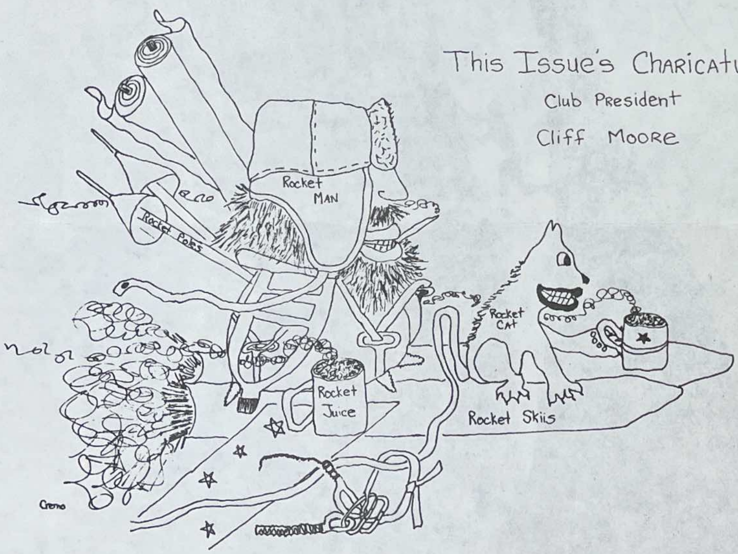


The Mountain Snowpack
Snow and Metamorphism

the first of a series of 3 articles about avalanches

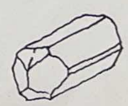
BY STEVE HACKETT

The type of avalanches that develop upon a mountain slope are determined by the form of snow which falls, the processes that deposit the snow and the changes (metamorphism) which occurs after deposition.

Snow forms within the atmosphere when tiny supercooled water droplets freeze upon small dust particles called nuclei. The ice crystals that are formed are hexagonal shaped and their initial forms are commonly platelike, columnar, or branchlike. Snow crystal shape is determined by the nucleation temperature. Crystal growth after initial nucleation is controlled by air temperature and humidity of the atmosphere. Over 39 different general shapes of snow crystals are initially possible with variations of growth conditions (Magons and Lee,1966). Temperature and humidity commonly change with altitude, so that snow crystals modify their basic forms during their fall to earth. Large intricate snow crystals are most common at higher temperatures when there is ample moisture in the air, whereas smaller basic shaped crystals are most common at low temperatures.

In quiet air, snow crystals fall vertically at 1 to 5 feet/sec which varies according to their size and shape. If the concentration is high enough, falling crystals tend to collide and adhere to one another, forming snowflakes. When the wind blows strongly snow crystals become fragmented so that airborne snow is usually small and [uniform in shape],ed. Snow picked up from the surface or while falling is carried by wind and preferentially deposited around surface obstacles or abrupt changes in slope. Selected deposition or erosion of blown snow is important in creating potential avalanche conditions. When snow is deposited by strong winds the particles generally settle into relatively compact masses. Deposition is commonly uneven with some locations being free of snow and other areas covered by heavy drifts of snow or forming cornices. A significant feature of wind deposits is their commonly layered structure. Alternating snow layers with different characteristics can drastically influence subsequent temperature distributions, vapor diffusion within the snowpack and the formation of certain weak layers in the snow mass. The major process that affects the snow as it precipitates is mechanical breakage under wind action.

As soon as snow crystals fall onto a mountain snow slope they fasten to other crystals and become part of an inter-



connected system called the snowpack. The snow crystals on ice grains obtain much freedom with time to move into surrounding voids and the snowpack constantly deforms (settlement) in response to its own weight. The shape of each snow grain changes until the grain loses its' original size or show crystal form. Snow grains change their form through physical processes during the metamorphism of the snowpack.

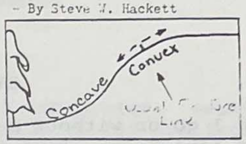
Transport of water vapor from regions of high surface energy (sharp grain corners) to regions of lower surface energy (rounded grain corners), which has a constant below freezing temperautre throughout is called equi-temperature metamorphism. This process leads to the destruction of the original forms and produces uniform, fairly well-rounded grains. The destruction of sharp corners and the thickening of plates, while their major diameter decreases, commonly leads to a reduction in apparent grain size. For grains of the same shape, surface energy decreases further as the smaller grains disappear and the larger grains grow, leading to an increase in average grain size and a reduction in grain number. Both equi-temperature processes facilitate snowpack settlement and densification.

Under a strong temperature gradient, water vapor is transported in the snowpack from the warmer (lower) to the colder (upper) layers by sublimation and deposition. The relatively rapid transport of water causes vapor to sublime from the tops of the snow grains and to deposit on the bottoms of the grains above. The final result is well-oriented grains whose stepped surfaces are called depth hoar or sugar snow. These grain forms are usually related and associated with the first snowfalls of the season and are commonly found on north facing slopes.

Once the snow density has reached approximatley that of randomly packed, uniform ice spheres (580-600 kg/cubic cm) further densification occurs through other processes than those influenced by snow temperature. When snow temperature reaches the freezing point, caused by warm air temperature or high solar radiation, the show melts and additional water is trapped between the grains, filling some of the pore space. Refreezing then results in a denser snow pack through melt-freeze metamorphism. Additional reduction of pore space and a second important process in densification throughout the winter is the action of pressure metamorphism. The final stages of this process are the formation of glacial ice from snow (firnification). Changes in snowpack strength at depth are generally due to the previously described metamorphic processes. General knowledge of internal snow structure and the possible changes with time help in snow stability evaluation.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON AVALANCHE TERMS

\- By Steve W. Hackett



Avalanche: A rapid downhill movement of snow.
Avalanche Hazard: A threat to life and property.
Snow: An ice crystal - a solid form of water.
Accumulation Zone: In an avalanche path, the main collecting area for snow.
Debris: Snow, trees, rocks, etc.. brought down by an avalanche and deposited at the terminus.
Deposition Zone: That area in the avalancne path where the debris comes to rest.
Fracture Line: The well defined line across the top of the avalanche path where the slab breaks away from the stable snow. The face of the fracture is perpendicular to the slope.
Climax Avalanche: A large or major slide which is a result of cumulative factors working over a longer interval of time than those associated with single storms.
Compression Zone: An area of compression at the base of the slide path. This zone is concave in profile and subject to gravitational pressure from the snow above.
Tension Zone: Occurs at the top of the slab where it is trying to pull away from the stable snow.
Concave: The interior of a curved surface.
Convex: The exterior of a curved surface.
Transition: Any point where the profile makes a sharp change.
Aspect or Exposure: The position or terrain facing a particular direction (North aspect faces north).
Cornice: The overhanging lip of snow that develops from wind drifted snow on the lee side of a ridge.
Lee Side: The side sheltered or protected from the wind.
Windward Side: The side from which the wind is blowing.
Fall Line: A line perpendicular to the contour, which has the greatest pull of gravity. The line a round ball would roll down if the slope was free from obstructions.
Slab: A layer of snow held together by internal cohesion.
Shear Stress: The downward force acting parallel to the under surface on a slab layer.
Tensile Strength: The stress at the top of the snow slab where ruptures are most likely to occur.
Shear Strength: Bond or anchorage of a snow layer to its adjacent surface.
Stabilization: The relief of tension in the snow cover which reduces or diminates the avalanche hazard.
New Snow: Freshly fallen snow, classed as dry, damp, wet.
Old Snow: Snow on which metamorphism is underway, classed as dry, damp and wet. Generally old snow terms are old powder, wind pack, ski pack, corn, slush, and depth hoar.
Metamorphism: Structural and crystal line changes within the snow cover (Constructive or destructive).
Corn Snow: A type of damp or wet spring snow. Example of destructive metamorphis in advance stages.
Creep: The slow continuous, glacier-like downhill movement of the snow cover.
Crusts: Breakable, unbreakable, and variable wind crust - bond to under layer, slab - a layer of snow of different structure than adjacent layers.
Rain Crust: Very hard snow layer.
Depth Hoar: (cup crystals or sugar snow) New centers of crystallization caused by vertical diffusion of water vapor (constructive metamorphis). These crystals are of a different character than original snow, and are cup shaped and layered. Cohesion is very poor between the crystals. A steep temperature gradient within the snow cover will induce such formations.
Graupel: Pellet snow, soft hail. Crystals which are completely and heavily coated with rime. Have shape of small, round ball.
Rime: A solid form of water caused by super cooled water particles (fog) collecting on surfaces such as trees branches. Dense, and fine grained in structure.
Snow Plume or Snow Banner: Snow being carried by the wind away from a peak or ridge into the air.
Sunball: Balls of snow which roll down a steep slope after sun action. The trail they leave is sometimes called a "snow snake".
Measurement of Snow: Four types of stakes:
1. Fixed or master measures total winter snowfall.
2. Storm stake measure total snowfall of one storm.
3. 24 hour stake - measures snowfall over a 24 hour period.
4. Interval measures snowfall over short interval.

Settlement: Old snow depth previously, plus new snowfall, minus total depth at the time of observation equals settlement.
Adhesion: Attraction between surfaces.
Age Hardening: The process leading to increase in snow strength with time following mechanical disturbance.
Cohesion: Particles throughout the mass are united.
Condensation: Conversion of water vapor to a liquid.
Conduction: Transfer of heat from one touching object to another.
Density: Water content in the snow cover.
Dew Point: The temperature at which air is saturated with water vapor, and below which condensation will occur.
Elastic and Plastic: Property of snow - deformation of snow without fracture.
Evaporation: Conversion of liquid water into water vapor.
Radiation: The exchange of energy between bodies of electromagnetic radiation (eq. light, heat).

Donna's Poem

BY DONNA LEE WEIHS

Need I go on without mentioning the alpine start
java java java - fart fart fart.
It's 3 am in a car without heat
Madman at the wheel, eight to a seat.

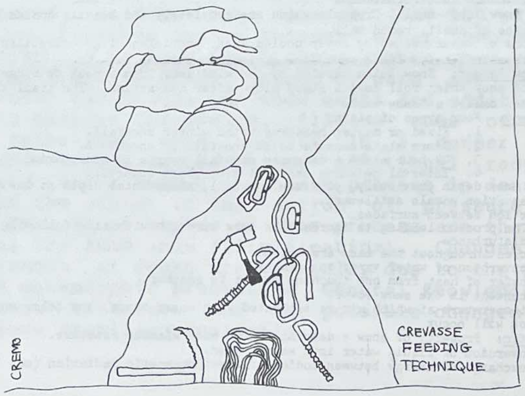
Now now where has my boot gone?
It was there - on my foot - nearing the ridge at dawn.
Hanging on this rope is great fun
as is sleeping in the tent bun to bun.

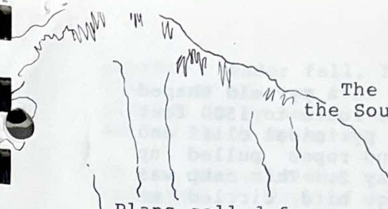
Time to rope up or place a few screws
Wish I could find my boot - hell of a thing to loose.
Watch out head, watch out ass
Here I come - grinning crevasse.

"Farout the summit is in sight!"
No? - That's where we bivouacked last night.
It's been 8 hours and 4000 feet of a gut busting slog
18 hours and 20 feet of frozen rope and jammed clog.

As the sun sets flaming skys and cosmic motions
Out come flasks and bags of fireside delights and magic potions.
Above conversation and quiet reflective thoughts
Comes the roar of msr stoves and bubbling pots.

The snow cave collapsed, the weather has taken a turn
This pyro behind the stove just caused dinner to burn.
Well the fuel is low, not enough to make water boil
Time to hit the Trophy Room and a Burger Royal.





The Central Buttress of the South Face of Mount Hunter

BY JOHN WATERMAN

Plans called for a complete traverse of Mount Hunter, south to north and a descent on the north side to fly out from either the Kahiltna or Tokositna glaciers. I would do this route in the most expedition of styles, ferrying my entire 600 lb base camp of reserve equipment. By re-using my rope as I went along, pulling it up again and again after I had moved supplies, I could climb a route requiring 12,500 feet of rope with only 3600 feet of rope. There were 12 camps. Each section between camps required 12 gear shuttles on the average. 145 days on the mountain proved my original plans of 80-100 days inaccurate.

The climb can be divided into 10 sections. The first 4 make up the central buttress, the major unknown of the trip. The South Ridge, which joins the central buttress at 12,700 feet, comprises the next two sections.

Of Hunter's 3 summits, north, south and middle, the north is the highest. Sections 7 and 8 run from the south edge of the summit plateau to a pass at 14,000 on the northeast shoulder of the mountain. The descent of the north spur occupied the last three sections.

On March 24th camp was set up in the bergschrund beneath a gully on the east side of the buttress. I lost a contact lens that same night and my fingers, frostbitten a month earlier during preparations in Fairbanks, started to blister despite above zero (F) temperatures. Thoughts of aborting the project vanished as I made rapid progress up the 1200 foot long, Class 4 gully. 250 feet higher I reached the top of a rock step where I found a suitable place for a campsite.

The next 500 feet was the crux of the technical climbing. The rock step was traversed with only one class 5 move. Above, it attached to a 350 foot high rock cliff. A pinnacle some 80 feet high jutted out from the face about 50 feet above me. Thirty feet of free moves and 20 feet A1 brought me to the snow on the back of this cat's ear shaped pinnacle. Forty feet higher I was up against a blank slab. By angling off to the right I reached a beautiful two inch crack. I aided out forty feet and lowered myself to the closest spot on the snow ledge near the base of a 300 foot gully. This snow ledge had been built for two foot high midgets, and the gully contained some A-3 climbing on rotten expanding flakes as well as numerous fifth class moves sprinkled throughout. However, the rock was generally excellent Yosemite type granite and the climbing mostly the sort one dreams about. The gully led to a pyramid shaped cliff. On April 11, day 18, I pushed the route to 1500 feet up the buttress; this was the top of the pyrimidal cliff and my third campsite. I got all supplies and ropes pulled up to the top of the second section by May 2. This camp was called "the perch" perhaps because a large bird circled me there, or because it reminded me of a place I had visited as a young climber.

By April 19, I had received my last flight from Cliff. I'd told him I'd see him on the other side in July. I didn't see another human being for 100 days. Section 3, the next 1600 feet, I called "the Courts of the Lords". This section was a spectacular corniced arete with a monster snow formation (probably large enough to land a Super Cub), "The First Judge", and a second smaller formation, "The Second Judge". I climbed the 1600 foot section from "the Perch" to "the Second Judge" in 4 days in bunny boots and crampons. I used a stich belay plate and a 200 foot three-eighths inch goldline to do most of my leading, unless in a hurry when I would use the belay plate on a 600 foot three-eighths inch polypro. I seldom placed protection at closer than 100 foot intervals for the sake of speed.

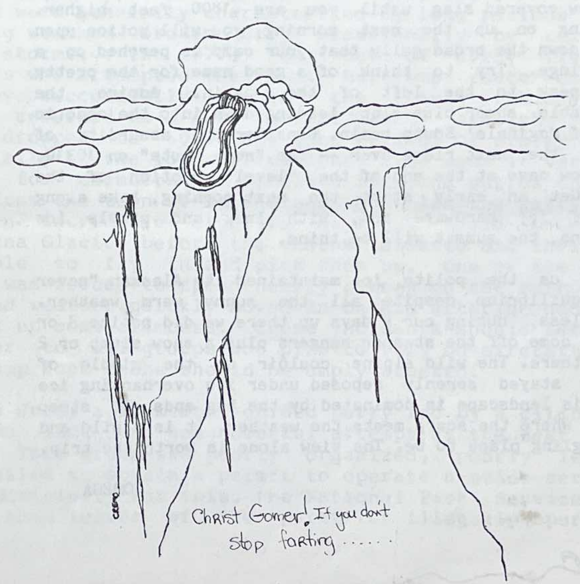
On the 43rd day it became obvious that even by going on two-thirds rations, I would not reach the summit plateau with any food reserves. In addition, I noticed I was infected with pediculosis. It was some comfort to know at least I was not alone. Beethoven's 4th symphony and his Grosse Fuge are reminiscent of the ominous mood that prevailed.

I finally got around to pulling up my ropes from section three on May 22nd, day 59. The weather, which had not hampered me much this far, seemed now to conspire against me. My spacious (finally) campsite became inundated with snow frequently.

The fourth and last section of the buttress entailed a steep corniced arete and headwalls to a large easy ridge I called "the Third Judge". This led to a triangular face called "the Little Prince" and then to a ridge connecting with the south ridge at 12,700 feet. Here on top of the buttress, Mount Foraker came into view. In this last section, I suffered numerous nervous breakdowns due to iced jumars on frozen ropes. By June 6th, all my gear was at the beginning of sections 5 & 6, the south ridge. The next day on the south ridge, a 12 foot section of cornice broke underneath me. Suprisingly, my belay system held the 40 foot fall. A frozen-in picket had resisted a straight up pull . Another cornice collapsed while traversing the knife edge to the summit arete. I used all 3600 feet of rope on this fifth section due to cornice danger. On June 12th, with all my equipment across section 5, I had 8 , two-thirds-ration days of food. The next day, despite losing one mitten and taking another leader fall, I reached the summit plateau. I fixed 1000 feet of rope that day. When I felt the edge of that plateau in my hand like one grips the edge of a table, tears welled up in my eyes.

On the 15th, in what seemed to be the worst storm to date, I consumed 3 days of food carrying the remains of my camp up the arete. By a miracle I set up my tent in what later seemed to be the windiest spot on earth. A partial clearing prompted me to relax and eat an extra day or two of food so that on the 17th I divided my last two days of food into 10 units of less than 1000 calories each. Relief came on my third full day on these rations when Cliff dropped 36 days of full rations plus a gallon of ice cream and ten lbs of potatoes. A day later I concluded that I would run out of this food as well, before I even began my descent. This disrupted my new-found sense of security.

Despite continued icing of my jumars, I completed all my carries up the arete by June 28th. Using my completely sunburned upper torso as an excuse for not load carrying, I went to the south summit on the 2nd of July, day 101. The summit never seemed so far away as when I was 100 feet below it in a little col confronted by a gentle slope. Shortly thereafter, I walked onto the broad summit. Who could have known that it would take me another 43 days to reach my fly-out site, leaving only the higher summit of Mount McKinley awaiting my return.



MUST O' DONE

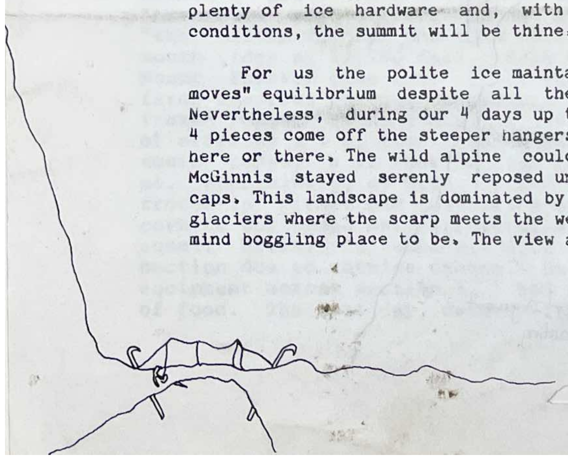
10310 again. Started 2 climbers late two days. Ended up 4 climbers a day late and a dinner short. This amounts to about 3 steep slippery but firm pitches exposed to earthquake. If the fault slips, the whole ridge will be rapidly rearranged. Such is, of course, a hazard of every steep route near the fault. There is enough hanging ice, however, to make one very wary of other more frequent triggers such as thawing and freezing and just plain old mass balance. April could be a very cruel month. Fortunately for us it was late March.

There is a well defined chute between the rock and the ice just off the lee side of the ridge line. Running up this chute would be easy and fast. However, the steep ice at the top would be a welcome relief from the total avalanch exposure below. Saner strategy keeps to the right, working through more steep ice but affording some protection from moderate sized pieces which might come off the tower. There is a last unseen pitch before one is over the lip of the big back ice sheet and into the Shand amphitheater. The change of view must be a fine flash.

To find this place, turn right at Black Rapids Training Station and follow the snow machine track for a few miles until you are pushed right by Locket Basin Bulge. Chase moraines for a while then turn left before the icefall and slog snow covered slag until you are 1800 feet higher. Continuing on up the next morning, you will notice upon looking down the broad gully that your camp is perched on a snow bridge. Try to think of a good name for the pretty hooded peak to the left of the basin. Admire the unarrestable sheer blue slope leading down into the chaotic tangle of Mcginnis' South basin. Consider the absurdity of climbing the next ridge over -- the "nose route" on 10310. Dig a snow cave at the end of the "level" section of the ridge. Get an early start the next morning, take along plenty of ice hardware and, with luck and stable ice conditions, the summit will be thine.

For us the polite ice maintained its Alaskan "never moves" equilibrium despite all the sunny warm weather. Nevertheless, during our 4 days up there we did notice 3 or 4 pieces come off the steeper hangers plus a snow slump or 2 here or there. The wild alpine couloir up the middle of McGinnis stayed serenly reposed under its overhanging ice caps. This landscape is dominated by the tag ends of steep glaciers where the scarp meets the weather. It is a wild and mind boggling place to be. The view alone is worth the trip.

OMEGA



Mountaineering Activity
Mount McKinley National Park
1978

BY ROBERT A. GERHARD
MOUNTAINEERING RANGER

This report summarizes mountaineering activity within Mount McKinley National Park during 1978. On December 1, 1978, President Carter issued a proclamation establishing Denali National Monument. The Monument consists of approximatley 3,890,000 acres and surrounds Mount McKinley National Park on three sides. Mount Hunter, Mount Huntington, the Sheldon Amphitheatre, and the Kitchatna Spires are among the mountaineering areas included within the Monument. At the present time we do not know what regulations will be adopted for the new National Monuments in Alaska, but it appears likely that they will not significantly affect proposed mountaineering activities during the 1979 climbing season.

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More poor weather than in recent years combined with several unusual incidents made the climbing season in Mount McKinley National Park a noteworthy one. The 1976 and 1977 climbing seasons were generally characterized by long periods of good climbing weather broken only ocassionally by relatively short storms. In 1977, four out of every five (80%) climbers who attempted the West Buttress route on Mount McKinley successfully reached the summit. This year the weather returned to a more "normal" state and the success ratio dropped to 60%. The long periods of stormy weather (especially at the lower elevations) also made it very difficult for climbers to be flown into and out of the mountains from the town of Talkeetna. One climbing party had to wait an incredible eighteen days at their base on the Tokositna Glacier before the weather cleared and their pilot was able to fly in and pick them up. One of the glacier pilots was forced to spend nearly a week on the Ruth Glacier when bad weather quickly moved in on him after he had landed to pick up come climbers. These incidents should serve as a reminder to all groups who plan to rely on aircraft that a base camp food cache should be amply stocked.

In late June, a 13-member guided party led by a climber from Colorado made an unsuccessful attempt at the West Butress route. This group was poorly organized, poorly led, and also failed to obtain a permit to operate a guide service on Mount McKinley. For this, the National Park Service later cited the leader of the party for illegally operating a business within a National Park. A heavy bond was posted and forfeited.

The party made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the summit from 17,200 feet, after which one member of the party, who had earlier lost his sleeping bag on the West Buttress, became seriously ill with cerebral edema. The group leader did not feel that his group could safely evacuate the ill climber and with bad weather threatening felt that several others could become liabilities. He therefore sent everyone but himself and the ill climber down to report the incident, while he waited to be rescued. Bad weather precluded any rescue for several days but finally a U.S. Army Chinook helicopter made a very rough landing at 17,200 feet and evacuated both climbers. Tricky wind conditions and the high altitude nearly caused a crash, a harsh reminder that there is a very definite risk everytime a helicopter is used in a mountain rescue operation.

A week later, a radio call brought a request for yet another evacuation from the same spot. the caller would not directly identify the nature of the problem although his "complaints" ranged from diarrhea to claustrophobia. Lacking knowledge of any specific incident, park rangers refused to initiate a rescue. The caller threatened legal action against the Park Service and later used the radio in an unsuccessful attempt to convince a Talkeetna glacier pilot to illegally fly to 14,200 feet to pick him up. Only later was it learned that his only "problem" was that he had "a very important business engagement" in Africa and he did not have time to return to the landing strip and be flown out. However, since he could not find any legal or illegal ways to be flown off , he was forced to return to the landing strip where he had to wait for some time before the weather improved. The leader of his party, an officer in the American Alpine Club, had no knowledge of any of this team member's radio conversations, until after he returned to Talkeetna.

Earlier in the season, two Alaskans tried to be the first to take a sled dog team to the top of McKinley. Surprisingly,they were able to reach 17,200 feet before they were forced to turn back when one member of the group suffered frostbitten toes due to damaged vapor barrier boots. A sorry sidelight of this trip occured when the two climbers had to kill one of their dogs to feed the others when they ran short of dog food. The dog's carcass was left at the 14,200 foot campsite and its head was later found impaled on a post.

In an incredible feat of strength,endurance, and determination, two other climbers reached the summit of McKinley 19 hours after leaving their base camp at Kahiltna pass (10,000). The party bivouaced briefly at 17,200 feet on their descent before returning to the base of the mountain. A 10,000 foot summit push in a single day has been done many times on lower peaks but this is probably the first time it has ever been achieved on a mountain over 20,000 feet. Their extreme exertion, the high altitude, and the cold made tremendous demands. The climber's bodies showed signs of high altitude pulmonary edema on the descent. Part of the party's strategy involved climbing high very fast and then descending before the symptoms of edema could disable them - a situation they narrowly avoided.

Eleven persons were involved in accidents requiring evacuation in 1978 and a number of others were injured or became ill in less serious incidents. Two Japanese were killed in an avalanche on the Southeast Ridge of Mount Foraker, making them the 7th and 8th Japanese to be killed on Mount Foraker since 1976. No climbers of any other nationality have been killed on Mount Foraker. In another avalanche accident occurring at nearly the same time, two Swiss suffered broken legs on the West rib of Denali after a large avalanche carried them 1,500 feet.

Altitude illness dramatically affected at least 13 others. One,who had suffered from the illness previously, first showed signs of pulmonary edema at the 8,000 foot level and was evacuated by fixed-wing aircraft. Two climbers from another party were evacuated by helicopter from Denali pass after they became ill with cerebral edema and acute mountain sickness. Their entire party had been taking the drug Diamox to prevent this, but had run out of their supply earlier in the climb.

Three others were injured in falls and at least eleven reported cases of moderate to severe frostbite.

A total of 539 registered for mountaineering within the park - 439 for Denali. 150 foreigners from 31 expeditions registered to climb in the park this year. As usual, the majority (89) of these climbers were from Japan.

Mount Foraker was successfully climbed this year by only one group of four who climbed the Southeast Ridge. Four other groups attempted Mount Foraker. Mount Mather was climbed for the first time since 1952 when it was first ascended. An Oregon team, which skiied from the road into and out from their climb made the first ascent of the southwest ridge of Mount Hunter. Another individual made an epic 5-month solo journey on Mount Hunter [see inside story by JOHN WATERMAN,ed.] and completed the first ascent of the southeast spur of the south face. Two new routes on Mount Huntington, the North Face and the Southeast Ridge, were climbed. In addition, two separate groups climbed the major portion of a new ice route to the west of the Harvard Route on the Southwest Face, but both were turned back short of the summit. Six other parties attempted Mount Huntington.

As more and more people climb Mount McKinley, its well publicized garbage problem continues. The very useful efforts of some of the "clean-up teams" and the concern shown by the climbers themselves have helped to improve the situation in the past. However, until everyone learns to understand and appreciate the problem and make a strong commitment to remove all of their trash a problem will still exist. This year it appeared worse than in previous years.

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Much discussion in Alaska in recent years has centered on "renewable" versus "non-renewable" resources. A non-renewable resource not yet mentioned is that of mountaineering "first ascents". While Alaska is one of the few places left in the world where numerous unclimbed routes and peaks remain, it will not always be that way. Climbing activity has increased tremendously in recent years especially on the lesser peaks of the Alaska range, and some day every significant mountain will have been climbed. But perhaps if future parties can climb without leaving a trace of their travels, then subsequent groups can have the same excitement and challenge of a first ascent. "leaving no trace" of course means to travel without leaving trash or altering the area in any way. But it also means to leave no written record of what you have done. At Mount McKinley, we plan to adopt an informmal policy of not making records of ascents on the lesser peaks in the Alaska range (generally those without a given name.) Hopefully, this will allow all mountaineers visiting an area the opportunity to experience the planning for, approaching, and climbing of a peak that apparently has not been climbed previously. This sort of a climb is more of a true test of the total skills of a mountaineer.

However, this scheme can only work if the climbing community wants it to. Will climber's egos allow them to refrain from publicizing their efforts just so subsequent parties can have a similar experience? We would like to know what others think of this idea. Any climbers who agree with it can help by refraining from formally naming peaks in the range and by not writing specific accounts of some of their climbs in the range, particularly those on the lesser peaks.

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We would love to hear your comments about this last part of the National Park Ranger's report
See editor's comment, next page

Editor's Comment

The Old Park Service has really done it - They think they have got problems now, having to worry about riskily landing helicopters all over the park. The people they're rescuing have probably read numerable detailed accounts and seen at least one slide show about the ascent of Denali. What if they hadn't had an introduction...?

"Oh well", one could say,"that's Denali, it's different. They're only worried about the lesser peaks."

Well, I think they're about as sharp as a bowling ball. Their policy is far from a governing principle. Why should greater peaks be governed differently from lesser peaks? Many of the lesser peaks in the Alaska Range confront the climber with situations quite similar to those encountered on the major peaks.

Don't get me wrong. I am steadfastly opposed to magazines about the outdoors that attract herds of people to areas that would have otherwise been quite peaceful. However, I am not opposed to concise, helpful, informative articles about particular routes. If 12 people died crossing the gully to the left of the South Buttress of Donnally Dome, I want to know about it. I don't care if some egotistic climber has placed his name in the article on every other line!

Christine Cremo

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