



DESCENT

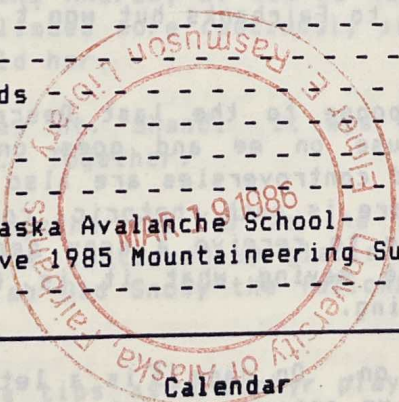
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 Volume XVIII : No. 2 Alaska Alpine Club March 1986

Officers

President.....	Stan Justice	479-5017	Vice President.....	Rex Rundquist	456-1963
Secretary/Treasurer....	Mike Nobel	457-7788	Councilor.....	Mike Masters	479-3104
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Calendar

March 3	Aconcagua Slide Show	Schaible	7:30 p.m.
March 19	Annual Meeting	Wood Center Conference Room	7:30 p.m.
April 5 & 6	Glacier Rendezvous	Patty Gym Parking Lot	6:00 a.m.
April 8	Intermediate Climbing Class	Eielson 111	7:30 p.m.
April 14	Monthly Meeting	Schaible	7:30 p.m.
May 9	Pot Luck Dinner & Slide Show	Yak Estates	7:30 p.m.

The **DESCENT** is published 1 to 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 \$0.50 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 normally the first Monday of the month, September to May, on the UAF campus. Tea and cookies are provided. The Alaska Alpine Club is a student organization of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The climbing class is off to an excellent start with 40 students and 7 - 8 instructors. There is a lot of enthusiasm and a wealth of experience. I've learned a number of things from the "students". As the class size continues to grow we don't have enough ice axes and crampons to go around so we are planning on buying 7 ice axes and 4 pairs of crampons.

Please come to the annual meeting scheduled for March 19 in the Wood Center Conference Room at 7:30 p.m. Besides the election of officers some agenda items include; Alaska Avalanche School controversy; policy on climbing school participation; setting up a rescue fund and a call list; proposal for summer rock climbing school; hut status and repair; Mckeith Fund; etc. If you have additional agenda items please let me know.

Lori Babb found Steve Will's article about Kate Bull in "Women's Sports" magazine. Steve, Kate and the editor of "Women's Sports" gave us permission to reprint the article. Steve didn't like some of the edits so he sent a "desimplified" "abridged" version. We owe them all a big thanks. Also thanks to Deborah Koons who spent her Sunday afternoon typing the article.

If the layout of the newsletter looks like your Nordic Ski Club newsletter there is a reason - I copied the work Lori has done. Thanks Lori.

Jason Peteson has offered to show his slides from his ascent of Aconocagua. This should be a good show with lots of 70 degree ice and stories of frost bitten toes. See calendar on cover for details. We have one more monthly meeting scheduled for April 14 and no speaker is lined up yet. Andy Embick tried hard to fit in a trip to Fairbanks but won't be able to make it. We will try again in the fall.

We received a 17 page response to the last Descent from Doug Buchanan. It heaps a lot of verbal abuse on me and goes on to attack all the past presidents. Many of the old controversies are also discussed, clear back to D-2 legislation. As usual there is much rhetoric, considerable viciousness, but little fact. Anyone wishing to receive a copy send \$1 to cover xeroxing and mailing and include a note saying what it is for. Copies will also be available at the annual meeting.

Meanwhile the campaign goes on. On page 15 is a letter from Representative Mike Davis which describes what we are up against. We have 87 signatures (22 from Juneau) on the petition and expect to break 100 before sending them to the legislature. I prepared a cover letter and plan on sending copies to finance committees in the House and Senate plus the Governor and top people in DNR. Nothing is more effective than personal letters from individuals so sharpen up your pencils and write or this valuable program will be lost.

Stan Justice, President

AFTER THE FALL

by

Steven Will

The following entry is from Kate Bull's diary. Undated, it was probably written the first week of May, 1980. The calligraphy approaches illegibility - letters malformed and uneven, spacing erratic - the legacy of a broken wrist.

"Where do I begin? How do I start to sort it all out? I believe I loved Peter MacKeith more, and liked him more, and respected him more than any sweetheart I have ever known. I never thought in future terms like I did with Peter MacKeith.

"The weekend of April 25 changed all that..."

On April 25, 1980, Kate Bull and Peter MacKeith left Fairbanks for a three day mountain weekend. Accompanied by friends Jon and Tobi, they drove southeast for three hours before trading wheels for skis; shouldering packs full of down, perlon and hardware; and heading up the Castner Glacier into the heart of the Deltas. Thirteen miles away, concealed by ridges of ice, snow and black rock, Old Snowy waited. Peter and Kate were intent on sharing its 9200 foot summit. Their relationship was new and intense. They had met just one month before, on an expedition. Though their party had failed to climb Mt. Shand, Peter and Kate got higher on each other than they could have atop any peak.

Bonds forged by axes and shovels were tempered in a post-expedition ambiance. Kate discovered a rare well of sensitivity within Peter. She opened her heart to him, sharing pain and sorrow over the recent death of her father. Peter in turn told of the climbing death of his friend Andrew, of how he had tried to revive him for over an hour, but failed. Peter climbed more cautiously since then. "I don't ever want to die in the mountains" he told her.

But death seemed as remote as Mt. Shand. It was springtime, the alpine season. Peter and Kate wanted a summit. Together.

The four adventurers skied together as far as the Thayer Hut where Jon and Tobi spent the night. Kate and Peter continued up glacier, making camp below the O'Brien Icefall. They planned to climb Old Snowy the following day; Tobi and Jon intended to summit the day after.

Morning alpenglow graced Delta tips as a zephyr played across the shadowed surface of the glacier. Kate's mood was buoyant as she rolled up her foam pad, debating whether it and a stove should go into her summit pack. In the back of her mind she knew she should take them. In the front of her mind she resisted the added weight. She consulted Peter.

"No, you won't need them. We'll do it in a day."

Something told her he was wrong, but she ignored it.

By 9 a.m. they had negotiated the icefall, skied across Old Snowy Basin and munching cheese and crackers on a solitary black rock at the base of the climb. Snowy soared above them, its upper two thirds a shining face of blue-gray ice shimmering in the sun. She feasted her eyes on the buttresses, ogives and cornices of the master architect as pre-climb anxiety tickled her psyche. What would alpine ice be like, she wondered, would she be equal to it?

The route commenced in a steep couloir. Peter labored in the fore, punching knee-deep steps into soft snow. They were soon bathed in sweat and panting, the next step monopolizing their thoughts. Peter seemed tired so Kate offered to take the lead. After several hundred vertical feet he finally agreed.

The climbing was slow, hard, tedious. Punch a step, tamp the snow, add weight and punch again. The angle demanded concentration and the effort left little breath for desultory conversation. Kate labored, digging on the exertion, getting off on the lead. She was strong and liked it, liked doing her part, sharing the responsibility. Peter found the breath to say, "I should have let you lead a long time ago".

Kate took them to the interface between snow and ice, between couloir and face. But when she stepped off the snow her confidence slipped. This was different. The cold, blue ice of the mountain wasn't like the waterfall ice she was accustomed to. It was tremendously hard. The freshly honed points of her crampons hardly nicked it. She asked Peter to take over the lead.

He marched off easily, switchbacking up the face, his ankles bent downhill to keep crampon points in contact with the ice. Kate imitated his example, but her ankles tired rapidly and her hold on the ice felt tenuous.

Kate wanted to know what would happen should one of them fall. "You hope you can stop yourself," Peter responded, "Do you think you could?"

She hesitated, imagined trying to self-arrest, trying to sink a pick into the ultra-compact ice while skimming down the face. It didn't seem possible, yet she answered yes.

They debated the merits of placing protection. The prospect of torquing screws into such hard ice was daunting; it would consume time they didn't have if they wanted to reach the top. They climbed on.

Three hundred feet from the summit Kate was extremely nervous and said so. The expanse below looked deadly. "If you fall," he told her, "just yell. I'll be able to catch you."

Kate looked at Peter, thirty feet away, attached to her by a strand of rope. Sunlight glanced off the ice of Old Snowy's face, shone upon the peaks around them and mirrored in his shades. He was smiling. The image caught in Kate's mind, touching her with wonder.

They climbed. "We're going to do it, Kate."

"We sure are."

Immediately above them the ice steepened. Kate took one look and turned towards the relative security of a snowy ridge. Peter followed her lead. "Good idea," he called out.

Good idea - Peter MacKeith's last words.

Kate heard a scraping. She looked down. Peter was shooting down the face. She saw his head disappearing. She had time to turn towards the mountain and experience the fleeting, futile thought of slamming her tools into the ice. The rope pulled taut. Kate was yanked off.

The fall was endless. Kate bumped and crashed, wondering where it would stop.

They fell one hundred feet, accelerating over iron hard ice. Kate was sliding on her belly. She skipped off a bump and caught a glimpse of Peter below her. She imagined what would happen if he stopped and she didn't and the razor sharp points of her crampons crunched into his skull.

They fell three hundred feet, hurtling down the mountain at terminal velocity. Kate focused on keeping her crampons from contacting the ice, snagging and tearing at her legs.

They fell seven hundred feet. Kate made a final desperate effort to slow them. She forced the pick of her hammer to the ice tearing past beneath her. The hammer chattered wildly, snagged and flew into the sky. Kate lost consciousness.

They fell nine hundred feet, a thousand feet. Crampons and ice tools were torn from limbs. They bounced and rolled, the rope snarling around them. Limbs cracked, snapped, shattered. Still they fell.

Kate opened her eyes. She heard a sound. It was Peter, breathing hard and fast, gurgling, as if there was blood in the way.

She was on her back, head downhill. She lifted her left leg off the snow; her left foot remained undisturbed, as if hinged at the shin.

She struggled to extricate herself from the tangle of rope bonding them. Each time she moved they slipped further down slope, leaving a bloody trail. She finally freed herself and crawled to Peter.

He stopped breathing. She turned him over. No pulse. She gave him mouth-to-mouth. His mouth was full of blood, his face totally lacerated and bloody. A huge gash in his forehead left a skin flap and a white circle above his eye. Her bowels released into her pants.

Kate edged into the twilight zone. Her everyday sense of reality didn't apply here. "This is serious." She said it aloud, not really believing. "This is serious, Kate. This is not a game, a practice, a test. This is it."

No pain. The gruesome feeling in her left leg, the bones grinding against each other like sharp sticks indicated major damage, but pain was not a feature of her mental topography.

She tried to get Peter's heart beating. When she put weight on his chest he slid downhill. Her right wrist failed under pressure. Her legs refused to support her in an effective position. She tried for fifteen minutes, perhaps twenty. No compression. No pulse. No Peter.

Yet she felt his presence in a ethereal way. She had the sensation that he was there. That having separated from his body he was watching what she was doing, making sure she was ok.

She didn't analyze the phenomenon; she didn't analyze anything. She moved with a febrile sense of urgency - confused and panicked. She had to get help. She had to get someone up there. Even though Peter was dead. She would ski to the hut and bring Jon and Tobi. She had to hurry.

Leaving Peter lifeless in a tangle of rope and blood soaked snow, she rode her pack down the couloir. The glissade was wild, her efforts to keep the shattered leg from bouncing semi-successful. She felt the portent of pain. Each time the snapped leg struck a sharp nervous response lanced into her brain.

At the black rock she remained enveloped in a cocoon of unreality, but her instincts for survival began to function rationally. She cleaned the mess out of her pants and learned the extent of her injuries. The damage to her left leg was obvious, and the significance of weakness in her right ankle and wrist sank in. Bones in each were broken. There seemed to be something wrong with her right knee, too, and her hat was caked with blood.

Her plan to ski for help was ludicrous.

It was evening. The weather had been deteriorating; clouds obscured the sky and snow threatened. Jon and Tobi should have been there by now, camping near the route for an early summit start. But they weren't. Kate concluded they had gone back to town.

It was Saturday evening. She and Peter were scheduled to ski out Sunday. But no one really expected them in town before Monday. People would become concerned Monday evening and might come looking on Tuesday. She was thirteen miles from the road. The earliest anyone would reach her was Tuesday night, three days away.

Kate was cold and thirsty. She remembered a quart of Tang and a parka in Peter's pack, at the top of the couloir. She remembered the foam pad and stove she had left at the tent. She had to get to the tent.

She pulled the metal stays from her pack and splinted her left leg. Then she tried to rig a sled. She put her pack on her skis and sat on the pack. It didn't work. She kneeled on her skis. It didn't work. She put her pack directly on the snow, sat on it and tried pushing with ski poles. It didn't work. She tried three other variations. It snowed.

She needed shelter. Using the black rock as a wind screen she chopped a trench in its lee side. Four inches of snow yielded with alacrity to the adze end of her axe, but the ice beneath was impenetrable. The result was a shallow slot that might block the wind passage over head and shoulders. Kate squirmed into her pack and dozed.

Sleep was intermittent. Awake, Kate had the opportunity to reflect. She thought about Peter. "Peter's dead. Peter's dead." She turned the words over in her mind but could extract no meaning. A fog of detachment isolated her from events, except for a feeling that he was watching her. The sensation was weaker than it had been at the top of the couloir, but she couldn't deny it. For Kate, raised in an environment of rational skepticism, the experience was disturbing.

Her own death seemed imminent - she couldn't tell. She doubted her senses, her awareness of her own body. But she was shivering. She was probably hypothermic. If she slept, would she awake? She gazed into her soul and found acceptance. If she died of hypothermia, that was ok. Peter got to try out death already - at worst she'd be with him. Kate had seen the face of mortality and was unintimidated. She slept. She had absolutely no fear of death.

Night retreated before a frontal assault of violent facts. There was no sign of Tobi or Jon. Peter was dead. Three of her limbs were broken. She had no shelter, no food, no bag and nothing to drink. Her only hope was to get across the basin, down the icefall and back to the tent.

Further attempts at designing a sled failed and Kate could think of only two alternatives: stay put or crawl. She was damned if she was going to lie there in the middle of the glacier and pretend she was going to die.

Kate began her crawl.

Arms through ski pole wrist loops, knees on the glacier, Kate left the black rock at a ridiculously slow pace. The minutes crept by, easily outpacing the meters. She planted one pole, then the other and shuffled her knees, over and over in endless repetition. She was not in pain. She felt no grief. She wasn't worrying about how to descend the icefall. She was thinking about thirst. She was thinking about water, milk, soup and beer. She imagined herself at home, a tall glass of apple juice raised to her lips. She pictured arriving at the tent, firing up the stove and melting snow. Shovel loads of snow. She remembered hearing you can live days without food, but without water...

The sun rose over Old Snowy, radiating into the basin, warming the worm-like creature crawling below. The warmth was comforting. Kate filled her empty bottle with snow and tucked it close to her skin. The heat from her sun-warmed body melted the snow to slush and she gulped it greedily, craving more.

The sun rose to its zenith, beaming down on Old Snowy's southwest face, beaming down on the still form at the top of the couloir. Kate crawled, weak from thirst, trauma and exhaustion, stopping often and passing out. The minutes turned to hours, the inches to yards. Clouds skimmed the ridges and hid the sun. Wind entered Old Snowy Basin.

Kate looked around, wondering where she would spend this night. The inhospitableness of her surroundings dismayed her. She didn't belong here.

She began hearing things. Drink, she thought, gotta keep moving, sounds like a voice, weird, gotta find shelter.

Kate had crawled two miles in ten hours. She was stopped cold at the edge of a crevasse. If she could only stand, crossing it would be a breeze. If she could only stand. Wind kicked spindrift in her face and she shivered. Her need for shelter was desperate. She was so thirsty.

Then she heard it; the clear, unmistakable sound of someone yelling. She yelled back. Jon and Tobi skied up and Kate burst into tears.

"Where's Peter?"

"He's dead."

It was the first time she'd said it aloud. For the past twenty four hours she had been living in her head, the question of survival dominating all else. Suddenly she spoke to someone and it was all real. She would live. And Peter was dead.

Kate had survived. Her rescue was underway. She no longer needed to act. It was hard to comprehend, but Kate's pure, physical struggle for life was in itself not a harrowing experience. "When you hear about it as a catastrophic story," she admits, "it sounds horrendous. But I really wasn't in that much pain. I was living from moment to moment." A mechanism was at work within her, filtering messages which were, in her situation, extraneous. Kate calls it survival mode, and believes that, in a similar situation others would have a similar experience. The adjectives courageous and heroic, she insists, are inapplicable. "Once you're there, you gotta do what you gotta do to survive. You're going to fight."

The sense of unreality began to dissipate. Her first clue was the onslaught of pain. By the time she'd been helicoptered to the hospital it was plethoric. Agony, drugs, nurses, doctors, family and friends restrained emotional trauma, but when she left the hospital, her psychic ordeal shifted into high gear. Kate began to experience consciously the nightmare she had already lived through.

"I would have these daydreams as I was trying to sleep," she recalls, "I'd be on the edge of sleep and all I could, all I could do was go over, in my mind, the accident, and what little thing I could have done to help him and what little thing I could have done just a little bit differently and everything would have worked out better. And he wouldn't be dead."

She was obsessed with the impotent, consuming wish to alter events, to change the past. Anything - a few extra minutes over lunch, an earlier start that morning, an extra word spoken on the climb - anything might have altered the course of fate.

Why, she wondered, had Peter fallen? Why hadn't he yelled? Why did he have to die? Why had she lived?

So many times," she wrote in her diary, "I just wish I had died with him. Death was so easy for me to accept then, out there, and then I would be with him - or at least not without him."

And the question tormented her: was he really dead when she left? She had checked his wrist, his neck, and found no pulse. She could feel no breath, even with her face close to his. But was he really dead? She remembered how he had tried to revive his friend Andrew for over an hour. Had she left too soon? She relived the circumstances - her broken limbs, how he kept slipping down slope, the macabre wound over his eye - but still she wondered. Couldn't she have done more?

Kate found her own survival irreconcilable with Peter's death. "It's not right that he should die," she wrote, "I wish I had died with him." She became entangled in a self-spun web of unjustified guilt. Cruel, but under the circumstances, not unusual.

Peter's body was recovered. She heard the tale, how two strong climbers took hours with extra ropes, pulleys and screws to lower him to the glacier. She realized how little she could have done even if he had been alive.

On May 14 she wrote, "Talked to Dr. Brown about Peter, and he reassured me that, from the sound of it, he was dead anyway from a serious hit to the head or internal injuries. My relief at hearing this was enormous."

Though the question remained, its urgency diminished.

An autopsy was conducted. Kate inquired, several times, about the results. She never received an answer. It bugged her, but she didn't pursue it for some reason.

By late May her perpetual depression had metamorphosed into a mental roller coaster. May 21: "Emotional undulations are driving me nuts. At the Sandvick House I was laughing so hard my stomach hurt. Two hours later tears and sadness overwhelmed me in a torrential onrush of emotion. Why can't I just be over this without having to go through it?"

The pain was easing, however, and with remarkable speed. In the same entry she was awestruck over the eruption of Mount St. Helens. Her life force was regenerating.

But her emotional recovery breathed life into a new mental ogre. She asked herself if her wounds weren't healing too fast, if the knife of tragedy had somehow failed to penetrate. "I should have felt it more deeply. It's like my whole being doesn't feel the effects of things. I think it makes me more capable of being strong, but is it that I'm strong, or numb?" She had experienced no initial grief when Peter died, and even afterwards her sorrow had been strangely vicarious. His death seemed more awful, more real when she told about it and heard how it sounded to others. She was afraid her emotions had been crippled.

Mosquitoes bloomed in Fairbanks. Kate's waves of anguish attenuated and her attention shifted to physical rehab. Her body was going to be different.

The sheared edges of her left tibia and fibula had been pulverized, and as they mended a massive lump of bone deformed her leg. The result was bizarre and she was acutely self-conscious about wearing shorts.

But the joint was solid. Her structural problems were mostly in her ankles. She had lost flex, and it became apparent that, as long as she was active on her feet, she would have pain. Hiking would be slow and unpleasant; running was out of the question.

Leaves changed and fell. Kate wrote about Peter, talked of the accident and shed tears. She realized others had grown uncomfortable around the subject and began to restrain herself. At times she would break under the weight of unexpressed emotion, tears and sorrow raging through her. But even these outbursts became infrequent and, finally, rare.

Kate contemplated climbing again.

Her desire to return to the vertical world was never in question. "Climbing was such a high for me, something I was growing at, that I had potential at. It meant too much to me to give it up."

Two forces drew Kate to the mountains; one physical, the other spiritual. "It's a physical high that I can be that strong. It makes me feel capable. I can do this, man, I'm tough and here's the proof. I did this climb. And there's the touch with spirit that I get in the mountains. I remember feeling it poignantly that spring. I was doing a lot of thinking, trying to figure out if I had any spiritual feelings

at all. In the mountains, I felt, well, I don't know what the hell it is intellectualizing ruins it. But there's energy I'm linking into up there. It's beautiful. It's magical."

Kate was determined to climb again, and that determination carried her down the highway, ten months after the accident, to the falls on Dragonfly Creek.

She had doubts. She didn't know if she was physically capable of climbing anymore. But mostly she didn't know if she was mentally capable. The drive down was highlighted by nervous apprehension.

"I wondered if I was going to be scared, if it was going to be hard, if I could do it, if I was capable of taking risks again. I wondered if I'd have rushing memories of the accident and freak out."

It was appropriate that Kate should return to climbing at Dragonfly. She'd first learned about ice there. As she limped through the grove of spruce trees, pampering her bones, she relished the sense of homecoming. A scree scramble took her down to a close rock alcove. Dragonfly spilled into the bowl, frozen, draping the rock in glimmering blue.

As she strapped on crampons much of her apprehension melted away. The ritual of suiting up felt familiar, safe. She tied into the rope, clasped her tools and hobbled to the ice.

Thunk. She drove a pick into the waterfall, sensing the interplay between muscle, steel and ice. She swung her other tool, kicked front points in and left the ground. Everything was as it should be; all memories positive.

But as she ascended she felt the stealthy approach of fear. For all the familiarity she still felt like a neophyte. It had been a long time. Fear moved closer, lacing its fingers through her mind, taking over. Her emotions became brutal, placements insecure. Kate's legs were trembling "Let me down."

Her partner was supportive, praising her effort, and she was in silent agreement. Rushing memories had not overwhelmed her, she'd just gotten scared. She'd take a break and try again.

While her partner was elsewhere Kate wandered back to the ice. She drove her tools, set her front points, testing things, and traversed along Dragonfly's base. "I was playing around about six inches off the ground," she recalls, "my tools popped. I fell back and burst into tears." It could hardly be considered a fall, but it triggered something. "I thought, maybe this is from the accident. All of a sudden I was crying and it really freaked me out. Do I have this in me anymore? Is this going to happen again? Can I climb again?"

Not that day. They packed up and headed for Fairbanks.

On the way home Kate felt sad, but also proud that she had given it a try. "I didn't think this was the end. And my reaction made me think that I did have some depth to me, that I had felt this. It was like, hey, you aren't just a stone wall."

Eighty miles from home her truck broke down. They hitched.

The following weekend Kate armed herself with a rebuilt alternator and went to rescue her rig. After a long day of greasy wrenching her truck ran and she was riding a wave of self-confidence. The wave carried her another thirty mile, back to Dragonfly.

Half a dozen climbers were already there and, "They were really glad to see me." Words of encouragement accompanied her as she suited up, tied in and started climbing.

"I was scared shitless. Just do it, I told myself, don't let the fear grab you. But it took incredible nerve to get myself onto the ice." Having an audience might have given her a push, but it didn't stop her from voicing anxiety once on the ice. "Watch me," she called to her belayer. Hammers missed their mark. Her legs were shaking. "Have you got me?" "I've got you." She moved up.

The ice was in shape; soft, not like on Old Snowy, yet firm. As she climbed she swung into a rhythm. She'd take aim, drive a pick, move up, weight on her feet, heels down, feeling the ice. She experienced a fluid grace and, instead of tiring, grew stronger as she rose. She was swinging her hammers confidently now, placing them with authority. Her feet found irregularities in the waterfall, working with the medium. She was aware of the space below her crampons, but it wasn't terrible. Fear was controlled.

Kate stood alone atop Dragonfly, breathing hard, exultation flowing through her. She turned and gazed down at the view. The Nenana River's rapids lay frozen in silence, walled in by the ragged foothills of the Alaska Range. She felt the cool sun of winter on her face. "I was completely elated. I love that view. It was so beautiful. I just smiled all the way through."

It's tempting to leave Kate atop Dragonfly, but loose ends exist in real life, that, if they can't be tied off, should at least be gathered and sorted.

In 1984 Peter MacKeith's mother and sister visited Fairbanks. Kate was spending an evening with them when his sister asked her if anyone had ever told her the results of the autopsy. No one had. So she told her. Peter had died of exposure. No head wound. No internal injuries.

"Which brought back the question," Kate says, "of was he dead when I left him. You know, I'm the first one to admit there's a little question in my mind."

The question is moot. Even Kate recognizes, if only consciously, the absurdity of blaming herself for Peter's death. But the fact remains that she lived and he died. She can never change that; she will never be able to fully accept it.

Yet for all the pain, physical and emotional, for all the grief and self-doubt, Kate has made a peace with herself and events and has come to realize how much she has gained from tragedy. "It's given me an inner strength, a real understanding of what life takes. The depth of human reality. There is so much involved in living and dying...the affects on people of others dying. On the other hand, we're just animals. We live and die. And when we're in a survival situation we do what we have to do in order to survive. I understand who I am and where I stand. I have strength, a confidence that I'm ok. I made it through this."

GLACIER RENDEZVOUS BLACK RAPIDS GLACIER

April 5th and 6th

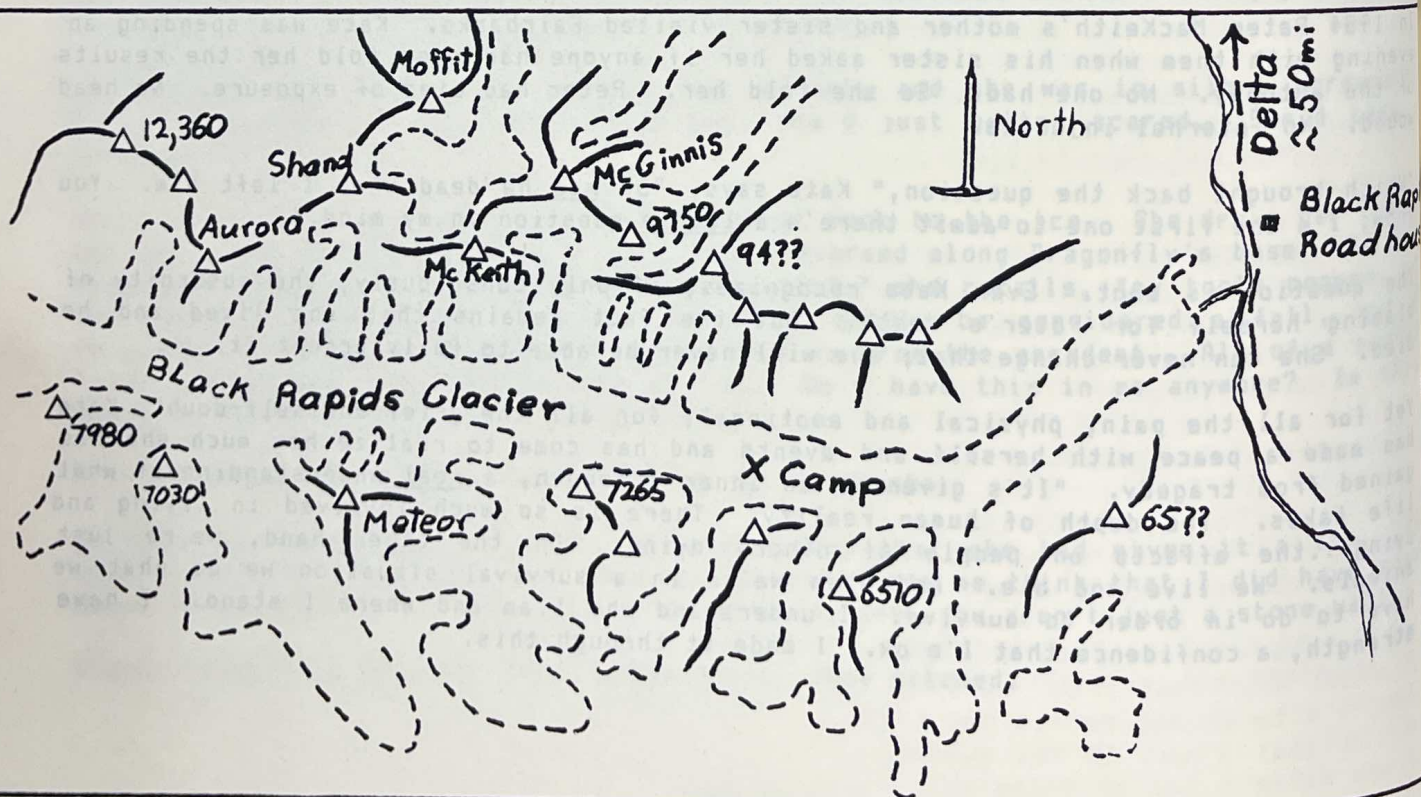
Leave @ 6am from Patty parking lot **or** meet us @ 8am in the Evergreen in Delta **or** you @ 10 am at Black Rapids Lodge.

The Glacier Rendezvous is a replacement for the Glacier Stampede which was dropped as a club activity when it became an event club members did not want to continue. It was considerable work to wand a safe path in and pack trash and excrement out just to have the hut trashed by a bunch of people who weren't even members of the club. The Rendezvous on the other hand is for **A_AC members** and their invited guests. This is a great opportunity to get new members so if you have any friends that you think might be interested in joining invite them along. Please be sure they are properly prepared - can be real winter that time of year.

The lower Black Rapids is fairly free of cracks and people generally ski it unroped. There are occasional moulines so everyone should be prepared with basic crevasse gear (harness, prusiks, and ropes). This is especially true for anyone planning on exploring the side glaciers.

In the past we have been criticized for pollution of the glacier environment and our actions will probably be scrutinized this time as well. Everyone will be responsible packing their own trash and feces out. Page 20 ~~of~~ (the Denali National Park report) has instructions on how to bag it but the only crevasses near us will be moulines which people go exploring in so take it home for proper disposal. Pray for below freezing weather.

If the Delta River is open we will [↑]insult the Casner Glacier instead. For more info [^]ask any officer.



POT LUCK DINNER AND SLIDE SHOW

Yak Estates Commons

Saturday May 9 @ 7:30 p.m.

Everyone is invited to cook up their favorite dish to serve 6 - 8 **HUNGRY** climbers and bring it up to the Yak Estates Commons (building @ far east end of Yak Estates). So we don't end up with 30 freezer burned salmon here is a guide;

If your last name begins with:

A - L....Bring....Main Dish

M - R....Bring....Dessert

S - Z....Bring....Salad or Vegetable

Bring your own Beverage.

For entertainment bring 10 - 15 slides of people in compromised positions. We will provide a projector & stack loader.

CHENA HOT SPRINGS HIIHTO

COME AND SKI MARCH 9!

Cross country skiers will have an opportunity to participate in the Second Annual Chena Hot Springs Hiihto on March 9, 1986. You can choose between the 18-km Loppet and the 45-km Hiihto. The course starts at Mile 30 Chena Hot Springs Road and the Hiihto finishes at the Chena Hot Springs Resort. Both events start at 9 a.m. All 45-km entrants must be 18 years old or older, but there are no age restrictions for the 18-km ski. Each finisher will receive a commemorative medallion with Scott Sauter's Hiihto logo imprint.

To register for this event:

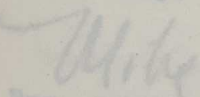
(1) Pick up your registration form at Birch Hill, West Ridge, Clem's, Beaver Sports, Campbell's, etc. (2) Mail it in or return it to Clem's, Beaver, Campbell's, or Prospector's (North Pole) before March 5 OR Come to Ryan Junior High School Wednesday, March 5 from 5-9 P.M. and register at the bib pick-up. OR Come to Mile 30 Chena Hot Springs Road Sunday, March 9 between 7:45 and 8:30 A.M. for late registration.

NOTE: Registration through March 5 is \$10; after March 5 -- \$20. Further details for this ski event can be found in the registration brochure.

So... if you are not involved in alpine club activities on March 9, please come to the Hiihto and ski! If you would like to volunteer your help on the aid stations, registration, or timing, contact Kurt Karwoski at 452-8472.

Sue Keller, Hiihto Publicity Committee

Sincerely,



Rep. Mike Davis

IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

At least 3 bills are before the legislature which may affect the Lower Canwell McKeith huts. (SB 269, HB 561, & SB 397) Someone needs to research the bills and background info and prepare a club statement to be voted on.

Peter McKeith's next to last climb was an attempt to go over 10,310 to get Shand. We could prepare a proposal to rename 10,310 McKeith Peak.

Present climbing class does not adequately address Women's mountaineering. seminar could be prepared to address this subject.

Huts are always in need of repair. The Lower Canwell needs end wall replacement. All the huts need outhouses. Any designs for solar composting toilets?

We are trying to turn Bucky Wilson's lecture on "History of the Deltas" into an article. Tape recordings need to be transcribed, edited, etc.

Jason Peterson has offered to head up a summer rock climbing school. He might need some help.

We wanted to include a membership list with phone #s in this issue but couldn't get it done.

Wood Center has a display cabinet available for use by clubs. Does someone want to get a display together?

Anyone want to help with a sports day booth at the fair?

McKeith Grant program is without a standard grant agreement. A good contract document might prevent abuse of the program.

Thayer Hut lease is about to expire. Mike Masters submitted paper work to BLM but we need to follow up.

Stan Justice



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Mike Davis

Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-4930/4941

Interim Office:
P.O. Box 81435
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

February 19, 1986

Mr. Stan Justice
Alaska Alpine Club
1750 Reed Circle
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Mr. Justice, *Stan*

Thank you for your support for the Avalanche school. I am very supportive of avalanche prevention programs. I think it makes much more sense to fund programs to prevent accidents involving avalanches than to pay the extremely high cost of rescuing victims. Unfortunately, much of the budget has been cut for FY 87 for avalanche programs.

In FY 86, \$275,000 was appropriated for purposes of avalanche safety and education. Only \$32,000 will be left in the FY 87 budget. The \$32,000 is mainly for the Department of public

Safety to set explosive charges to purposely activate avalanches. The \$98,600 for the Avalanche school has been cut from the Governor's budget. In addition, the \$144,100 for the University's Avalanche forecasting program has been cut from the Governor's budget.

In order to put these programs back into the budget, there needs to be a lot of public pressure on both House and Senate finance subcommittee members which sit on the University and Natural Resources budget subcommittees. These sub-committees are made up of the following legislators:

Department of Natural Resources finance sub-committee

Senate: Kerttula, Halford, and Eliason.

House: Cotten, Goll, Sund, Jenkins

University of Alaska finance sub-committee

Senate: Halford, Sackett, Paul Fischer

House: Ringstad, Koponen, Martin, Rieger, Miller

Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,

Mike
Rep. Mike Davis

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

1985 MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY

There were no winter ascents of Mount McKinley or adjacent peaks during 1985. A Japanese team, filming a movie about Naomi Uemura, made this season's first ascent. Their large filming crew arrived at the Kahiltna base camp on March 18th. Twelve team members continued beyond base camp, filming while they ascended. On April 18th, the tenacious group placed seven members on the summit. Even though they did not officially qualify as a winter ascent, they certainly experienced winter conditions throughout nearly all of their climb.

The months of May and June have traditionally offered the best weather for expeditions to the Alaska Range. For 1985 however, they were an extension of the arctic winter. Severe temperatures and abundant storms created conditions that kept the success rate to approximately 20 percent until the last week of June. Cold related injuries more than doubled from the previous year, effecting 11 percent of all the Mount McKinley climbers.

The High Latitude Research Project was funded this season. Their camp at 14,200' on the West Buttress was staffed from late April through late June. In addition to continuing past projects, the researchers began investigations into the effect of altitude upon brain function. As in past years, their talented staff assisted in and/or coordinated a number of rescues. Transportation of the project to and from the mountain was provided by the U.S. Army, 242nd Aviation Company, Ft Wainwright, Alaska. Doctor Peter Hackett will submit a summary of the research results from the High Latitude Project for inclusion in the 1986 American Alpine Journal.

The National Park Service conducted three, four week expeditions on Mount McKinley. All were on the West Buttress route. These patrols enabled the Mountaineering Rangers to contact nearly all the West Buttress climbers to emphasize the importance of proper sanitation and trash removal practices. Both the medical doctors and the rangers stressed the importance of self-sufficiency on Mount McKinley. Nearly all of the mountaineers who developed frostbite or altitude sickness were encouraged to conduct their own evacuation. For 1985, only seven people were air evacuated from Mount McKinley and the surrounding mountains under rescue conditions (two of these were body recoveries). Two others were assisted from 17,000' to the medical camp where they were later able to descend to base camp under their own power.

In addition to the pit latrine at the Kahiltna Base at 7,000', new pit latrines were provided at 14,200' on the West Buttress and at the landing strip on the Sheldon Amphitheater on the Ruth Glacier. These simple latrines have been very successful in concentrating human waste and thus reducing the sanitation problems at the more popular traditional campsites. We plan to expand the use of these units to include the 11,000' and 17,200' camps for 1986.

One American was issued a citation for littering. A German was cited for guiding without a permit.

The number of people attempting to climb Mount McKinley decreased slightly this year. The decrease was in the number of foreign climbers and was probably a result of the strong American dollar in the foreign markets.

1978 = 539
1979 = 533
1980 = 659
1981 = 612
1982 = 696
1983 = 709
1984 = 695
1985 = 645

Approximately 645 mountaineers attempted to climb Mount McKinley in 1985. Severe winter weather continued through April, May and into late June. Conditions improved in late June in time to allow a large number of expeditions, who were waiting at the lower elevations, to try for the summit. Unusually good weather lasted throughout nearly all of July.

Interesting Statistics: *

Success Rate - 321 (50%) of those attempting the summit were successful.

Acute Mountain Sickness: - 116 (18%) had symptoms, of these:

- 64 (10%) were mild
- 39 (6%) were moderate
- 13 (2%) were severe

Frostbite: 72 (11%) reported some degree of frostbite. Eight of these required hospitalization.

West Buttress Route: 511 (80%) of the climbers on Mount McKinley were on the popular West Buttress route.

Mountain Guiding: 238 (37%) of the climbers were guided by professional mountain guides. The overall success rate of these groups was 62%. The majority of the guided trips occurred on the West Buttress, but other guided attempts on Mount McKinley included the Muldrow Glacier, South Buttress, Northwest Buttress, West Rib and Cassin.

Foreign Climbers: 121 (19%) of the climbers were from foreign nations. This was a 37% decrease from last year. Twelve nations were represented:

Australia- 3	England- 2	Japan- 34	Norway- 6
Austria- 2	France- 11	Kenya- 2	Switzerland- 7
Canada- 22	Holland- 3	New Zealand- 3	W. Germany- 26

* Two thirds (66%) of all climbers completed the Post Climbing Report, the source of statistics for AMS and frostbite. Final figures were obtained by extrapolating the reported figures to represent the total number of climbers. Hospitalized cases represent actual cases, not assumed.

Record Number Of Mountaineers On Mount McKinley During A Given Week: A new all time high of 294 Mount McKinley climbers was recorded during the week ending May 19th. The previous high was during the week ending May 16, 1983 when 270 climbers were on the mountain's slopes during a seven day period.

Minimum Temperatures: Near the end of the 1984 climbing season, the Mountaineering Rangers cached a minimum recording thermometer at 17,200' along the West Buttress route. The thermometer was checked during early May of 1985. The minimum temperature was -58 degrees F. The same NPS patrol experienced -49 degree F. temperatures while camped at 17,200'. The 1913 Stuck/Karstens Expedition left a minimum recording thermometer at 15,000' on the Muldrow Glacier route, near Brown's Tower. It was recovered 19 years later by members of the 1932 Lindley/Liek Expedition. The thermometer indicated -94 degrees F. which was the lowest possible recording for that instrument. The accuracy of that reading has been questioned because of the high possibility that one of Denali's numerous earthquakes jarred the instrument. According to personnel at the US Weather Service Forecasting Office in Fairbanks, the lowest officially recorded Alaskan temperature was -80 degrees F. recorded at Prospect Creek on January 23, 1971. This was during the coldest month on record for the city of Fairbanks....The average daily temperature was -32 degrees F. The coldest official temperature for the Northern Hemisphere was -94 degrees F. recorded at Verkhoyansk, Siberia.

New Routes:

Mount McKinley: No new routes were completed during 1985, however Sarah Doherty, a 25 year old American, became the first amputee (one leg) to climb the mountain. She summited in May via the West Buttress and utilized special crutches for the ascent.

Mount Hunter: A new line up the East Buttress was completed by Americans Jack Tackle and Jim Donini.

Kitchatna Spires: Alaskan mountaineers Roman Dial, Chuck Comstock and John Harpole made two first ascents:

Peak 8055- "Vug Tor"- a route up the southeast face.

The 6000' peak south of Bluff Spire- "Talkeetna Tor"

Accidents:

In early May, a German climber was descending Denali Pass on the West Buttress when he slipped and fell. He was travelling unroped, had his ice ax strapped to his pack and was walking with ski poles. He was unable to self-arrest, tumbled 200 yards and disappeared into a crevasse. He was fortunate to land on a small ledge about 10' down. He was helicopter evacuated from 17,200' with possible cervical injuries.

In mid May, another German climber who was part of an illegally guided expedition from Germany, fell at the same place. Again, he was unroped, his ice ax was on his pack and he was using ski poles. This time the fall was fatal. His climbing party evacuated the body to 14,200' where

it was flown out by ski plane.

In early May, an American guided party on the Muldrow Glacier was caught by a severe wind storm along Karsten's Ridge. Winds were so strong that two packs were blown away. Travel became impossible. Members of the team were literally blown off their feet. This overstressed the polypropylene fixed line the climbers were descending. The line broke and climbers fell approximately 200'. There were no injuries during the fall but climbers were forced to bivouac overnight where they landed. In one case, a climber maintained an ice ax arrest position all night long. This individual received third degree frostbite to his left hand. The team requested and received helicopter evacuation for this man and another who had lost all of his equipment during the storm.

In mid May, an American climbing party of four reached the 16,100' level on the West Rib. As they prepared camp, one member moved to the down-sloping edge of their tent platform to drive a snow picket to anchor their tent. He had unroped, removed his crampons, was wearing smooth soled overboots and was carrying only a rock hammer. He slipped, was unable to self-arrest and fell 1200' to his death. The body was helicopter evacuated.

In early June, two American climbers were caught on the Lowe-Kennedy route on Mount Hunter by one of the heavy snow storms. Avalanche danger was high. Calls for help were heard at the Kahiltna base camp. When rangers made an overflight, the two climbers indicated by arm signals that they needed transportation off the mountain. Food, fuel and a CB radio was air dropped but only the food was recovered by the climbers. On the next overflight, one climber again indicated they needed help. They were evacuated by helicopter. The climbers later said they felt it was too dangerous to move from their location, they were low on fuel, and weather appeared to be deteriorating.

At the end of May, an American party of two reached the 17,200' camp on the West Buttress. One member elected to camp in a tent, the other camped in an igloo where another climber cooked and melted snow with a white gas stove for an extended period of time. The newly arrived climber developed a severe headache, slept poorly and by morning was ataxic, had a pulse of 120/minute and respirations of 26/minute. He was removed from the igloo and oxygen was administered. Improvement was rapid. With some assistance, he was able to descend to the 14,200' medical camp where he was diagnosed as having carbon monoxide poisoning from the stove operating in the poorly ventilated igloo.

Another American climber showed symptoms of dehydration, carbon monoxide poisoning, and Acute Mountain Sickness at the 17,200' West Buttress camp. Personnel from the 14,200' medical camp responded, administered oxygen, IV solution (two liters), and medication. He was lowered down the upper portion of the "rescue gully" and then assisted under his own power to the medical camp. After rest he was able to walk to base camp. This rescue should never have occurred. The victim was ill at high camp with headache and vomiting and was unable to take liquids during the day. He chose to attempt a summit climb that evening despite these clear warning signs. This expedition demonstrated little of the self-sufficiency which is so important on Mount McKinley. Rescue efforts were left to other

climbers and members of the research camp. Members of the expedition were either too exhausted or did not have sufficient experience to conduct their own evacuation.

Many of the most common causes of rescues and tragedy in the Alaska Range are clearly avoidable:

* **Acute Mountain Sickness:** Allow for proper acclimatization by adopting a conservative ascent rate. The recommended ascent rate is 1,000' (300 meters) per day above 10,000' (3000 meters). This rate may be either too fast or too slow for certain individuals. It is important to learn the symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness. Once symptoms appear, immediate descent to reacclimatize is essential. An excellent concise guide to AMS is the American Alpine Club's Climber's Guide: Mountain Sickness, Prevention, Recognition and Treatment, by Peter H. Hackett, M.D.

* **Crevasse and Denali Pass Falls:** Travelers on snow covered glaciers should be roped and have the proper equipment and knowledge to extricate themselves or an injured partner if a crevasse fall should occur. Over the years, Denali Pass has proven especially dangerous for unroped climbers traveling without an ice ax.

* **Frostbite:** Temperatures at altitude in the arctic are too extreme for the protection offered feet and toes by the plastic double boot. Fully insulated overboots that also cover the bottom of the foot are essential during April and May and highly recommended for June and July. Special attention must be given to maintaining proper circulation in the foot and toes, keeping the inner boot insulation dry and the body properly hydrated.

* **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:** Cooking in poorly ventilated areas such as tents with all doors and vents closed, or old ice glazed igloos and snowcaves, produced two serious cases of CO poisoning this year. We suspect that many others also suffered lesser forms of CO poisoning. Furthermore, it seems very likely that CO poisoning may be a common contributor to AMS. It is difficult to diagnose the difference between Mountain Sickness and early symptoms of CO poisoning. Avoid the temptation to heat shelters with cooking stoves. Allow for good ventilation. Extra caution is necessary if two stoves are being used at the same time.

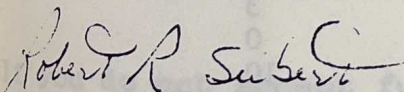
* **Sanitation:** Intestinal disorders, vomiting and diarrhea may result from contamination of food, or more likely, drinking water. The resulting dehydration can become a serious problem at altitude. All drinking water is obtained from snow melt. Since most Mount McKinley expeditions camp at sites commonly used by previous expeditions, the chance of gathering snow in the immediate vicinity of a previous expedition's latrine is very high. Conditions become worse as the season progresses at old latrines melt out. For the health and safety of all, it is imperative for everyone to follow these simple steps:

- 1) Use the public pit latrines where they are provided. At other locations:
- 2) Dig a shallow hole in the snow.

- 3) Line the hole with the proper size heavy duty plastic bag.
- 4) Stake the corners of the bag open (wands work well). When not in use, simply close the top of the bag to prevent it from filling with snow.
- 5) Use the bag as a communal latrine for all members of the expedition while in that camp. A little attention to prevent overflowing will make the process of disposal much easier.
- 6) When you move camp or a bag fills, simply tie it off and toss it into a deep crevasse. If no crevasses are immediately available, the bag should be carried until a suitable crevasse is found. The wastes are usually frozen and will ride well on the sled. On steep technical routes, the bag can be tossed away from the climbing route or feces can be deposited on snow blocks and shoveled off the route.
- 7) Crevasse only human waste. All trash must be carried out!

* **Self-sufficiency:** Those who depend upon rescue efforts or the strength and expertise of others to extricate themselves from difficult positions are inviting disaster. Helicopters and/or acclimatized rescuers are often not available or the weather prohibits their response in the Alaska Range. Travel prepared with the knowledge, equipment, strength and common sense to support your own expedition.

The Talkeetna Ranger Station is staffed year-round. For more information, please contact me.



Robert R. Seibert
 South District/Mountaineering Ranger
 Talkeetna Ranger Station
 P.O. Box 327
 Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

Signature _____ Date _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

1985 MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY

<u>MOUNT MCKINLEY</u>	<u>EXPEDITIONS</u>	<u>CLIMBERS</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL CLIMBERS</u>
West Buttress	104	311	153
West Buttress (Guided)	25	200	116
Muldrow Glacier	6	15	9
Muldrow Glacier (Guided)	2	26	19
West Rib	14	35	5
West Rib (Guided)	2	13	13
Cassin	6	14	4
Cassin (Guided)	1	2	0
South Buttress	4	14	0
South Buttress (Guided)	1	5	0
South Face	1	2	2
North West Butt. (Guided)	1	8	0
	<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 167	<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 645	<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 321
<u>MOUNT FORAKER</u>	4	9	0
<u>MOUNT FORAKER</u> (Guided)	1	3	0
<u>MOUNT HUNTER</u>	8	18	2
<u>MOUNT HUNTINGTON</u>	4	8	0
<u>MOOSES TOOTH</u>	4	14	9
<u>MOOSES TOOTH</u> (Guided)	1	2	0
<u>KITCHATNA SPIRES</u>	3	7	3
<u>MOUNT CROSSON</u>	3	9	0
<u>MOUNT DICKEY</u>	3	10	10
<u>MOUNT BARRILLE</u>	2	5	3
<u>LITTLE SWITZERLAND</u>	2	8	0
	<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 35	<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 93	<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 27
TOTAL	202	738	348

Note: Since registration is required only for Mount McKinley and Foraker climbs, statistics for other climbs represent those climbers who voluntarily checked in with the Mountaineering Rangers. Other climbs, especially in the area of the Ruth Glacier, are likely to have occurred.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Dues

Individual	\$6
Family	\$10
Student	\$3

(circle one)

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____ / _____
 ADDRESS _____ days _____ evening _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

UAF STATUS 1985 - 86 (check all that apply)

Student (3 credits or more)	[]	Spouse	[]	Sex	
Faculty	[]		[]	Male	[]
Staff	[]		[]	Female	[]
Alumni (graduate)	[]		[]		
(4 or more semesters)	[]		[]		
No UAF Affiliation	[]		[]		

If you do not accept fully the following conditions DO NOT sign up, attend training sessions or in any other way participate in any event. I under signed, know that ski mountaineering and winter camping are action sports carrying significant risks of personal injury. Ice climbing, rock climbing or mountain climbing is even more dangerous. I know that there are natural hazards such as crevasses, avalanches and environmental conditions, and risks which in combination with my actions can cause me very severe or occasionally fatal injury. I agree that I, as a participant must take an active role in understanding and accepting these risks, conditions and hazards. I also agree that I and not the Alaska Alpine Club or its officers, or its instructors, or other participants, am responsible for my safety while I participate in or train for these events. This statement of risk and the signatures thereto shall be valid for all Alaska Alpine Club events.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Send To - Alaska Alpine Club P.O. Box 81174 College, Alaska 99708