

ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA

Vancouver Island Section

11:2

Spring '83

402-710 Vancouver St. Victoria, BC V8V 4P9

Stuffsack...

As our next mailing will be in August, note that there'll be another meeting in the Faculty Club June 8th. It's still in the planning but may be a workshop & gear swap event including slides and discussion on new equipment and climbing techniques. Call Karel or Gary...or come curious!

This is last call for '83 dues; send them to Gary now to receive the August issue..thanks. Take a few pictures for the Bushwhacker this summer; good climbing! *W*

Section Notebook

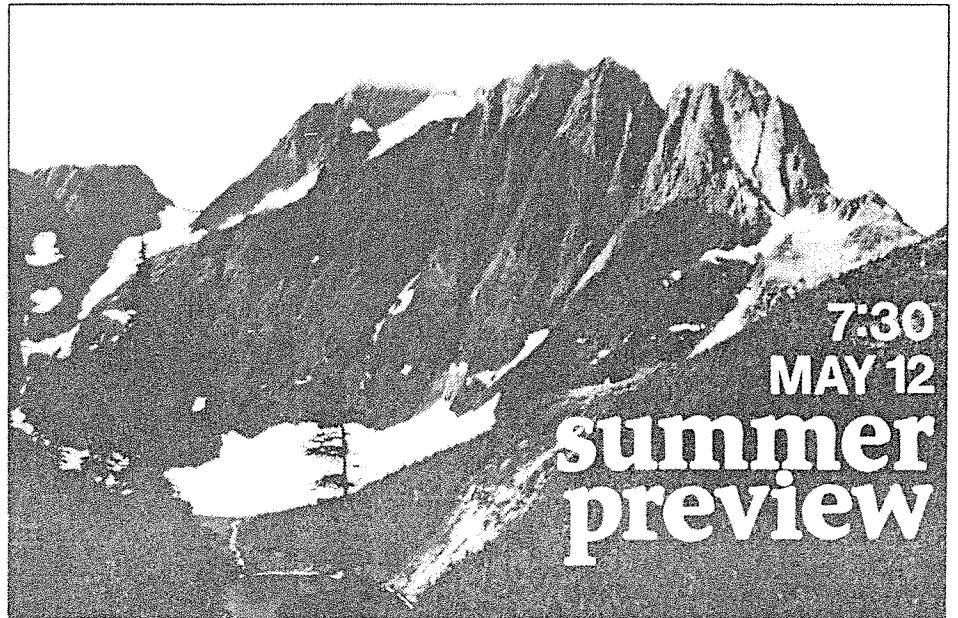
Just a short note as I am busy packing for the Cream Lake trip! I am discussing with Stephen Bezruchka the possibility of his presenting the Canadian Mt. Everest program here in September, at the Newcombe. (Uvic didn't bring any Everest program in March). The summer (August) Bushwhacker should have the details.

Thanks to Rick Eppler for putting together a fine summer list of trips, and thanks to the coordinators volunteering to organize each one. Don't miss these opportunities to explore our area; give them a call and get all the information, then try to get out there this summer. I will! K.H.

Climbing Courses

Section members who don't receive main club mailings can obtain details about this year's training weeks and other summer climbing camps by writing The Alpine Club of Canada, P.O. Box 1026, Banff, Alberta T0L 0C0. You can also just phone Banff headquarters at 762-4481. Remember if you're travelling in that area this summer you can stay at the Clubhouse near Canmore at very reasonable rates; a great place to freshen up if you've been out on the peaks a few days. Call 678-5855 to reserve dormitory or bunk cabin accommodation.

Mountain workshops may be



Join us for a look at some of the climbing destinations featured in our Summer 83 program! In the Faculty Club at Uvic... refreshments 'on tap'... special film, too!
JUNE 8 meeting will also be in Faculty Club, 7:30 pm

Landslide Lake and East Face of Colonel Foster, from west side of Elkhorn (Strathcona Park) by Karel Hartman

held again this spring by the Section, including rock technique refreshers and a weekend snowclimbing session. If you want to be kept notified call Greg Foweraker at 592-7026 or Gary Allen at 478-8004.

The 1983 introductory climbing course at the Victoria Y will be starting June 7 and will include a weekend on the superb rocks at Squamish (easy practice climbs) and snowclimbing on Arrowsmith. The fee is \$70 and early registration is advised as the course always seems to fill promptly as the start date approaches. Get full info from the Y or call 386-7511.

Information Needed

There are new or revised guidebooks being compiled right now for west coast climbing regions, and your input is needed. Don't assume the access roads or routes you consider familiar are known by these authors/editors. Publication of guidebooks encourages people to visit unfamiliar

areas and takes the pressure off well-travelled mountains or practice rocks.

These editors are interested in anything you can send, such as sketch maps (ie, onto a photocopied topo map section), simple diagrams, photos of rock faces, etc. as well as whatever written information you can provide.

ALPINE GUIDE TO SOUTHWESTERN B.C. is being revised by Bruce Fairley, c/o P.O. Box 2839, Vancouver BC V6B 3X3. This one covers the territory from Vancouver Island to about Manning Park and north to the Waddington region.

NORTHERN COAST RANGE GUIDE-BOOK is a new project covering the range north from Waddington. Don Serl, 2631 Columbia Street, Vancouver BC V5Y 3G2 (872-4774) and Glenn Woodsworth 3435 Mayfair Ave, Vancouver BC V6V 2Z1 (261-5894) are both on this one.

SKI TOURING GUIDEBOOK TO THE SOUTHERN COAST RANGE is new. Contact John Baldwin, 303-2385 West 2nd Ave, Vancouver BC or call 731-9950.

The Phillips Creek Circle Route

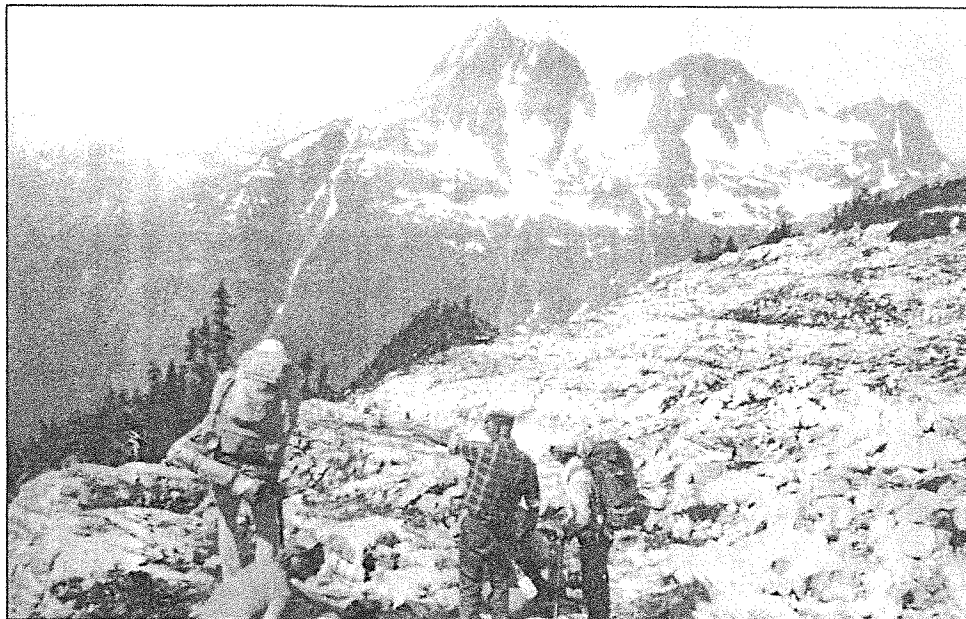
By WILLIAM PETERS

This is probably the best one-week introduction to Strathcona Park for those who want to take it easy, since it offers views of all the peaks while entailing little climbing. With good timing, the alpine flowers can enhance a trip, although we were a week early, July 24th to August 1st in 1982.

With the 14 backpackers assembled after canoeing across Buttle Lake, we sweated up the Marble Meadows trail from 700 to 5,000 feet (213-1524 m) in one morning. Syd Watts and John Gibson collaborated on the leadership, with our group including myself, Shirley Ward, Ian and Margaret Brown and their two peerless daughters, Anna and Penny, Anthony Britneff, Laura Harris, Ben Peterson, Alan Robinson, David and Adele Routledge.

That evening we climbed Marble Peak, an easy ascent for except for a couple of rock chute crossings. Day 2 we camped below Mt. McBride which we climbed on the next day. It is a long but easy hike from the southwest, offering dramatic views of the area as well as a gentle glacier. Views of the Golden Hinde, dominating the skyline to the west, continued as we headed south along the ridge at around the 5000 foot level (1524 m). The only difficult bit came during the descent of a break in the ridge, after we had crossed the 'Limestone Cap'. The snow had melted so far from the rock that the usual step became a rope-aided drop giving each a chance to show his own variations on approved techniques, much to the amusement of those already happily down and reclining in the shade opposite.

On the fifth day, July 28th, we circumnavigated Greig Ridge, site of a plaque ceremony to be held in July of 1983. The Comox District Mountaineering Club is going



© W. Peters

to install a plaque at the ridge end of Greig Lake in honour of the fellow who first explored the area. The plan is to go in by helicopter and try a climb of Golden Hinde while they're in the vicinity. The Ridge juts out eastward for three kilometres or so in the middle of the Phillips Ridge circle. Noteworthy for superbly green, steep meadows and the lovely Greig Lake, the ridge nevertheless failed to reveal the Vancouver Island marmots Dave Routledge sought. We did see the tracks of a mother bear and her cub in the snow which still topped most of the Ridge.

The ridge route continues east above Scheldrup Lake, offering views of many smaller lakes below in a luscious valley we ached to explore. Views of Mt Thelwood can be enjoyed from here, as well as of the country the new Myra Creek Trail will open up if the dam road doesn't do it first. Camping here was great with an array of tarns to suit all tastes for bathing. The weather continued hot and sunny, with the bugs happy thanks to our presence.

For me the highlight was on our seventh day, above the Westminster mine, in the meadow area. A lake and several tarns run right across the ridge with connecting winding creeks and subalpine flowers. This beautiful meadow is marred by the remains of a Western Mines camp, rotting on the ridge with enough garbage to load several helicopters, which is what should be done with it.

We finally found wildflowers ascending Mount Phillips and got the photos to prove it. On the ninth day we crossed the lower peak of Phillips and Syd got us down to the Marble Meadows trail-

S.E. side of Golden Hinde from 'Limestone Cap' area head by a precisely calculated route which required both altimeter and compass work. Night-fall meant a fire, sore muscles and Triple Sec thoughtfully hidden on Day One by Ian and Margaret.

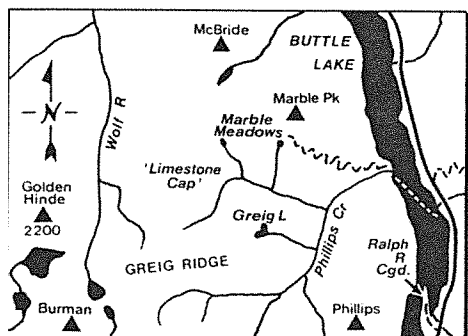
Spring Avalanches

by BRAD GEISLER

Long spring days, warm winds and sun and also spring rains, have special effects on the snow cover. Wet snow avalanche conditions are among the easiest to recognize, but this is not the advantage it seems. The hazard escalates so fast on a warm day that a "safe" slope now may avalanche half an hour later. So we must do more than evaluate the present hazard; we must become avalanche forecasters.

The spring avalanche cycle begins with the first deep thaws of the season. When the snow cover warms up to 0° (32° F) all the way through, it is said to be isothermal (same temperature). In place of the winter types of snow metamorphism which occur by sublimation [ice changing to water vapour without going through a liquid state], we now have melt-freeze metamorphism, because liquid water exists as a coating on the snow grains. The degree of avalanche hazard depends on how much water there is, whether the snow is still stratified or has settled and homogenized, and how well the snow grains are bonded together.

Well-settled snow is typically well-bonded already. This is especially important in the deeper part of the snowcover, where



the temperature can change only gradually, and little re-freezing is possible. Snow that has remained stratified [in layers] as it does in the eastern Rockies, can become very treacherous as it begins to thaw. Buried crusts stop the downward percolation of water, and become lubricated by water. Buried slabs, with their fine texture, tend to hold the water and become saturated. Depth hoar, even the partially-destroyed type that remains in spring, tends to collapse at thawing temperatures. Lucky is the skier under whom it collapses straight down, instead of tangentially, into the valley! Other poorly bonded snow types will also settle rapidly as they reach 0° C. After settlement the snow usually stabilizes for a time, but at the point of incipient settlement it can be dangerous.

Water begins to form as a microscopic film on the surface of each snow grain. Capillary action draws it into the finest crevices ensuring that the existing intergranular bonds are warmed to 0°. At and near the surface, the snow cover becomes soft and "heavy", but remains fairly cohesive as long as there is only enough water to fill the capillary spaces.

Later, when more water has formed, and the snow grains are "floating" on each other within their liquid envelopes, the snow feels "mushy" to ski in. Your skis begin to stick, because the excess water clings to them. (You can increase your speed by brushing on a thick, rough wax layer that breaks up the water film and lets some air remain under the running surface).

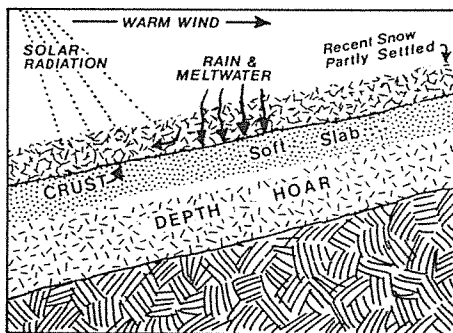
Now, when a stratified snowcover gets mushy, be cautious. Perhaps there is a layer that is concentrating the excess water, or one that is especially weakened by the water. Are you skiing on a layer of almost-new snow, that may "slab-off" from the old snow? What is the temperature going to do in the next half hour? Unless the air has already begun to cool where you are, the snow will continue to get softer. Why not be smart and find some drier snow on a north or east slope, or else sit in a safe place and soak up the sun and your favourite drink? If you don't want to do that, at least stay off the very steep places that are most likely to slide.

Melt-freeze metamorphism makes corn snow. With each partial melting, the snow particles are coated with water and settle

closer together. With each freeze they are welded more solidly. At transition temperatures, the surface is made up on large particles that are clusters of former grains. We stay ahead of the morning sun to find this stuff, as the surface changes from ice to corn, corn to mush, and in the afternoon mush to corn and at last to ice.

You can see from this how the melt-freeze cycle settles and strengthens the snow cover. But is the deeper part of the snow solidly frozen, or is it isothermal? If it's isothermal, how deep did the last freeze penetrate? How saturated is the deeper snow? If it failed to freeze last night, or if it froze only at the surface, you could be in danger.

I know a man who got caught in this trap. He is alive by chance only. Rain fell on two feet of partially-destroyed depth hoar. That's about all the snow there



was on that slope. Overnight, a light frost made a solid crust but did not get down into the underlying bush. Next morning was pleasant. Sun and warm wind "corned" this southwesterly slope early. Many skier had runs on it, and left for cooler slopes. One patrolman kept skiing it. In the late morning, the crust let go, along with everything under it. They found my friend in mid-afternoon. He had managed to tangle himself in some trees right near the fracture line, and luckily he also had an air hole, or the wet snow would have suffocated him in minutes. By August of that year he had recovered from what the trees did to him.

That was twelve years ago. This summer a chairlift will be built on that slope. Avalanche control has been practiced there for a couple of years. But avalanche control is not always effective when the snow is wet. No matter how you blast it, the avalanche will come only when the degree of melting is just right. So wherever you ski in the springtime, respect the avalanche warnings of both men and nature.

Cathedral Lakes Park

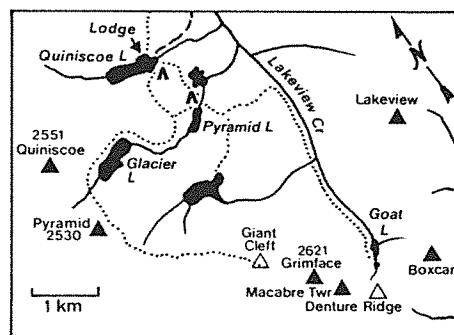
by MARTIN CONDER

The thousand-foot faces of Cathedral Ridge are located within a day's drive of Victoria. These unclimbed features, composed of granodiorite and quartz monzonite [the latter found in the Bugaboos], can be found in a provincial park on the Canadian-American border east of Manning Park.

While the American side of this formation is well explored and well-documented, there is yet to be a major route established on the northern side. The lack of detailed examination of this portion has led to errors in peak location in Beckey's guide (1981 edition); errors compounded by the book's misleading photo and mistakes in the official park pamphlet which has remained the same for many years.

Access to Cathedral Lakes Park is gained by turning south off Highway 3 just west of Keremeos, and taking the Ashnola River road to the gates at the river crossing. It becomes obvious at this point why the peaks in this park are relatively unexplored. Climbers are faced with the choice of spending a day packing loads up a dusty trail 16 km in length, rising 1000m, or paying the outrageous fee of \$32 to reach the commercial lodge area by 4 x 4. This road is not open to private vehicles even though this is a provincial park. Complaints to the park officer fell on deaf ears as he admitted his support for the highway robbery practiced by the local entrepreneurs.

From the lodge at Quiniscoe Lake (6700 ft/2042m) it is an easy 90 minute hike, with gear, to scenic Goat Lake at the foot of Cathedral Ridge. This forms an amphitheatre of peaks rising to 2621 m (8599 ft) high with northern exposures in excess of 300 m. Grimface Mtn is the highest; this name was given by the first ascent party but for



some reason the locals refer to it as Mt McKeen.

Bruce Fairley, Jay McArthur, Hamish Mutch and I crossed over the wooded ridge north of Grimface, bypassing a buttress not marked in the guidebook, and began a route in the broken corner adjoining the Northeast Face. Two leads of 5.7 climbing led into technical climbing for which our limited equipment was unsuited. Darkness forced a termination of the climb about two leads short of the 4th class summit ridge.

The following day we turned our attention to the Boxcar and Denture Ridge, enjoying a day of 3rd class scrambling and exploring before descending to Quiniscoe Lake at twilight (and the noise of the lodge generator).

This area offers wall climbing on solid rock in virtually unclimbed territory, with attractive surroundings. I recommend a pin selection of K.B.'s to 1" plus many small to medium chocks and some etriers.

Bowling Alley Ice

By MIKE OUNSTED

January 29, 1983

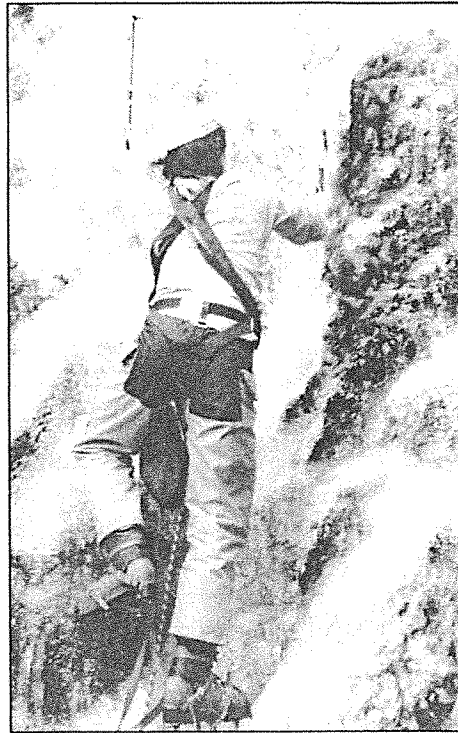
What was hoped to be an excellent ice climbing winter season turned to water as the weather was unusually warm. Since October, Randy Barnard and myself trudged every second Saturday or Sunday to the Mt Arrowsmith area hoping for some cold weather and frozen H₂O.

It wasn't until January 29 that we got some cold weather to turn our luck around--even for a day.

We drove past the recently logged area where the turn-off to the Col trail is located, to a point 1.5 km away. We stopped when we saw what we were looking for.

In the thick of the woods, 150 metres walking distance from the road, an ice tongue hung from the cliff above. It was perfect.

Completely vertical for the first five metres, the angle eased off to 60° for ten metres and then up to 80° for the last part of the route (total about 1.25 rope lengths). We decided to



Randy Barnard on 'Bowling Alley' © M. Ounsted

call it Bowling Alley because we were constantly being hit with little icicles. Lowe Snargs were used; this is an excellent site to start off the season or brush up. Too bad the weather warmed up again...

ICE AXE RENTAL AT THE Y

Need an extra axe? Jim Leggat, Outdoor Program Director at the Victoria Y has a few available for rental at moderate rates. Call 386-7511 well in advance.

CONTRIBUTOR:

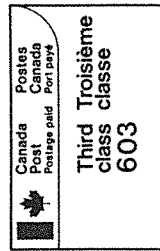
Submissions on climbing, wilderness skiing and related topics, related to Vancouver Island and S.W. mainland areas are welcome.

PHOTOS: include some brief notes if you don't have a report. Slides are ok but we prefer you get 4x6" prints done from them (mark routes by holding print to outside window and tracing on a piece of paper). Photos should have good contrast, ie sunlight or clearly defined shapes in scene.

ILLUSTRATIONS: Maps or drawings must be in jet black ink on white paper (no photocopy can be used). Art will be returned.

REPORTS: should include all participants, dates, essential access details, snow, camp and trail conditions if relevant. Please summarize reports from well known mountains within c. 400 words. Rarely visited areas warrant longer accounts and MUST be accompanied by useful illustrations/photos or publication may be delayed. Remember all new accounts may be accepted for use in the Canadian Alpine Journal (maps essential).

DEADLINES: don't wait; send things in now!



ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA
Vancouver Island Section

402-710 Vancouver St, Victoria, B.C. V8V 4P9

11:2



1983 EXEC.

Chairman: Karel Hartman, 479-7680/721-7194 Uvic
Secretary: Chris Schreiber, 592-9477
Treasurer: Albert Hestler, 592-1673/382-2141 day
Publications: Jim Weston, 387-5162 day only
Membership: Gary Allen 3215 Willshire, Victoria
B.C. V9C 2V4 (Dues & Info) 478-8004/388-8411
FMCBC Rep: William Peters 382-8757

Climbing & Equipment: Rick Eppler, 479-8526
Training: Greg Foweraker, 592-7026
Programs Committee: Mike Sampson, 477-8402
and Karel Hartman, 479-7680
Parks & Trails: Rob Macdonald, 479-9540
Members-at-Large: Geoff Freer, 383-6610
and Mike Ounsted, 384-9386