

DESCENT

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEEKLY INFORMAL MEETINGS of the Alaska Alpine Club are being held Tuesday evenings at about 8:30 at the Pumphouse. These are great opportunities to plot the next assault on Scott Peak or just see what the other folks might be doing next weekend. Formal meetings will begin again in September.

ALASKA MOUNTAIN AND WILDERNESS CLASSIC overland footrace will be started August 22 in Hope, AK ending who-knows-when in downtown Homer AK. This is a 145 mile cross country race conceived and organized by George Ripley. Contact him at SRA #31, Homer, AK 99603 for more details.

GATES OF THE ARTIC PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PLAN is now available for public scrutiny in the Fairbanks office of the National Park Service.

Report on the Annual Meeting
by John Keller, Secretary-Treasurer

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The 1982 annual meeting of the Alaska Alpine Club was held Friday, March 19 in the Wood Memorial Center on the UAF campus. Twenty members attended. The first order of business was the consumption of tea and cookies accompanied by lots of bull and smalltalk. Finally the meeting came to order and the election of officers for the 82- 83 season

proceeded. The results after much politicking and speech-making are as follows: Ken Green was elected President; Stan Justice, Vice-President; John Keller, Secretary-Treasurer; and Joanne Groves, Counselor. Following the elections there was a discussion led by Joanne Groves concerning Club input on management plans for new National Parks in Alaska. A resolution was passed supporting limited development in these Parks, with maintenance of traditional air access for climbers. The meeting ended with the showing of the climbing film "Solo" and adjournment to the Pumphouse.

The Canwell Stampede
by Ken Green

This most recent Stampede had an interesting twist this year. We actually were responsible for inspiring Doug Buchanan to beg the Department of Environmental Conservation to intervene in the Stampede management. Imagine that! A supposed Libertarian trying to use an environmental agency with little success I might add. Evidently he complained three times to DEC that we might litter the glacier. However, DEC inspected the glacier afterwards and gave us an "A" for cleanliness, so we still have our reputation as the "clean" club.

The Stampede attracted over 100 folks and assorted mutts this year. We had good weather on Saturday and high winds Sunday while skiing out. John Keller and Christy Tews did a good job wanding the trail (at least I didn't hear of anyone falling into a hole). The northern lights were fine Saturday night and Jay Hughes supplemented them with his own display. Jay and I did pretty well that night in spite of Rough Dog (Ron Rosser) failing his mission of a dog-sled booze run. Sickness and car troubles are no excuse, Ron. Joanne Groves got her "shit" together and left the glacier immaculate, but she couldn't understand why she had trouble getting a ride back to Fairbanks.

In spite of my joking concerning Buchanan, there is an element of truth in his machinations. When I checked the hut Sunday afternoon, it was trashed. I ended up hauling about 35 pounds of someone else's garbage off the glacier. I think we need to discuss the Stampede at a club meeting before automatically rescheduling it again.

Some Climbs on Angel Creek Rocks
by John Keller

Angel Creek rocks are a collection of granite outcrops located about one-half mile south of the Chena Hot Springs Road at Mile 40. Recently members of the Alaska Alpine Club

climbing class have been exploring for new routes on these rocks. Recorded here is a description of the area including old and new routes. There are still many new routes to be climbed out there; if you climb a new route worthy of description, write it up for Descent.

The rock at Angel Creek is similar to that found in the Tors. In places it is solid and rough; in other places the crystals are not well cemented, making for a surface which tends to slough off and the occasional loose block. Also like the Tors these rocks are covered on the north side by a thick layer of lichen and moss. However a considerable amount of gardening has removed most of the loose rock and moss on the routes described here.

To get to these rocks drive to about mile 40 of Chena Hot Springs Road, park in the turnout just past the bridge over Angel Creek. Walk along the east side (right side as you leave Fairbanks) of the bridge to the creek and follow it downstream 50 yards. Follow a Jeep trail one quarter mile or so upstream along the Chena to a small cabin. Cross the river here. Cross the branch further over and pick up a climber's trail which heads straight up to the largest rock (rock no. 1).

Most of the climbing so far has been on the N. E. face of rock no. 1, however two routes- 8 and 9- on other rocks are worthy of mention. All the routes described here can be climbed with a rope anchored at the top. Several of the routes do offer good nut or Friend placements for the leader. Routes 2,4,5, and 9 have good protection, routes 7 and 8 some, and routes 1,3 and 6 none.

1. South Ridge, 5.4. Ascends ledges from a grassy ledge on far left hand side of the N.E. face to a sharp pinnacle. Descent: rappel from a sling around the pinnacle.

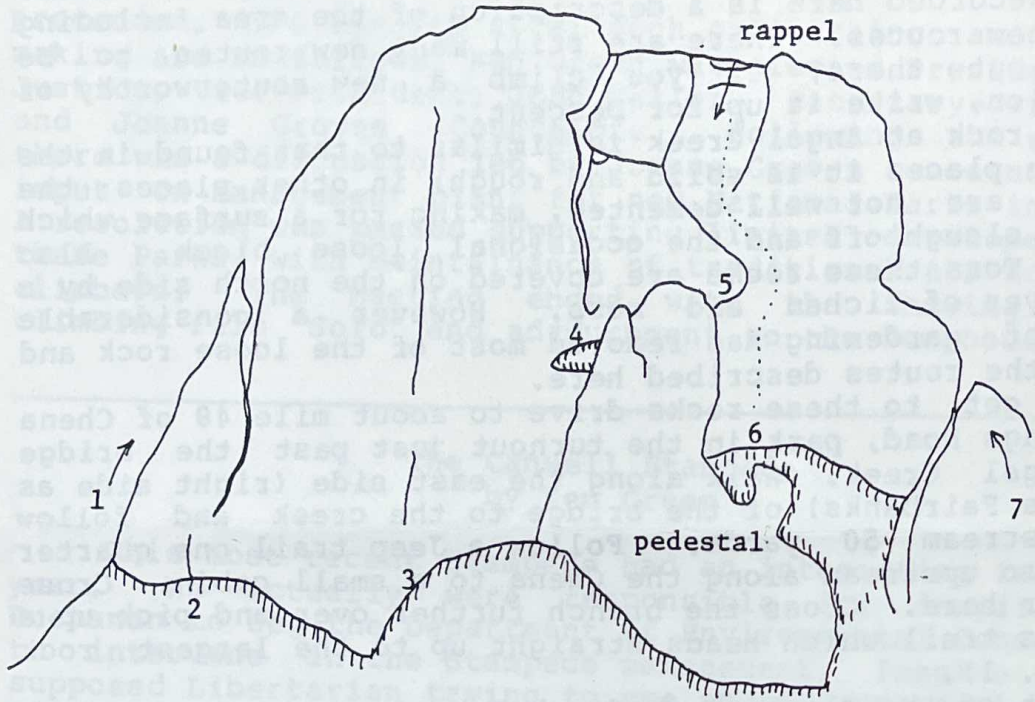
2. Handcrack, 5.8. Cross slab and climb obvious hand crack and chimney 20 feet right of the south ridge. Descent: as in no. 1.

3. Minor Groove, 5.9+. Looks like a crack but it isn't.

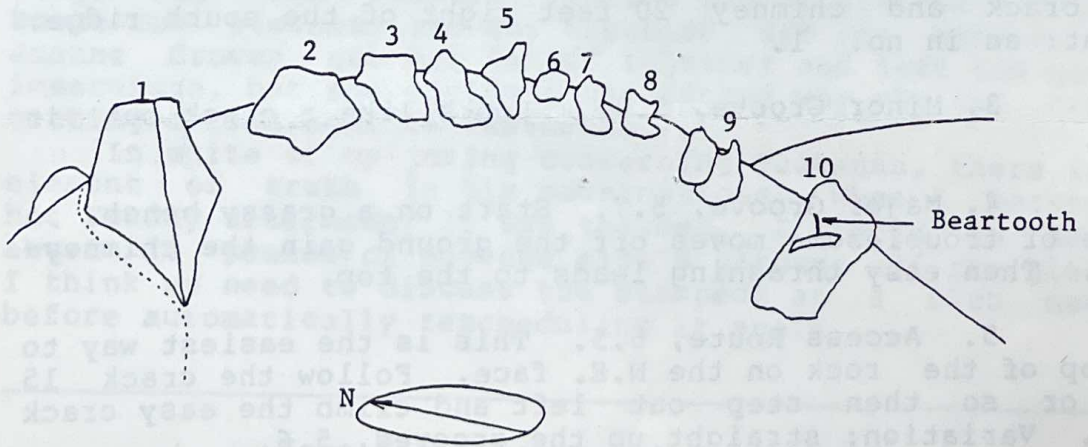
4. Major Groove, 5.7. Start on a grassy bench. A couple of troublesome moves off the ground gain the chimney-crack. Then easy thrashing leads to the top.

5. Access Route, 5.5. This is the easiest way to the top of the rock on the N.E. face. Follow the crack 15 feet or so then step out left and climb the easy crack above. Variation: straight up the grooves, 5.6.

6. Rappel Route, 5.9. About 20 feet to the right of the top of the access route is a block tied off with slings. A rappel from this anchor is the standard descent from routes 3-6. Start near a small birch tree and climb



View of the NE face of Rock No. 1
of Angel Creek Rocks from Rock No. 2.



View of Angel Creek Rocks
from Chena Hot Springs Road

directly up to the rappel anchor. Variation: start up the access route and cross over to the right at the first opportunity, 5.6.

7. North Buttress Crack, 5.9. This route ascends the north buttress starting along the trail below the pedestal which stands against the N.E. face of rock no. 1. Climb a steep chimney-crack then go straight up a thin face.

8. Rock Three. East Face, 5.10? A very steep hand-to-offwidth crack beckons the would-be hardman (or woman).

9. Rock Ten. Beartooth, 5.8. Layback and jam the left side of a large flake leaning against the road side of the rock. There are also several good short routes in the 5.7 to 5.9 range around on the south face of Rock Ten.

Kachemak Bay State Park
by Moss Mead

Kachemak Bay State Park is a striking hybrid of the green lush beauty of Southeastern Alaska and the drier terrain of Central Alaska. A bill was passed in 1970 setting aside this area of 119,970 acres of glaciated and faulted coastal lands. From the town of Homer on the Kenai Peninsula the gray and green peaks and pale blue glaciers rise only a few miles across the Bay's clear waters. Much of the park is undeveloped with as yet very few maintained trails. There are a number of interesting peaks to climb. China Poot Peak is accessible below treeline; Ice Worm Peak is accessible via the main ice field east of the park. (Yes, there are iceworms.) Skiing the glaciers is a good mode of travel in late summer. Below treeline a machete is required gear when hiking, since the vegetation there is extremely lush. Flowers grow in great abundance-just like the berries...yumm yumm! Animals include everything from Dall sheep to whales. The marine ecosystem in the Bay is one of the richest to be found anywhere. There are also numerous archeological sites found mostly near the water or on islands. Nowadays the area has few human inhabitants and only a few inholdings. Anyone considering a trip there can ride the local ferry across from Homer for about fifteen dollars. One could also fly in or drive and walk from Seldovia. A visit to this Park, which is little used at present, promises to be refreshing to the Interior Alaskan.

Amphitheatre Touring by Michael Masters

Ten virtually cloudless days in a basin surrounded by sheer granite walls rising nearly 6000 feet, the sun so intense it enabled us to transform a tent into a sauna one afternoon. Summer in Yosemite? On the contrary, early April in the Ruth Amphitheatre on the Southeast flank of Denali. Instead of a valley of trails, trees and visitors, the cliffs of the gateway and gorge drop directly into ice rivers concealing and still carving away their bases. To one accustomed to the Deltas, being landed on the shadow of Mount Barille, 45 minutes from Talkeetna, overwhelms the senses. Without familiar scale objects the mind compresses distance and size, not appreciating that the gateway through which the glacier exits is over a mile wide and the amphitheatre five, a deception broken only temporarily by the appearance of a light plane, or another ski party. Disorientation also strikes other creatures, as ptarmigan which roosted just outside our camp one night, far beyond any willow. In the days ahead, astonishment became awe and appreciation as our party headed by Stan Justice, including Henry Friedman, Joe Welna, and myself took in the valley.

Opportunities for skiing, both downhill and touring, and climbing of snow, ice and rock abound. The grand scale, steepness and dissection of even the non-granitic peaks is daunting. There are few easy climbs here, and most of those, such as Mt. Barille, are guarded by approaches subject to frequent ice avalanches. A notable exception is Explorer's Peak off the north fork of the glacier. However several feet of recent snow and warm days combined to convince us to concentrate on skiing and ski touring. A network of trails, followed later by the one or two parties in the area, grew during exploration of the west fork of the Ruth Glacier, between the north face of Mt. Huntington and the buttresses of Denali, each a mountain in itself; the north fork to the base of three almost-continuously active icefalls from Mt. Silverthrone; the north pass to the Buckskin Glacier, over which towers the ice-capped monolith of the Moose's Tooth and its nearly 6000 foot vertical north and northeast faces; and the gorge itself. During that time we saw several avalanches, including one that left the approach to Pittock Pass littered with ice blocks and heard a mammoth slide that seemed to continue for several minutes on the far side of Mt. Dan Beard. On one tour, we probed and sidestepped a path through the corniced cracks of the glacial margin to the base of a lesser wall. The warm granite, large-crystalline, completely solid and free of lichens, and split by vertical crack systems with stains trailing from iron nodules reminiscent of old pitons, invited climbing. Joe respinded, overboots and all. Even this minor wall completely overwhelmed us, reestablishing a sense of scale.

On rest days we crafted igloos and covered crackfree

slopes around the landing strip with the curves of linked telemark turns. The uniform, almost crustless snow was perfect for downhill skiing and made suitable construction blocks after compaction. Using Stan's design of a radius cord to avoid topless cones, we created a two-igloo condominium that assured warm sleeping after appreciating the auroral displays on the 20 below nights. Warm, that is, except for one night when we partook too heavily of spirits and forgot to plug the vent.

While Joe and Henry flew out at the end of spring break, Stan and I skied out via the Buckskin Glacier. The pass, like the amphitheatre, is awe inspiring: to the west, the massif of Denali commands the total field of view; to the east towers the Moose's Tooth. As seen from above, a large cornice overhangs the whole descent slope. By now practiced masons, we built an igloo from the windpacked snow just behind the lip, then dug through the overhang. After a warm night we used our shelter as a bollard to rappel down the hole. Lowering the sleds and leapfrogging from one anchor to another the thousand feet of descent took the rest of the day. From below we could see that our rappel, while fun, wasn't essential: the cornice disappears on the south side.

Three and a half days of skiing to the Parks Highway linked the basin of ice, snow, and rock to the more familiar world, step by step. The smooth high road of the glacier led into tortuous water canyons strewn with house-sized blocks of the Moose's Tooth, half-seen in a whiteout of heavy wet snow, then to sun upon the open upper reaches of Hidden River where the living world greeted us in the varied songs of water ouzels, the return of forests. The lower stretch of the river, featureless on maps, includes a short but beautiful rocky canyon. As we traversed this, a second snowfall dropped a full foot of wet pellets. Under better snow conditions, the deep snow covering all of the underbrush would provide an easy tour through the widely spaced trees, as well as on the river. The few channels of the Chulitna River carried only a foot or so of water, all still ice bridged, while a side creek made an easy ascent route to the Parks, where Stan led us out exactly at the stick left to mark the closest approach of the road during the drive south.

For those of you interested in experiencing Alaska's Yosemite in the Pleistocene, the Talkeetna Air Service provides flights in and out, and airdrops. Reservations are not necessary, but it would be advisable to call ahead. Prices for our trip were \$100 flat rate, one way one person and gear, or \$175 round trip. Rates were increased about \$25 or \$50 just after we left. And don't forget to inquire about the special deal on ten days of sunny skies.

 RURPS 'N BONGS

News About Fairbanks Climbers

STAN JUSTICE, LAURIE BABB, DICK STOLZBERG and friend are floating the Tachincheena River in June. They are taking a leisurely 21 days.

KEN GREEN, CINDY FOLSOM-GREEN, MOSS MEAD, and JOHN KELLER went to sunny Yosemite in June for several weeks of rock climbing.

JIM BOUCHARD is planning a summer blitz of the Deltas. Plans to try CHRIS CASATI's route on the north face of White Princess.

WILLY HERSMAN is doing a lot of climbing in the Anchorage area. He was involved in the helicopter rescue of an injured climber recently. Willy also climbed McCallum Peak with the climbing class this spring.

RON ROSSER spent this spring breaking trail for his cousin's Iditarod sled dog team. His reward was a wild party in Nome.

JOANNE GROVES is working at the Geophysical Institute again and is building a shed as big as her house to store her climbing gear, boats, bicycles, and Nepalese souvenirs.

HOWARD FERREN took a long trip to India early this spring, then returned soon enough to climb White Princess at spring break.

LAURIE and STAN moved out of Sandvik House into a real middle class house and had a "ties and dresses" party to celebrate. TERRY CHAPIN wore a birch bark tie.

JAY HUGHES (the other mad dentist in the club) bought a house on top of Ester Dome only to have mud take over his road for two weeks in May.

JOAN FORSCHAUG spent spring semester at Michigan State University taking graduate microbiology courses for her Masters degree.

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News About Fairbanks Climbers

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... (the other had earlier in the club) bought a house on top of Ester Dome only to have mud take over his roof for two weeks in May.

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