



# DESCENDANT

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## Caving in Southeast Alaska

by Steve Lewis

August 8, 1991 was slated for a major effort on the Bridal Veil cave system. Tim and Julie Heaton and I were to wrap up several small caves that Mark Fritzke had located along the surface stream that in high water creates the veil of falling water at Bridal Veil Cave proper. Most promising was Dragon's Breath Cave, a small hole just above the stream bed which led to an apparent 50 foot pit with the sound of running water below. An overly leisurely start and trail-clearing hike-in saw us eating lunch and rigging the pit at about noon. Mark Fritzke and Glenn Coville had tagged along to video the descent before heading to Bridal Veil and Curvin Metzler was shooting still photos. I dropped the initial 55 foot drop to find myself in a chamber with plentiful drips and water running down the walls to disappear down a small hole in the floor. A few more steps suggested why it made so much noise in vanishing. A black hole disappeared down beyond the range of my light and

### Quote:

.. I think that one of the lessons of climbing is perseverance, having a vision and continuing on in spite of obstacles, putting one foot in front of another steadily until you get to your goal. Learning that lesson in mountaineering helps you apply it to all other activities.

*Arlene Blum, mountaineer, writer and lecturer*

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## President's Message

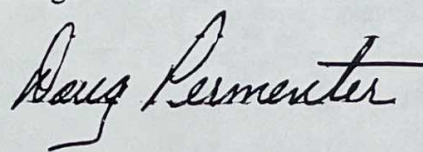
Well I guess I bragged once too often that I wanted to get more involved in club activities. So be careful what you wish for - you may be elected president. Seriously though I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to make a positive contribution. The other officers elected were: Chris Holder as vice president and Rob McFarland as Secretary/Treasurer. At the time of this writing I have yet to hear from either of them. So if you are out there, please contact me. Franz Müter has generously agreed to edit the club's sometime publication DESCENT, and to schedule speakers for the club's monthly meetings, along with other club duties too numerous to mention. A round of applause for Franz please. Also much appreciation should be directed towards Stan and Carol Justice. Stan will again run the club's biggest single member and revenue gainer - the Ski Mountaineering Class - with the assistance of Carol, the ever popular climbing dynamo. Both of them were also instrumental in laying the groundwork for a climbing wall at UAF.

Our meetings this spring will again be held on the first Tuesday of each month. I am very encouraged since we found ourselves in the most enviable

position last fall with more speakers than we had meetings scheduled. Already we enjoyed exceptional slide shows on Nepal and Ecuador. After each of these shows I am sure I know where my next trip will take me until I see the next presentation, then I know where I'll go instead. So many adventures - so little time.

In conclusion, I am certainly looking forward to the upcoming season, future slide shows, and meeting / learning from new members and students. We always need new folks to help out with future club activities. I don't know how long we can continue abusing Carol, Stan, and Franz's generosity. There are plenty of mountains yet to climb, and glaciers to ski, so - GET INVOLVED!!

Climb high



rocks fell free for 5.5 to 7 seconds before rattling about. This was much more than expected and extra rope was going to be needed as well as my rappel rack!

Tim relayed these messages as best he could in our noisy room and followed down to sketch. The excitement was too much for the photographers and after Julie's descent the whole crew followed, bringing our 165 foot and their 80 foot rope. Tim, Julie, and Curvin were not equipped for potential knot crossing in very wet and cold conditions and ascended

This article describes the exploration and mapping of just one of the several hundred caves discovered in Southeast Alaska in the past several years. Most of the caves are located on Prince of Wales Island with great potential on Dall Island and several other areas underlain by limestone. At least 700 square miles of karst (limestone with sinkholes and subsurface drainage patterns) topography exist, including over 30 square miles of alpine and subalpine karst. Surveyed caves include El Capitan Pit, at 598.3 feet the deepest known natural pit in the United States, and El Capitan Cave, the longest cave in Alaska, with over 2 miles of passage surveyed thus far.

Biological studies of the caves have revealed large numbers of mammal bones, including some that appear to be of pleistocene origin. Timber harvest has traditionally been high on these well drained and fertile areas. Cave resources have only recently become a concern. Providing for protection of cave resources through education of the public and the land managers is an important task. Timber removal may change drainage patterns and increase siltation, damaging the unseen resource beneath the forest. Identification and mapping of caves is a first step in protecting them. Annual month-long Prince of Wales Island Expeditions with support and cooperation from the US Forest Service and Glacier Grotto of the National Speleological Association have begun to address this need. For more information contact Steve Lewis, 479-7257, Room 211 Irving - UAF, Fairbanks, AK 99775.

out. Once they were out we rigged our 245 feet of rope and I dropped over the lip into the unknown. About 50 feet down I discovered where the water from above had gone. It poured out of the wall and showered me for the rest of the descent. 90 feet down at the survey point the bottom had still not appeared. The knot soon did, right in the wettest place yet. But

the bottom was in sight and the rope reached! A free drop of 170 feet!

Mark followed down, videotaping his descent. The largest lead was a 30 foot drop into a very large room, dubbed the Dragon's Lair. We both dropped the remaining 30 feet and tried to notify Glenn, whose light was giving problems, that we were safely down and he could exit. We were now 260 feet below the surface stream.

Several large passages beckoned us upward and the stream dropped into another passage below us. We scrambled up a silt slope and headed up Barad Dûr. Beautifully folded bands of siltstone graced the right wall as we surveyed up a steeply ascending pile of breakdown. Much of this was noncarbonate siltstone and conglomerate. 150 feet up a 20 to 30 foot wide passage the blocks filled it nearly to the ceiling and we entered what appeared to be a breakdown plugged chimney. Its dimensions are difficult to estimate but it and all the similar structures later discovered appeared to be as big or bigger in diameter than the entry pit. A limestone flake 20 or more feet high allowed a view up a small waterfall to a final boulder choke, the end of Barad Dûr.

Next was another steeply ascending breakdown passage, Smaug's Deathtrap. The ceiling of the lower Deathtrap was decorated with numerous lines of helecites up to several inches in length as well as numerous soda straws, both clean and muddy. Most interesting was the Dragon's Tooth, a snow white carrot-shaped and -sized stalactite dangling from the end of a muddy soda straw. Huge muddy breakdown blocks were stacked at 45 to 60°. Smaller blocks were extremely unstable and left one feeling that the whole pile was poised to tumble if one pulled the right block. A line of hemlock needles high up in the passage suggested that the entire cave is subject to flooding. This passage went for 250 feet with several squeezes between the ceiling and breakdown before ending in another plugged chimney. These large breakdown filled shafts lend credence to Kevin Allred's hypothesis that past glaciation has filled many of the Prince of Wales caves which are just now beginning to clean themselves out.

Although more cave beckoned alluringly, the time dictated retreat. A 45 minute hike in the dark brought us to the road head by 11pm, thanks to Kevin's prolific flagging along the trail. 681 feet of survey and video tape footage wasn't a bad day at all.

The next day found Carlene Allred, Glenn, and me back at the cave with a 200 foot rope for rigging

the deep pit. Our goal was to follow the cave down toward Bridal Veil itself. Dropping into the Dragon's Lair was quickly accomplished without a knot to cross. A 15 foot drop through the cobble fill that formed the floor of the Lair brought us into a clean limestone walking passage with a stream. Passing beneath a network of ascending passages we rigged a 20 foot wet drop. It was possible to avoid descent (or ascent) in the worst of the waterfall by careful placement of the rope. Some scramble drops later we emerged into a sizeable room which dropped away out of our view. Clean breakdown covered the floor at the top of this chamber, which we named Gollum's Gallery. This breakdown emerged from another shaft plugged with breakdown, the Orc's Orifice. This was another pile of steep and unstable although clean breakdown. A waterfall poured down from above, making good upward vision impossible and precluding absolute confidence that no leads existed, but the instability of the breakdown made me sure that no safe leads beckoned.

Returning to Gollum's Gallery we followed a 15 to 20 foot wide and high passage. However, the ceiling height quickly dropped as cobble and sand covered at the bedrock floor. Evidence of foam at bends warned of the impending sump. A crawl down an unstable slope of sand and cobble brought us to the wet termination. I was able to get a foot through to what felt like more breathing passage but the hole was too small for underwater pushing. It seems likely that drier conditions will permit further exploration of this passage. Our explorations followed a long period of very rainy weather. However, the slope above the sump is very unstable and great care must be taken to avoid undue disturbance. The sump had been three to four feet deep when first observed. Two days later sand had filled it to within a few inches of the water's

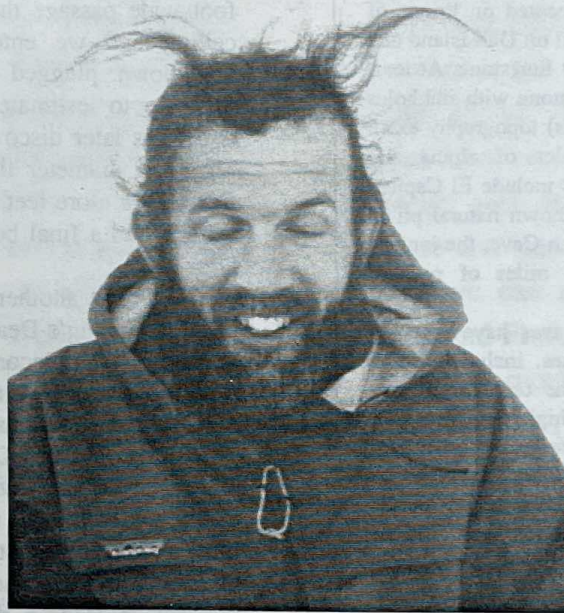
surface and filled the lead. Thus the name of the sump came to Gollum's Grave.

Coming back up the final drop Glenn discovered the importance of proper placement of the rope. He did not have on a drysuit and found the waterfall running down the arms of his waterproof coveralls and out his boots. We surveyed up into the maze, naming it the Orc's Escape, but did not finish as time was late and Glenn getting very cold. Once again the entrance was black as I emerged from the cave and three tired cavers trudged back to the truck in the dark with 333 feet more surveyed cave in the bag.

The 11th found Kevin and me back at the cave to try to tie up loose ends. Several leads were still unexplored along Smaug's Deathtrap, and the Orc's Escape needed to be finished. There were also leads at the bottom of the main drop and a possible passage in the main shaft.

Orc's Escape was indeed a minor maze, with all leads but one ending up near our starting point. One high lead appeared climbable but would need a dynamic rope. Smaug's Deathtrap still had more in store for us. The F and Y (Why?) surveys both led into large breakdown filled chimneys. Then came the Blockhead's Blunder. A passage beneath breakdown blocks and the wall of the Deathtrap lured us in. As we squirmed through, it became apparent that the

breakdown was more unstable than we had feared. Fresh gouges in the ceiling were evidence that huge blocks had tumbled since the last flood. The top of this breakdown crawl led back out into the main passage. However another passage lured downward. A webbing handline got us down an 8 foot drop into a horrible slimehole. Wet clay or silt covered everything, quickly including us. The hole continued down along the wall through breakdown for at least 20 feet. Happily, we had no rope and left this drop for future cavers with a death wish. There was no



Steve Lewis, currently working in Antarctica, also engages in other hair-raising adventures like a winter ascent of Mt. Drum, where this picture was taken. (Photo: Stan Justice)

evidence that this is a good going lead. I had three holds release simultaneously going back up the headline and discovered that muddy webbing is virtually frictionless. After getting the wind back into me we left the cave without further incident, showering off most of the slime during the ascent. 310 feet of cave, much of which is probably best never visited again. It was novel to find our way back to the road in broad daylight.

Glenn and I returned on the 12th for a final wrap up. Passages off the main shaft pinched quickly. High leads off the bottom of the shaft are wet and would require bolting. They do not appear promising. A short squeeze six feet above the main shaft floor led to a series of pits with a passage leading on the far side of the pit. The first pit could be downclimbed.

Another 45 foot drop was very intriguing. Flagging at the bottom showed it to truly be the Orc's escape, the top end of the high lead we had planned to climb. Getting to the passage across the pit required a belay and protection on natural anchors. A small chamber has a muddy upper extension which I was unable to climb into. Unwilling to quit yet we

verified that Barad Dûr was impassable at the top but found a small tube leading from Barad Dûr towards Smaug's Deathtrap which, frustratingly, I was unable to get to. No safe leads remain in Dragon's Lair which do not require bolting, aid, and/or a better climber than me.

This cave requires good vertical skills and warm and waterproof clothing that will permit safe climbing in cold waterfalls. One needs a 70' rope for the first drop, a 250' rope for the next two combined, and then 30' and 40' respectively for the next two drops. Extreme care is necessary in negotiating the upper breakdown passage safely and the sump passage appears capable of slumping, trapping careless cavers. Flooding occurs, although ascent through heavy waterfalls appears to be a more likely hazard than entrapment. The vertical and wet nature of the cave preclude its use by most of the public and also protect it quite effectively. For those properly trained and equipped it is an exhilarating cave - physically challenging, geologically interesting, and aesthetically pleasing. ♦

## Profile



### Christian Bonington

**Born:** August 6, 1934, London, England

**Hometown:** Wigton, Cumbria, England

**Occupation:** Writer, lecturer, photographer

**Climbing Highlights:** Annapurna II (first ascent, 1960), Nuptse (first ascent, 1961), Central Pillar of Freney (first ascent, 1961), North Wall of The Eiger (first British ascent, 1962), Brammah (first ascent, 1973), Changabang (first ascent, 1974), Ogre (first ascent, 1977), Kongur (1981), Vinson (1984), and Everest (1985)

The British have a long tradition of climbing exploration in the Himalayas. Much of that tradition is based on the work of Chris Bonington, recipient of the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, and a veteran leader with more than fifteen consecutive yearly visits to the highest mountains of the world.

"I look at climbing not so much as standing on top as seeing the other side," Bonington explained.

"There are always other horizons in front of you, other horizons to go beyond and that's what I like about climbing.

"Climbing is a series of explorations and discoveries. It is full of excitement and the unknown. Actually, I think for most people, their most exciting climbing is done in their first two years, when they are learning the most about their own limits."

Bonington was raised in London. On a vacation, he was traveling through Wales and "saw someone climbing on a rock and I knew instinctively that climbing was something I wanted to do."

His climbing career very nearly came to a quick end when he took a nine-to-five job with a British corporation, thinking that his three-week vacation each year would be enough for the amount of climbing he wanted to do. He felt stifled in the job and soon learned that he wanted to climb more than anything else and started looking for a way to climb and still make a living.

He took up photojournalism and received what he called "adventure theme assignments." One such assignment sent him to Baffin Island to photograph Eskimos. Bonington recalled, "The temperature was minus forty and it was totally quiet and beautiful. I went out for two weeks with some Eskimos, hunting caribou. We didn't see any caribou, but we did see some impressive country."

A later assignment took him to Ethiopia on a descent of the Blue Nile. He nearly drowned when his boat overturned, but that was only the beginning. "We were attacked by local natives. We were ambushed and got away. Then they attacked at night. That was the only time I ever fired shots in anger. I don't think I hit anything, but I fired five shots. Then I decided I'd had enough of this photojournalism bit. I was tired of being a voyeur, sitting back while others did things, so I decided to get something of my own going."

That led him to the alps where, among other things, he accomplished the first British ascent of the Eiger North Face, an event that placed him in the headlines. He was asked to write a book and give a few lectures and he hasn't stopped doing either for over twenty-five years. His books include *I Chose to Climb*, *The Next Horizon*, *Kongur: China's Elusive Summit*, *Everest: The Unclimbed Ridge*, *Annapurna South Face*, *Everest South West Face*, *The Quest for Adventure*, *Everest the Hard Way*, and *The Everest Years*. Literally thousands of climbing enthusiasts have heard his lectures and viewed his slide

presentations over the years.

In *The Next Horizon*, Bonington wrote:

One of the features of climbing is the intensity of concentration it exacts. In its basic form, if you are poised on a rock wall a hundred feet above the ground, all other thoughts and problems are engulfed by the need for absolute concentration. There is no room for anything other than the problems of staying in contact with the rock and negotiating the next few moves. In this respect, climbing offers an escape, or perhaps it would be better to describe it as a relaxation, from everyday worries of human relationships, money, or jobs. This relaxation lasts for longer than just those moments when you are actually climbing and life is in jeopardy.

Sitting on a ledge, belying one's partner, senses are extra acute; the feel of the rock under hand, of the wind and sun, the shape of the hills - all these are perceived with an extra intensity. Absorption in immediate surroundings once again excludes one's everyday life. On an expedition the same withdrawal from everyday affairs takes place, but here the expedition becomes a tiny little world of its own with, in microcosm, between its members, all the tensions and conflicts that can take place in the larger world. The all-consuming aim is to climb the mountain of one's choice and this transcends, in importance, anything that might be happening beyond it.

One of the attractions, indeed reasons, for climbing is the element of risk involved, of pitting one's own judgement against the mountain, with a fall as a price of a mistake. In its purest sense, the solo climber is getting the most out of the sport since he is staking his life on his judgement. Without companions or rope, he has a good chance of being killed in a fall. The majority of us, however, prefer to hedge our bets, climbing with a companion, using a rope, and than contriving running belays to reduce the distance we fall if we do come off. The problem is in deciding just how far we should reduce the risk before losing a vital element in the sport.

He is still aware, however, that the sport he has

chosen does exact a price. He has seen friends die in the mountains - Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker, Ian Clough, Nick Estcourt, Mick Burke, Dougal Haston, and others. "It is like playing Russian roulette," he admitted. "You are exposed to a great many objective dangers for such a long time. It you do it year after year, the odds kind of pile up against you."

Bonington is able to look beyond those names in relationship to his own climbing. "I don't think about the accidents and the possibility of dying on a climb. I think you'd probably give up if you did that. I am an optimist. I blank that out. I'm worried, yes, but basically for my family. I get worried because of the responsibility to my family."

"I go climbing because I like climbing and I modify my climbing to what I enjoy. I'm now tending to go for the unclimbed peaks in the range of 23,000, 24,000, or 25,000 feet high that I can climb with enjoyment. The need to climb comes from inside. Basically, I enjoy stretching myself to my personal limits, and that's what the satisfaction is for me."

Bonington summed up his feelings by saying, "The allure is so great. I must go on. I don't think I could live without climbing." ♦

from *Why I climb* by Steve Gardiner,  
Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA 1990

## ***Climbing Wall at UAF***

by Carol Justice and Franz Mütter

As many of you may recall, the AAC sponsored a number of slide shows over the past year to raise money for a proposed climbing wall at the Patty Gymnasium. After a long and often frustrating journey through UAF's bureaucratic jungle, which laid the groundwork for a more ambitious wall in the new Student Rec Center, we gave up our original plans in favor of supporting the latter project.

We have raised approximately \$750 through slide shows but will probably need far more to turn the "minimum design" wall, primarily dictated by budget constraints, into an attractive, usable facility. In order to ensure that the final product will meet the needs of all potential users (within the limits of what's possible) we need YOUR input and YOUR support (see memorandum below).

**To:** Interior Alaskan Rock Climbers  
**From:** UAF's Student Rec Center Rock Wall User Group  
**Date:** December 12, 1992  
**RE:** Feedback on UAF's Rec Center Climbing Wall Design

The new Student Rec Center is projected to be completed in January 1994. An indoor rock climbing wall will be included in the Rec Center. We are asking potential users of the wall for feedback on the preliminary design. Attached is a copy of the design and comments from the Student Rec Center Rock Wall User Group. **Please drop us a note on your ideas and comments on the wall design, to one of the following addresses:**

Franz Mütter	Mark Herkert	Dan Jaffe	Eric Breitenberger	Stan & Carol Justice
3047 Ester Dome Rd	P.O. Box 900594	Geoph. Inst. UAF	P.O. Box 81212	1750 Reed Circle
Fbks, AK 99709	Fbks, AK 99775	Fbks, AK 99775	College, AK 99708	Fbks, AK 99709
479-8815	474-7324	479-7910	455-4098	479-5017

We will consolidate all input to be forwarded on to Lynn Lashbrook and the architect working on the Student Rec Center. If you would like to work with the Student Rec Center User Group, or would be willing to help with fundraising, or low tech carpentry, please give us a call.





To: John Vosmek  
Architect for UAF's Student Rec Center

From: UAF's Student Rec Center Rock Wall User Group

**RE: Comments on Student Rec Center Climbing Wall Design**

**Safety Issues**

1. Consider elimination of belay platform and resting ledges and replacing it with low angle slabs, roofs, overhangs, and buttresses (see Use Ability Issue #1). In a short practice wall, ledges are not necessary, and could sprain ankles or bruise knees if someone falls when climbing immediately above them. Top roped climbers come down 1 to 2 feet in a fall due to rope stretch.
2. The best top anchor would consist of 3" steel pipe running the length of the wall, and mounted 4 feet out from the wall so a falling climber is pulled away from the wall. This prevents climbers from striking the holds with knees, etc. The climbing rope should take a turn around the pipe, thus providing friction to facilitate catching a falling climber.
3. A landing pit should be constructed along the base of the wall and filled with pea gravel or shredded tires. This makes an excellent landing surface.
4. Anchor points should be provided at floor level for the belayers. They would be needed when the belayer is lighter than the climber.

**Usability Issues**

1. Maximize variety of slope angle and features. The plan showed large sections of dead vertical, flat wall. Features such as low angle slabs, roofs, overhangs, and buttresses should be included. This would make the wall more usable for beginners and advanced rock climbers.
2. Bolt placements should be randomized, to eliminate set distances if they are placed at "24" O.C. each direction".
3. Bolt placements should be numerous. To make a section more difficult one simply installs no hold on some of the bolts. The area marked "3' 6" bolt placement for added difficulty" should have bolts about every 2 feet in a randomized pattern.
4. A commercial finish such as Roc-Tex should be applied on the surface of the wall to simulate more closely real rock and provide a friction surface for the feet.

**Enhancements**

1. Handcracks are another feature the design is missing. The ability to climb cracks is an important technique for a climber to practice.

# Mountain Science Center

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by Franz Müter

In 1989, while working for Admissions and Records at UAF, Mike Sfraga met with Bradford Washburn to discuss plans for a video commercial for the University. The University wanted Washburn, renowned mountaineer, cartographer, and photographer, who holds an honorary degree from the University of Alaska, to participate in the promotional advertisement. The two men took an instant liking to each other.

The meeting, scheduled for two hours, lasted through the rest of the day and turned into a 12 hour exchange of ideas well beyond the original intent. Three years, numerous meetings and countless phonecalls later, Sfraga has laid the groundwork for a project that he and Washburn conceived during their first marathon meeting.

During that initial meeting they talked at great length about Washburn's collection of over 9,000 photographs, countless videos, climbing journals, various writings and original maps. Washburn had earlier discussed plans to archive his collection at the University's Rasmuson Library with director Paul McCarthy. While Sfraga and Washburn agreed that Fairbanks would be an ideal location for the Washburn Collection they also shared concerns that it would slowly collect dust in the archives and be forgotten. They thought of ways to make this priceless treasure more accessible to the public. What better place could there be than an entire museum dedicated to the history of Alaska's mountains?

Thus the idea of the Mountain Science Center was born. And for Sfraga began a task that soon consumed much of his time. He knocked on the doors of many well known climbers, scientists, pilots and others that took part in the exploration of Alaska's mountain ranges. He attributes much of the support he has received to Bradford Washburn. "It's amazing how many doors that name will open for you," he says as he describes the enthusiastic responses of many mountain veterans. It is easy to see how his own enthusiasm may affect others that became involved in the project - people well known in Alaska like Terrence Moore, Alfred Brooks, and Grant Pearson. When they heard about the project from Sfraga, many individuals contributed precious

photographs, journals, equipment, and other material to the growing collection.

The Mountain Science Center is now nearing its design stage and will most likely be added to the east side of the University of Alaska museum. It is primarily intended as an educational tool for the public and as a resource for climbers and researchers alike. The Center will have displays on the early climbing history of Alaska, on the geology of Alaska's mountains, and the glaciology of its ice fields and glaciers.

A computer data base of pictures and narratives chronicling the pioneering climbs of Washburn and others will allow users to relive these early adventures. Modern computer technology will also allow climbers to view detailed 3-dimensional computer displays of virtually any climbed or unclimbed route in Alaska's mountain ranges from different angles and on different scales. Through computer networks this database will be available to users throughout the world.

**Bradford Washburn** was born on June 7, 1900 in Boston, Massachusetts. His interest in climbing began when he discovered that he could escape his paralyzing hay fever while walking above 4,000 feet in New Hampshire. His first climbing experiences were gained in the Alps between 1926 and 1931. In 1937, Washburn, Bob Bates, Russel Dow and Norman Bright successfully climbed Mt. Lucania, at the time the highest unclimbed peak in North America. He has returned to Alaska many times since and among others climbed Mt. Bertha (first ascent), Mt. Hayes (first ascent), Mt. Steele (second ascent, first traverse), Mt. Marcus Baker (first ascent), Mt. Sanford (first ascent), Mt. Crillon (first ascent), and Mt. McKinley (third, fourth, and sixth ascents overall, and first ascent of West Buttress).

Other features may include a powerful telescope for a close-up view of the Alaska Range and Mt. McKinley. And if the weather prohibits a direct view of the mountains, a 3-dimensional model of Mt. McKinley, Mt. Foraker, and Mt. Hunter will permit visitors to study their major features in miniature.

Finally, Sfraga would like to include a miniature climbing wall to let children experience first-hand the thrills of climbing.

Sfraga hopes that the Mountain Science Center will attract climbers from around the world. Fairbanks could become the first stop in Alaska before climbers start on their expeditions to McKinley or other Alaskan peaks. Of course, climbers are only a small fraction of the potential users and the Center will

indeed add a major tourist attraction to the Fairbanks area. At the same time, it will serve as a data center for geological and glaciological research at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus.

For us as climbers the Mountain Science Center may well become a primary source of information before we venture out into the world of snow, rock, and ice to explore new frontiers.

# Rock Climbing News

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## 1991 Highlights

by *Stan Justice*

Several dramatic first ascents were successfully completed this summer. Teenage Wasteland (Angel Rocks) was the subject of numerous visits and having been lead and soloed, climbers were looking for more esoteric firsts. Dan Jaffe performed the FN (first nude) ascent, witnessed by a mixed crowd. Carol Justice set several records with her July ascent including: most attempts at 171 tries, highest body fat, and shortest person. She used 5 holds at the crux, where taller climbers make due with 3.

First lead of the crack on the E face of Aasgard Tor (Granite Tors) was done by Dan Jaffe. He found the run out to be unacceptably long, putting him in danger of ground fall had he come off on the last move. He called it Dead End Crack (5.10a).

The Fin (Wizard's Eye, Granite Tors) became noticeably pinker as a number of climbers struggled to the crux and came off. An ethics discussion ensued when the one good hold broke off. Some wanted to glue the hold back on but the majority felt that once

off, it is off; and once glued, who knows what will be glued next. As if to verify the decision, the route was finally climbed (sans hold). Dan Jaffe was first to do it clean, followed a week or so later by Eric Breitenberger. Franz Mütter and Alex Cronin hang-dogged it (5.11b).

A call from the Endangered Species Section of the Fish and Wildlife Service put in question the future of Grapefruit Rock climbing. A Peregrine Falcon nest was spotted on the west side of the road. The F&WS representative suggested we not climb on any rock within sight of that area, from April to August 1. He agreed that an educational approach would be tried rather than a climbing ban. He agreed to submit an article about the falcons for DESCENT and was considering posting some signs. Neither has materialized, but please be considerate if you climb in the area.

A climbing guide to rock climbs in the Fairbanks area is being written by Mike Seizys (349-2735). Desperately needed is information on who did the first ascents of our favorite climbs. If there are new climbs submit details to Mike.

## 1992 Highlights

by *Franz Mütter*

The summer of 1992 saw a flurry of activities in the Grapefruit area. A number of bouldering areas have been explored and several new routes were established (or re-established?) in the 5.10 to 5.11 range. According to Tom Ellis one of the climbs at Lower Grapefruit may be a 5.11d or possibly a 5.12. We'll let you know as soon as we find somebody who can do it and give us a rating. Tom also drew a

number of sketches of the main rocks and of several bouldering rocks in the area with descriptions for most of the climbs and bouldering problems. These will be published in the next DESCENT or in a separate brochure. If anybody has any information on any climbs in that area, please send a note to the editor.

# Ski Mountaineering

Once again the Alaska Alpine Club will be offering instruction in ski mountaineering and climbing this spring. Two sessions will be offered:

Introduction to Ski Mountaineering January 20 - March 7. 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 7 - May 2. For persons having successfully completed the introductory course or with equivalent experience.

Tuition for each course is \$25. Additional expenses include \$23 for text, gas money, food, restaurant meals on field trips. Anyone in the Fairbanks community with appropriate experience is invited to participate. These courses are a great way to get into the mountains and meet other mountaineers! Safety is everyone's individual responsibility. The club carries no liability insurance.

The course consists of weekly lectures or discussion sessions held Wednesdays at 7:30pm in Schaible Auditorium on the UAF campus and weekend field trips some of which are long day trips and others are overnight excursions.

**TEXT** - "Mountaineering - The Freedom of the Hills" by The Mountaineers of Seattle (available at Clem's, Beaver Sports, REI and UAF bookstore.

**CREDIT** - Available for up to 3 credit hours as independent study. Contact Tom Wells of the PE department for details.

## SCHEDULE:

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic</u>	<u>Weekend Trip</u>	
	Jan 20	Register, Frostbite, Hypothermia	none	
	Jan 27	Skis, Boots, Tents, Winter Camp	Jan 31	Survival Ski Workshop (Ft. Wainwright)
	Feb 3	Snow Caves, Ice Axe, Crampons	Feb 6,7	Wickersham Dome Overnight
	Feb 10	Prusik, Rappel, Z-pulley, Anchors	Feb 14	Skills Workshop on Campus
	Feb 17	Avalanche Safety	Feb 20,21	Fels Glacier Cracks
	Feb 24	Glacier Travel, Crevasse Rescue	Feb 28	Panorama Slopes
	Mar 3	First Aid, High Altitude, Rescue	Mar 6,7	Item Peak
	Apr 7	Snow Climbing, Igloos, Fly ins	Apr 10,11	Peak 7708
	Apr 14	Ice Climbing	Apr 17,18	Jack River Ice
	Apr 21	Leadership, Expedition	Apr 24,25	Silvertip Peak
	Apr 28	Rock Climbing	May 2	Grapefruit Rocks

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Alaska Alpine Club

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