



# DESCENT



Volume XVI: Number 1

December 1984

The DESCENT is published 1-4 times a year on a hit or miss basis. Copies are sent to members of the Alaska Alpine Club. Non-members may receive DESCENT for 50¢ an issue.

Membership in the Alaska Alpine Club is open to anyone with an interest in the mountains. Meetings are open to the public and are scheduled monthly, September thru May, on the UAF campus. Tea and cookies are provided.

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## President's Message

Monthly general meetings, a couple of weekend trips, and several other activities were enjoyed by club members this fall. For those of you who may not have participated in or heard about them, here's a brief summary. Although the film "Eiger" did not arrive in time for our first meeting ("Karakoram" proved a suitable substitute), mark your calendars for March 4, 1985 for a return of "Eiger". The distributor promised not to make the same mistake twice, and even sent us a videotape copy (VHS format) by way of apology. The tape may be checked out by members. Three slide shows rounded out the meetings: an attempt on Mt. Hayes, presented by myself; Barb Powell's all-women climb on Mt. Foraker; and Carl Tobin's first ascent of the east ridge of Mt. Deborah. Both the lower Canwell Hut and the Thayer Hut were inspected on hikes in September. Those who went on the lower Canwell Hut hike did considerably more than planned: the result and trash removal trip also involved extensive cleanup of the interior and temporary repair of the parky squirrel damaged end walls. The squirrels did not damage the parts we repaired last spring. Thanks to the efforts of participants, the hut is useable for the winter. The Thayer Hut has sustained minor damage by pikas, and has a broken window but is in overall good condition and is useable. Other major activities, both well attended and highly appreciated, were an avalanche hazard evaluation workshop by Doug Fesler and others through the Alaska Avalanche School, and a backcountry ski clinic taught by Gary Nichols. For the record, there was very little interest in weekly meetings at the Pub or in a ski trip to the Borealis-LeFevre BLM Cabin in the White Mts. over Thanksgiving, neither of which materialized. Thanks are due to all of you who are helping out with club tasks - tea and cookies, room reservations, climbing equipment, A-V equipment, posters and the other jobs that make activities possible by distributing the workload.

There are several upcoming activities to be aware of. Your participation in the spring Ski Mountaineering class is essential if we are to continue it as planned. John Keller, with the help of the Executive Committee, has prepared a schedule included elsewhere in this Descent. An avalanche beacon locating practice session in the field, including efficient searching techniques (fast) and multiple burials, will be a part of the class. We have ordered a few beacons which will be available to members at reduced cost. Contact Liz Andrews to pay for and reserve one or two. The huts also need attention. The Thayer Hut requires a pane of glass, a fire extinguisher, and a few odds and ends. The materials are ready to be taken up, so let me know if you are headed up there and are willing. The lower Canwell Hut requires another full fledged repair trip, planned for this spring. It may be possible to have materials helicoptered in, but many hands will be needed for preparation and construction. Neither the Thayer Hut nor the lower Canwell Hut have emergency sleeping bags. If you have one to donate, please contact one of the officers.

This spring we will hold monthly general meetings separately from the class, so please attend those to stay informed. Bring your interest and ideas as to how the club can benefit you.

Also this spring, Gary Nichols is interested in offering further instruction in backcountry skiing technique and equipment. Suggestions to date include a two day session at Skiland, and/or a weekend in the mountains.

# SKI MOUNTAINEERING COURSE

The annual Alaska Alpine Club Ski Mountaineering Course will be given during the spring of 1985. This year two sections will be offered:

Introduction to Ski Mountaineering, Jan. 22-March 17. For persons with cross-country skiing and cold weather camping experience. Will teach the basics of camping and ski travel in Alaskan mountains, including introductory crevasse rescue and safety topics.

Intermediate Ski Mountaineering and Climbing, April 9-May 5. For persons having successfully completed the introductory course or with other mountaineering experience.

Tuition for either course is \$20.00, which includes a one-year AAC membership (\$6.00 value) and use of some club gear. Anyone in the Fairbanks community with the appropriate experience is invited to attend. These courses are a great way to get into the mountains and to meet other mountaineers!

The courses consist of weekly lectures or discussion sessions held TUESDAYS, at 7:30 pm in Schaible auditorium, UAF campus and weekend trips to areas in the Alaska Range.

## SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic</u>	<u>Weekend trip</u>
Introduction to Ski Mountaineering:		
Jan 22	gear construction	-
Feb 5	winter camping	Feb 9: day trip/ski
Feb 12	snow shelters/mountain travel	Feb 16,17: overnight
Feb 19	frost/hypothermia	Feb 23,24: Deltas
Feb 26	ropes/prusik @Patty	Mar 2,3: Fels Gl.
Mar 5	snow climbing	Mar 9,10: Panorama
Mar 12	avalanche awareness	Mar 16,17: McCallum Gl.
Intermediate Ski Mountaineering and Climbing:		
Apr 2	--	Apr 6,7: Glacier Rendevous
Apr 9	ice climbing	Apr 13,14: Healy
Apr 16	snow climbing	Apr 20,21: Deltas
Apr 23	leadership	Apr 27,28: Deltas
Apr 30	rock climbing	May 4,5: local

For further information contact John Keller (479-3630, 474-6042) or club officers Mike Masters (479-3104) or Stan Justice (479-5017) or write to AAC, P.O. Box 81174, Fairbanks 99708.

## Peter MacKeith Expedition Climbing Grants

The "Peter MacKeith Memorial Endowment Fund for Climbing" was established in 1981 by the family of Peter MacKeith, late president of the Alaska Alpine Club, in honor of Peter's love for climbing and of his climbing achievements in Alaska, Afghanistan, Greenland, and Iceland. The Alaska Alpine Club was given the responsibility of distributing the earnings from the endowment for the purpose of supporting worthwhile mountaineering ventures by Club members in Alaska or elsewhere in the world.

### Requirements for submitting a proposal:

1. All expedition members must be Alaska Alpine Club members for at least a year prior to receiving the grant.
2. The proposal must contain the following:
  - a. Names, addresses, and resume of climbing experience for each expedition member.
  - b. A description of the climbing objective.
  - c. A description of how the party plans to carry out the climb and approximate dates of the climb.
  - d. A budget for the expedition explaining how a climbing grant will be used.
3. DEADLINE for submitting a proposal is March 1 of each year.

### Obligations of the expedition upon receiving a grant:

1. Use the grant money for the original climbing expedition described in the proposal or return the money to the Alaska Alpine Club.
2. Provide an acknowledgement that the expedition has received a Peter MacKeith Climbing Grant from the Alaska Alpine Club.
3. Submit an article (with pictures if possible) about the climb for the Club's publication Descent.
4. Present a slide show about the climb for the Alaska Alpine Club.

NOTE: These obligations hold even when the objective of the climb is not attained.

### General:

1. Grants will be awarded at the March Annual Meeting of the Alaska Alpine Club.
2. Expeditions are not limited to Alaska or to the United States.
3. Expeditions are not limited to first ascents or climbs of unusual difficulty although these aspects will be taken into consideration.
4. The financial need of the expedition's climbers will be given high priority.
5. The Alaska Alpine Club does not assume any liability for the expedition.
6. In any given year, the Club may distribute the entire earnings of the endowment, part of it, or none of it, depending on the merits of the proposals. Grants may be awarded to one or several expeditions.

# STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT

NORTHERN REGION  
4420 AIRPORT WAY  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-3896  
(907) 479-2243

November 8, 1984

Dear Trail User:

As the Tanana Basin Area Plan (TBAP) is being finished, the Tanana Basin Trails Management Plan is just beginning. Since you had an interest in the Tanana Basin Area Plan, we wanted you to know about the Trails Plan.

Phase 1 of the Trails Plan will address recreation and access trails on state lands within the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The inter-agency planning team is already grappling with many of the concerns identified in the TBAP process:

- to locate and map important trails,
- determine the principal uses,
- recommend whether public ownership or easements are warranted and what widths these should be,
- recommend priorities for surveying, and
- provide management guidelines for protecting the principal uses.

The Trails Plan will be used to help protect the integrity of existing important trails and establish procedures to develop a manageable trail network for the public.

The determination of priorities for location and use will require coordinated effort by all parties concerned. We will depend on you for information beyond that found in the TBAP, the Borough Comprehensive Recreation Trail Plan, and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' inventory of public access trails. Meetings with various trail user groups are anticipated.

If you are interested in receiving notice of public workshops, public hearings, or documents for review, please let us know by filling out and returning the enclosed postcard. We encourage you to contact us with any information of interest for this trails planning process. Any questions, comments or information regarding trails and the Trails Plan are welcome. Call Anna Plager or Joe Russo at 479-2243.

Happy Trails!

-Or write to the above address to get on their mailing list or for more specific information. I have done this on behalf of the club and will keep you posted.

## DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

### 1984 MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY

The 1984 climbing season in Denali National Park and Preserve began on two notes of sorrow. At age 59, Francis Randall died from cancer. Francis was known to many as the "Kahiltna Queen" and spent the last nine summers as the 7000' base camp radio operator on the Kahiltna Glacier. During that time Francis assisted with the coordination on dozens of rescues. She was one of the first women to climb Mt. McKinley. Francis will long be remembered by mountaineers for her charisma, warm friendship and her hospitality at the Kahiltna Base Camp.

The second note of tragedy involved the Japanese adventurer Naomi Uemura. Uemura completed the first solo winter (February) ascent of the West Buttress route to the summit of Mt. McKinley. However, he disappeared and is presumed to have died during his descent, probably somewhere above the 14,300' level. Cold temperatures, high winds and poor visibility hindered search efforts and likely contributed to Uemura's disappearance. Uemura had completed numerous solo adventures during his life including the first summer solo ascent of the West Buttress route. He was an expert in arctic travel and survival.

The High Latitude Research Group from the University of Alaska did not receive funding to continue a third year of medical research at 14,300' on the West Buttress. The National Park Service Mountaineering Rangers, assisted by volunteer medical doctors and volunteer mountaineers, established and operated a rescue/medical camp at the same location. The camp seems to have been very successful in reducing both the number and the cost of search and rescue incidents on Mt. McKinley. Its primary benefits were to assist mountaineers in the early detection of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), and when necessary, to effectively coordinate rescues with acclimatized personnel with communication capabilities. Early detection of AMS enabled many climbers to descend to lower elevations to better acclimatize before continuing their climb. This probably prevented numerous rescues. The Mountaineering Rangers encouraged parties to evacuate their own sick and injured whenever possible. This, combined with dependable on-site evaluation of potential evacuation situations, and better communications with Talkeetna, prevented many premature and/or unnecessary rescue responses. In addition, Mountaineering Rangers were able to personally contact nearly all of the West Buttress climbers and emphasize the importance of proper sanitation and trash removal practices. This seems to have made a significant contribution toward cleaner campsites.

During 1984, the first littering citation was issued to a mountaineering party on Mount McKinley. The party was from Italy and had been contacted by one of the Mountaineering Rangers on the West Buttress route about leaving garbage and abandoning food caches. The citation was issued after the party continued to abandon both garbage and food at a popular campsite.

Again this year, six commercial mountain guiding concessions and the National Outdoor Leadership School were authorized to operate under concession permits for the McKinley and Foraker massifs. Mountaineering Rangers began actively

enforcing the regulations which prohibit other guides from operating commercially on these two mountains. Two citations were issued, one to an American and another to a Japanese guide. Mountain guides who wish to lead commercial expeditions on either mountain must be under the employment of one of the authorized concessions.

Demand to climb Mt. McKinley seems to have tapered out to approximately 700 attempts per year:

1978 = 539  
1979 = 533  
1980 = 659  
1981 = 612  
1982 = 696  
1983 = 709  
1984 = 695

Approximately 695 mountaineers attempted the summit of Mt. McKinley in 1984. Lower than normal temperatures and high winds created unfavorable conditions for summit attempts during April and May. June weather was excellent but it again deteriorated during nearly all of July.

#### Interesting Statistics:

Success rate- ~~335 (48%)~~ <sup>324 (46%)</sup> of those attempting the summit were successful.

**Acute Mountain Sickness-** 77 (12%) had symptoms, of these:

52 (67%) were mild  
20 (26%) were moderate  
5 ( 7%) were severe

**Frostbite-** 32 (5%) reported some degree of frostbite. Three required hospitalization.

**West Buttress Route-** 562 (80%) of the climbers on Mt. McKinley were on the popular West Buttress route.

**Mountain Guiding-** 222 (31%) of the climbers were guided by professional mountain guides. The overall success rate of these guided groups was 45%. Most guided trips occurred on the West Buttress, but other guided attempts on McKinley included the Muldrow Glacier, West Rib and the Northwest Buttress.

**Foreign Climbers-** 193 (28%) were from foreign nations. Fifteen different nations were represented:

Spain- 9	Austria- 21	Czechoslovakia- 9
W. Germany- 29	Japan- 33	Canada- 15
Italy- 7	Holland- 4	Switzerland- 32
France- 15	New Zealand- 9	England- 6
Brazil- 1	Australia- 1	Norway- 2

## New Routes:

### Mt. McKinley:

South Buttress- Ridge of No Return: a difficult climb soloed by Renato Casarotto (Italy). Casarotto completed his new route but did not continue to the summit.

South Face- Czechoslovakian Direct: a difficult route exposed to severe ice fall. It is probably the most direct route to the summit and follows dihedrals and ice ramps to the right of the Cassin. It was completed in ten days by a Czechoslovakian team- Adam Blazej, Korl Frantisek and Krizo Anton.

Traverse- not a new climb but of interest- a well conditioned and acclimatized French Army team completed a traverse from 7000' base camp to Wonder Lake in five days! They reached the summit in three days.

### Mt. Foraker:

East Face- Pink Panther: the route tops out at 14,000' on the S. E. Spur. It was completed during May in five days by French Canadians Vachon, Dery and Gagnon and Australian Sanders.

### Mt. Hunter:

North Buttress Couloir: completed by two members of the French Army team- Tedeschi and Grison.

### Mt. Huntington:

West Face Variation- a route completed by Jim Haberl and Rob Rohn, from Canada. unfortunately these climbers disregarded their due-out date. After receiving calls from the climber's relatives, the NPS initiated an unnecessary search. The climbers and their air taxi service covered the cost of the search.

### Rooster's Comb:

North West Face- also completed by Haberl and Rohn.

## Accidents:

In addition to Naomi Uemura's disappearance during his winter ascent, there was only one other fatality during 1984. In early June, a Swiss guide died when he fell into a crevasse. He was skiing unroped down the West Buttress route. The accident occurred at the 10,700' level.

In April, a British climber was rescued from 14,000' on Mt Foraker when he became disabled by severe pulmonary edema (HAPE). This was an extremely hazardous helicopter rescue conducted by Chris Soloy in his Hughes 500 D helicopter. The victim disregarded symptoms of AMS and delayed his descent until he was incapacitated. Furthermore, this was his second time he has been stricken by HAPE.



1984 AMERICAN BRALDU RIVER BLAFO SPIRES  
KARAKORAM EXPEDITION  
DENALI NATIONAL PARK

An Alaskan climber was injured and required helicopter evacuation following a fall during a traverse of McKinley's South Buttress at 11,000'. The group of three was off their intended route and was attempting terrain that exceeded their ability. The fall occurred when the leader unroped when his belay rope proved too short to allow him to reach his desired objective.

A German climber fell at 18,500' on the West Buttress route and sustained possible internal injuries. He and other members of his party completed the evacuation to the 14,300' medical camp where he was flown out by Lowell Thomas in his Helio Courier. The victim carried no ice ax and was probably not roped at the time of the accident. He also had made an unusually long ascent that day and was probably suffering from exhaustion and at least some degree of AMS.

A guided party on the South East Ridge of Mt. Foraker was caught in an avalanche that carried three of its members down 800' including a 30' cliff. Fortunately, none of the mountaineers were seriously injured and they were able to evacuate themselves.

We continue to see some of the same mistakes reoccur time after time, year after year. The three most common seem to be:

- 1) Failure to adopt a conservative ascent rate to allow for proper acclimatization. The recommended rate of ascent is 1,000' per day above 10,000'.
- 2) Traveling unroped on Alaska's glaciers is an invitation to disaster. Again this year an experienced mountaineer died from an unroped crevasse fall. Everyone should travel with proper protection and the knowledge to extricate themselves from a crevasse.
- 3) Departing for a summit attempt with damp inner boots and/or improper footwear and insulated overboots, combined with inadequate food and water intake and the failure to stop to rewarm cold extremities is a sure formula for frostbite.

This spring, Bob Gerhard, Mountaineering Ranger at Denali National Park for the past eight years, accepted a new position at Lake Clark National Park. I have replaced Bob as the new South District/Mountaineering Ranger and will live in Talkeetna year-round. For more information please contact me.

*Robert R. Seibert*  
Robert R. Seibert  
Talkeetna Ranger Station  
P. O. Box 327  
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

1984 MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY

<u>MOUNT MCKINLEY</u>	<u>EXPEDITIONS</u>	<u>CLIMBERS</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL CLIMBERS</u>
West Buttress	114	428	219
West Buttress (Guided)	19	134	79
Muldrow Glacier	3	25	3
Muldrow Glacier (Guided)	1	14	0
West Rib	3	12	2
West Rib (Guided)	3	19	0
Cassin	9	22	7
South Buttress	9	32	7
North West Buttress (Guided)	1	6	4
South Face	1	3	3
	<u>163</u>	<u>695</u>	<u>324</u>
<u>MOUNT FORAKER</u>	11	33	10
<u>MOUNT FORAKER (Guided)</u>	1	5	0
<u>MOUNT HUNTER</u>	9	25	13
<u>MOUNT HUNTINGTON</u>	7	17	2
<u>MOOSES TOOTH</u>	2	5	3
<u>KITCHATNA SPIRES</u>	1	3	3
<u>ROOSTER'S COMB</u>	1	2	2
	<u>32</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>33</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	195	785	357

INTERESTED IN IMPROVING YOUR SKIING TECHNIQUE?

The Professional Ski Instructors Association of Alaska (PSIA-A) is an organization for skiers who are interested in the technical aspects of track skiing and ski mountaineering. It also provides a professional approach to teaching cross-country techniques.

In case you missed the flyer and haven't read the President's Message, the PSIA-A nordic clinic presented by Gary Nichols on December 3rd was attended by twenty AAC members. Gary encourages individuals interested in more advanced clinics, PSIA-A membership, or becoming a certified nordic ski instructor to contact him at 479-0942 before December 16th or after January 13th.

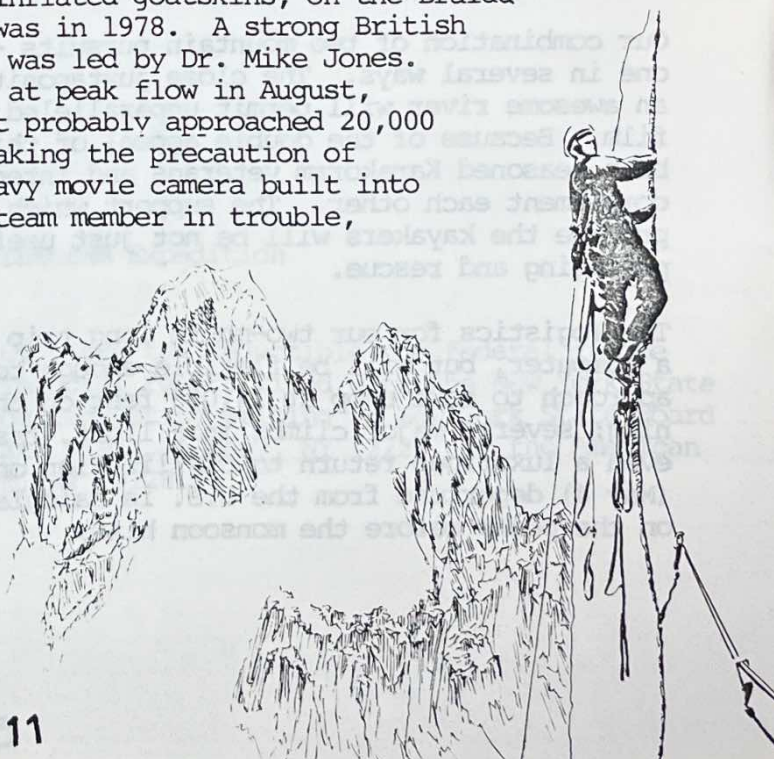
# 1984 AMERICAN BRALDU RIVER/BIAFO SPIRES KARAKORAM EXPEDITION

In a unique and unprecedented way, our expedition has both climbing and kayaking objectives of the first magnitude and a team to match. In May and June, 1984, we will travel to Baltistan in northwestern Pakistan, to an area called The Throne Room of the Mountain Gods in Galen Rowell's book of the same name. We need your support and assistance.

From the heart of the Karakoram Range flows the giant Baltoro Glacier, draining the flanks of 28,250-foot K2 and the greatest concentration of high peaks in the world. From the Baltoro's icy terminus at 11,224 feet flows the Braldu River, half-grown. After twenty-five miles, the Braldu's volume is doubled by a torrent of melt water from the Biafo, another of the major Karakoram glaciers. The Biafo's rubble-covered snout juts almost into the river a few miles upstream from the village of Askole, the highest human habitation in this arid, remote valley. Downstream, the river, icy cold and brown with glacial silt, continues to drop at more than sixty feet per mile, and then enters the narrow Chokpo-Chongo Gorge. The tortured water of the Braldu, constricted by rock walls and obstructed by boulders, sixty miles from the Baltoro's snout finally joins the gentler Shigar, which flows another sixty miles to join the mighty Indus at Skardu. The Braldu, because of its speed, altitude, length, flow and temperature, presents one of the most formidable technical whitewater challenges in the world and has never been successfully run.

Less than twenty miles up-glacier from the Biafo's terminus at the Braldu lies a challenge of a different sort but no less great, a collection of awesomely spectacular rock towers of the finest red granite, whose fantastic summits are in the range of 17,000 to 20,000 feet. Though individual peaks, such as nearby Uli Biaho Tower or Nameless Tower in the Trangos are comparable, as a group the Biafo Spires are unsurpassed, and as a technical rock-climbing challenge, these virgin peaks are unparalleled in the world.

Historically, the Braldu Valley has been travelled for centuries, first by legendary Central Asian traders, and more recently by climbers making the approach march to the giant Karakoram peaks. Though the lower stretches on the Shigar were navigated in the past by Baltis in "zahks" of inflated goatskins, on the Braldu itself, the only serious kayaking attempt was in 1978. A strong British team, veterans of the Dudh Khosi in Nepal, was led by Dr. Mike Jones. Making the mistake of putting on the river at peak flow in August, Jones was almost immediately killed in what probably approached 20,000 cubic feet per second going 30 mph. Not taking the precaution of wearing a wet suit, and burdened with a heavy movie camera built into his helmet, Jones died trying to rescue a team member in trouble, and the attempt was abandoned, though the film footage obtained was turned by the BBC into the movie Search For Excitement. (A video cassette copy of the film is available on loan from the expedition.) Dave Manby, a member of the 1978 team, returned in the fall of 1983 for a solo reconnaissance and confirmed that the river was potentially runnable at low water, though he had several serious mishaps, lost his boat and ran only parts of the river.



In both kayaking and rock climbing, techniques, equipment and attitudes have developed enormously in the last few years, and only recently has it become possible to consider running whitewater like that of the Braldu or climbing Karakoram supertowers such as these on the Biafo. The Hispar-Biafo region was explored and mapped in 1939 by Eric Shipton's party, and his map, now forty-five years old, is still the only good one of the area. At that time, however, such "small", highly technical rock peaks were virtually ignored as impossible, and neither photographed, named, mapped, or even mentioned. Even now, the Biafo peaks are close to unknown and remain not just unclimbed but unattempted. It remained for Galen Rowell, during a three hundred mile ski traverse of the Karakoram in late winter, 1980, to photograph the incredible spires and bring them to the attention of the American climbers in a position to attempt them.

The nucleus of our climbing team is a small group of veterans of multiple expeditions to the Kichatna Spires in Alaska, whose huge, steep granite walls and nasty, nasty weather have been a crucible of new techniques and equipment for superalpine walls there and elsewhere. An advanced wall tent, developed initially for Kichatna Spire overhanging Northwest Face will be used in Pakistan for the multiple hanging bivouacs we expect.

Team members have also climbed extensively elsewhere in Alaska and the Lower 48, and in Canada, Scotland, the Alps, Patagonia, Tibet, Nepal, India and Pakistan. Two are veterans of Everest expeditions in 1983, George Lowe reaching the summit via the previously unclimbed East Face from Tibet, and Galen Rowell serving as the climbing leader of the West Ridge attempt, also from Tibet. Latok I; the Eiger; Cerro Torre; difficult ice routes in Scotland and Alaska; McKinley and the Moose's Tooth; extreme free and aid routes in Yosemite; first ascents in Tibet and the Alaska Range; Trango Tower and Kichatna Spire; the Matterhorn's North Face, and much, much more, form the basis for the team's vast experience.

The kayaking members, who are in many instances also climbing members of our expedition share a similar training ground: the trio of legendary huge, fast and cold Alaskan Class VI rivers, namely the Susitna, the Alsek and the Stikine. As is true for the Kichatnas and our climbers, very few runs of these rivers have ever been made by teams that did not include our members. And besides Alaska, our kayakers have extensive backgrounds in river running throughout North, South and Central America, as well as New Zealand. They have pioneered multiple new runs at all water levels and contributed greatly to the sport in a variety of significant ways over the last decade.

Our combination of two mountain pursuits - climbing and kayaking - will be a synergistic one in several ways. The close juxtaposition of spectacularly beautiful mountains and an awesome river will permit unparalleled photographic opportunities, both still and film. Because of the double appeal of this combination, we have been able to recruit both seasoned Karakoram veterans and intensely ambitious younger members, whose talents complement each other. The support which members of the climbing team will be able to provide the kayakers will be not just useful, but crucial for scouting, photography, portaging and rescue.

The logistics for our two-month long trip will be complicated enough to be modeled on a computer, but will be flexible enough to permit careful acclimatization; a speedy approach to base camp at 14,000 feet on the Biafo; well-supported, careful river running; several major climbs in a light, fast, self-contained style; some trekking, and even a luxurious return to civilization on a raft down the Shigar River. Our early (May 4) departure from the U.S. is calculated to put us on the river at low water, and on the peaks before the monsoon hits.

Our team, led by Dr. Andrew Embick, is a very strong one, not just in individual technical brilliance, but also in cohesiveness and in diversity of talents. We have in our team of a dozen (including alternates): three past competitors in NBC's Survival of the Fittest competition; a physician; a Rhodes Scholar; a mathematics graduate student; an outdoor equipment representative and designer; a physicist; a cinematographer; a commodities broker; a carpenter; a U.S. Army captain; three professors (of forestry, geology and electrical engineering); experts in computer design and artificial intelligence; a lawyer; a gourmet chef; and several wilderness photographers and writers. Most wear, in fact, more than one hat.

Because of the team's strength, dedication and flexibility, we are very likely to be successful. The National Geographic Society is very interested in the trip and an article is expected. Because of the merit of our objectives and our team, we have received sponsorship from The American Alpine Club, its highest form of support to expeditions. Donations to the AAC in support of the expedition are tax-deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. As indicated by AAC Expeditions Committee Chairman Glenn Porzak, "One of the most unique features of this expedition is its attempt to obtain permission from the Government of Pakistan to climb in an area (as opposed to a specific peak) in which it is free to operate, choosing ad hoc objectives from multiple possibilities. If successful, this could provide an important precedent for future American expeditions seeking the same freedom."

Though much of the cost (about \$50,000) of the expedition will be borne by its members, several of our very strongest members have turned from budding professional careers to be more able to pursue their outdoor sports, and are consequently close to the poverty level. In addition to air fare to Islamabad (about \$1500 per person), we will face the costs of air freight and truck and bus transport up the Karakoram Highway, of jeep and tractor travel up the Shigar Valley, and the approximately \$700 per day cost of hiring about one hundred Balti porters and providing their food. We will need some special equipment, such as a water-purifying filter pump and large base camp tent, as well as the best modern kayaking and climbing gear. Because several members of our team are prolific, first-rank photographers and writers with multiple published photographs, books and articles (some translated into other languages) to their credit, we will be able to provide excellent exposure for our sponsors. We need and would greatly appreciate support, in the form of equipment, food and (most usefully) money, to be able to push the limits of the possible in climbing and kayaking in the Karakoram. Checks should be made payable to The American Alpine Club and mailed to: AAC/Braldu-Biafo Expedition, 113 E 90th Street, New York, NY 10128. Correspondence may be sent to P.O. Box 1889, Valdez, Alaska 99686.

Thanks and cheers!

1984 American Braldu River/Biafo Spires Karakoram Expedition

"All contributions to the American Alpine Club are tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. A copy of the last annual financial report filed with the New York State Board of Social Welfare may be obtained upon request by writing to New York State Board of Social Welfare, Office Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223, or the American Alpine Club, 113 East 90th Street, New York, NY 10128."

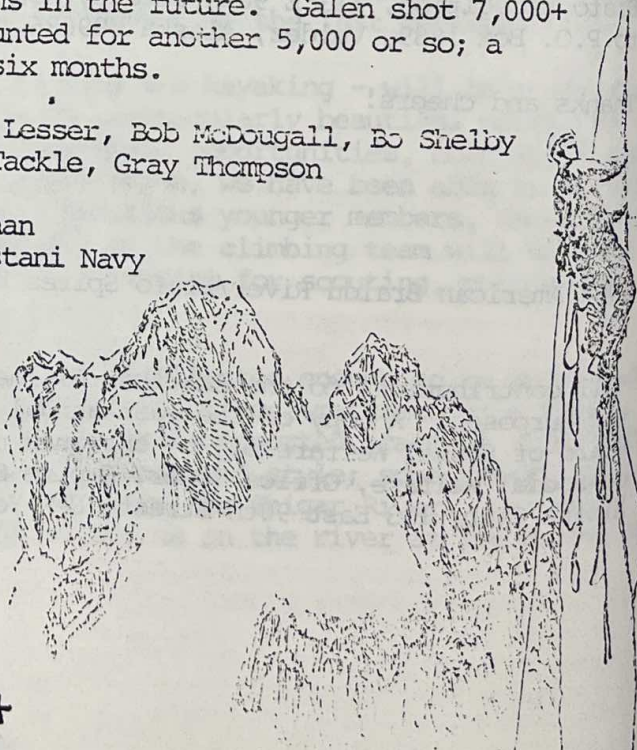
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P.O. Box 1889 Valdez, Alaska 99686  
(907) 835-4200 home, 835-4811 office

The 1984 American Braldu River/Biafo Spires Karakoram Expedition was entirely successful in achieving its objectives. Greeted on our arrival in Pakistan at a diplomatic cocktail party, we were quickly out of Islamabad, and were kayaking the Braldu within eleven days of leaving the U.S. May 4. Flow in the Braldu was a low 1000 cubic feet per second so the river was a technically extremely difficult V+ slalom through a maze of boulders. Less than one-half percent of the river's 50 miles was portaged, with nine short portages in all. The famed Narrows above Chokpo was runnable, where the river flows through a deep cleft in bedrock. Though I ran the last section of the river, the 25 miles from the snout of the Baltoro Glacier to Askole solo in one day, I was still late in joining the climbing team at Base Camp on the Biafo and was not with them on the first ascent of Lukpila Brakk, a 17,650' rock spire. The climb required one day of hauling gear to the base, one day of fixing rope and then two bivouacs on the way up and one on the way down. The climbing was all free except for two points of aid on the overhanging summit block and was 34 roped pitches (3600' vertical) on granite, done in T-shirts and rock shoes, VI-5.10-AO in difficulty. A 10-day, 120-mile trek from Baltistan to Hunza over the Hispar La was mounted next while Rob Lesser and Bob McDougall ran the lower half of the river again, this time at a pushy and marginal 2500 cfs. Later I ran part of the lower part of the Braldu again (now at an awesome 25,000 cfs), as well as the Shigar, the Shyok and part of the Indus. Rendezvousing with the trekkers in Hunza and satisfying myself that Jack Tackle's malaria was improving, Bo Shelby and I ran 70 miles of the Hunza River down to Gilgit. We all marvelled at how much conditions for expeditioning had improved in Pakistan over what we'd previously experienced or read about. We sustained essentially no delays and no bureaucratic difficulties, and our porters rather than striking were eager, friendly and helpful, putting up tents and helping out generally. Several did double and even triple stages when needed to follow the kayakers. On our return, we were able to voice our pleasure to Mr. Muneeruddin, Deputy Minister for Mountaineering Expeditions, and to Mr. Kamal, Minister of Tourism, while pointedly requesting that the Ministry respond more quickly to permit applications in the future. Galen shot 7,000+ photographs and the rest of the team accounted for another 5,000 or so; a Geographic article is expected, in about six months.

kayakers: Kathy Blau, Andrew Embick, Rob Lesser, Bob McDougall, Bo Shelby  
 climbers: Rob Milne, Galen Rowell, Jack Tackle, Gray Thompson  
 trekkers: Blau, Shelby, Tackle, Thompson  
 photographers: Barbara Rowell & Pervez Khan  
 liaison officer: Lt. Hamid Khawaja, Pakistani Navy

ANDREW EMBICK *AE*

Andrew Embick, M.D.  
 expedition leader  
 July 2, 1984



ALASKA ALPINE CLUB  
BOX 81174  
COLLEGE, ALASKA 99708

MEMBERSHIP DUES are now due January 1 for membership during that coming year. This will avoid some of the confusion members have had concerning when they owe dues and greatly simplify Club bookkeeping.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Send \$6.00 (\$10.00 family membership) to:

ALASKA ALPINE CLUB  
P.O. Box 81174  
College, AK 99708

to insure your membership for the coming year. Dues should be sent by January 1. Membership includes DESCENT.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a summer address if different from above. Make checks payable to: ALASKA ALPINE CLUB

THE ALASKA WILDERNESS GUIDES ASSOCIATION, in cooperation with the AAC, will present the Second Annual AWGA Film Festival on January 19 and 20 from 7 to 10 p.m. in Schiabile Auditorium. Featuring top quality and international films on a variety of outdoor sports, it promises to be a great activity for the short days of the new year.

THE ALASKA AVALANCHE SCHOOL, at last word, was almost full, but spaces were available for a few workshops. Call right away to partake in this rewarding adventure. 276-2653

THE 1985 SPRING CLIMBING CLASS needs you to volunteer to lead a weekend trip, give a lecture, or help out on trips or in class sessions. Check the schedule on page 3 and call John Keller to sign up for your favorite topic or area in the mountains. (Go thru your slides also and volunteer those!)

DICK STOLZBERG also needs volunteers to attempt the MacKeith (Upper Canwell) Hut on New Year's. Call 474-7525 to volunteer or to try and talk him out of it so he quits bugging me.

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DESCENT will gladly accept articles or brief descriptions about climbs, ski trips or other outdoor activities. Either typed or handwritten material can be sent to the club address: Box 81174, college, AK 99708.

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If anyone has piles of Alpine Club stuff gathering dust in a closet, drawer or outhouse somewhere, please gather it up and donate it to me. Drop it by Mike's office (Sorry, Mike), 479-3104, or tell him you have a donation and I will pick it up. (Box 81174 College works also.) In the two brown boxes I inherited, I found saved, much more than is of use to anyone and much in duplicate, triplicate and more. These are not to be confused with the grey boxes in which I assume I will find a similar, though somewhat older, array of interesting, historical or fire-starting material. I am attempting to "lighten ship" and save single copies and the most complete and/or useful and/or interesting items found between boxes, closets and the Library Archives. If anyone has suggestions or problems with this, write 81174 and let me know. Thanks and HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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According to Club records, the following people owe dues or have an insufficient address. If you see any of these people, please remind them to contact an officer or box 81174.

Bill Becia	Kurt Johnson	Francia Schultz
Michael Brodie	Carol Kasza	Jim Skelton
Mike Beck	Roger Kaye	Joni Snellgrove
Doug Blockcolsky	Tom Kulek	Mark Standley
Jim Bouchard	Blake Morgan	Scot Starbuck
Carol Buttimore	Mike McKee	Jack Taylor
Julie Byer	Paul O'Sullivan	Janet Warburton
Thomas Edgerton	Ron/Steph Paoletti	Ev Wenrick
Jon Fennie	Robert Pelz	Roger Whatney
Bernie Fowle	Bert Puchtær	Joe Wilcox
Steve Hackett	Bruce Rasmussen	Pete Williams
Dan Hoffman	Tim Roberts	Mike Schonoker