

# **The ISLAND BUSHWHACKER Annual**

**THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA  
Vancouver Island Section**

# **1995**



*Mt. Arrowsmith*

*Greg Gordon*

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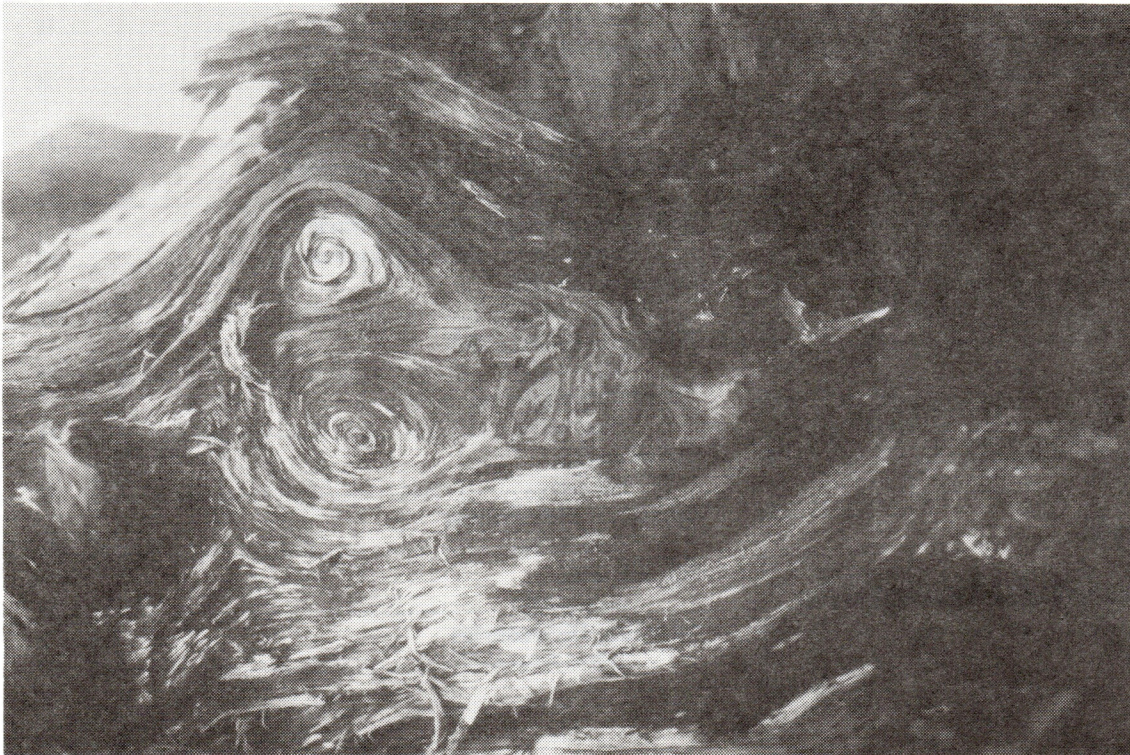
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# **1995 Photo Contest Winners**

**Best Print**

**Margaret Brown**



**Nature**

**Doug Goodman**

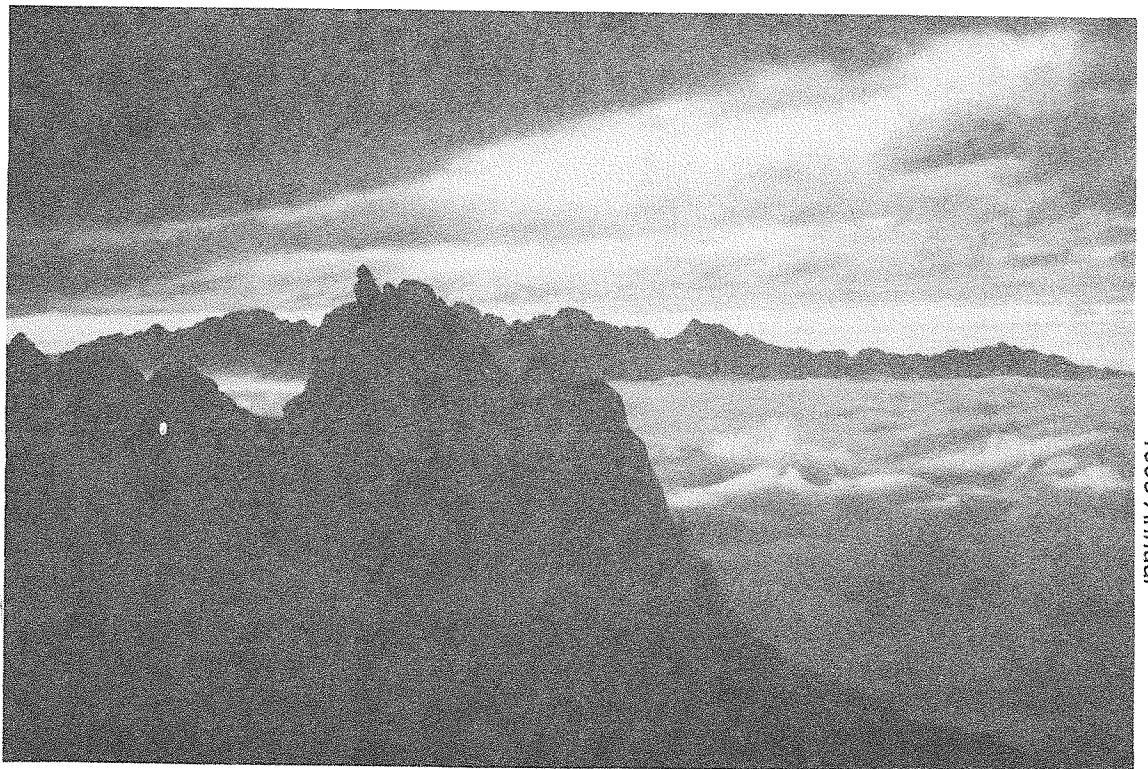
Нимонг

Claire Ebendinger  
*(with thanks to Valerio)*



Mountain Scenery

Valerio Faraoni



## 1995-96 EXECUTIVE

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*Kayla*

### Editors' message

Making deadlines is one of the "joys" of publishing. We've pondered ad nauseam on how to present all the articles and photos submitted. When our time limit ran out, we scrambled without belays up to a misty summit block. Without really knowing where we were going, we've arrived! What you see is what you get. We hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we did.

*Martin*

*Russ*



# Vancouver Island

## Six Days On Arrowsmith

Dec. 28, Jan 1, Jan 5, Feb. 24, Oct. 29, Dec. 24

Russ Moir

What might the chances be that here, in our Pacific Coast 'wetlands', we could experience in winter, six fabulous, clear, shining days in which to glory in the freedom of Island hills? Not, I'll grant you, all strung together on some epic week-long expedition, but six remarkable days snatched here and there and savoured to their fullest, knowing full well that such moments are a gift to be cherished and remembered.

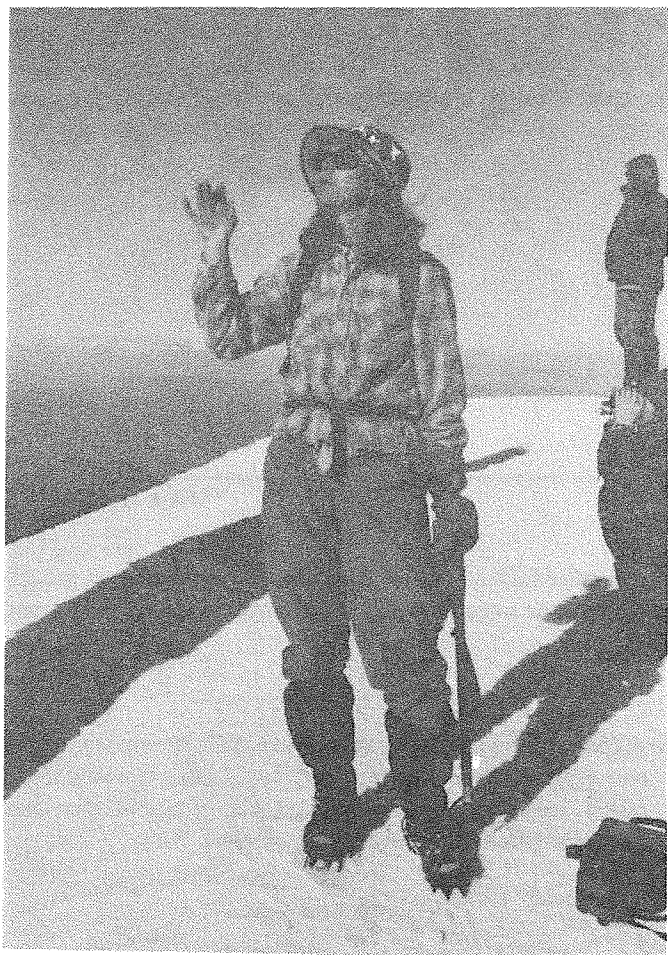
Day 1-Sandy decided that P32 was "the way, the truth and the light" It didn't matter, we christened the route the "Un-Judges" having intended to make the summit of Arrowsmith via

that old chestnut, Judges Route (take P33 for the normal approach to this) Un-Judges is steep and bluffy in places and not to be trivialised in icy conditions. The way leads across the gulch at the end of P32 and up towards the right through some lovely, open forested slopes. After reaching the right skyline, the route goes steeply up over several open bluffs until it trends to the left for a spell, before again rising up via connected shallow gullies (great in firm snow but debatable in icy conditions). Once over these sections, the way continues up a steep, shallow trough which can give some exhilarating crampon practice until it lands you out on the summit crest, just to the N of Arrowsmith's S summit.

From here you can make a choice to go right up to the nearby S. Summit or left over three intervening blips on the ridge until you hit the two final towers. In ice/snow conditions beware of the first crag's start. An icy, sloping ramp has a short, tricky section of 8-10 feet from which a fall would be unhealthy, E. into the corrie or W. down the deep couloir to the right of Judges. At the summit the views, on such a clear day, are breathtaking (assuming you have any left). The scene reminds us that here, on just such a day over 60 years ago, the Mundays spied their proverbial "Mystery Mountain", later to be christened Waddington. With binoculars you can distinguish the fine looking ridges going up to its dominant summit. Descent via Judges can now be made from either right or left of the tower, the right descent being the less exposed but less obvious route down to the high step in the bowl below.

On this day we'd left Chris and Mojo on the first of the icy sections half way up to the col, so from here we reversed our ascent route, resolved to return to complete the circuit

Day 2-another day given to get up and enjoy an ascent, this time 'just' a short up-and- down of Judges, in perfect snow conditions. When you ascend up the lower forest slopes on the right bank of the creek, the flagging is clear to follow. This route is a good introduction to alpine climbing in winter for a novice. As it comes out onto the open crest beneath the summit tower you've had a steady ascent through varied but relatively safe slopes. The final rise to the right takes you up a steep ramp, great in crunchy conditions with an easy run-out below and just the hint of exposed mixed snow/rock scrambling as it exits out onto the summit shoulder. Around to the left of the ramp is the longer, spiral rise which leads up a steep cut to the lower tower. Both ways have the quality of a fine mountain route; when you get up the steep bits you're THERE! All day we'd been climbing above the cloud banks of the Alberni Valley, and now we had a wider,



Certain Gallie Imports

Claire Rhondinoer

equally intriguing display of the Straits covered with a solid looking layer of fuzz, appearing as if you could walk across to the Coast Range peeking out into the lowering sunlight, one of the best balcony seats to be had.

Day 3- Four days on, the weather is 'unreal', so Valerio, Pedro and I return to connect up the two previous routes in one circuit. Now this was the 'route of choice' and no mistakes. Needless to say the day was ecstasy, kind of getting repetitive.

Day 4- Reinhard had decided to re-schedule his planned trip to some 'obscure' place on the Mainland, so he and a motley crew escaped again to the hills. We were looking for some good snow route to climb and so, splitting vehicles at P33, the group headed up the frozen track to the Cokely-Arrowsmith Col in high expectation. We snacked on the Col and agreed the Gully Route around the big bowl on the NW. side would be worthy of such conditions. I won't elaborate on the 'fun trip' we had getting around to the bowl (see Doug's description). I will set out though my admiration for Don and Valerio, who unselfishly belayed Stacey and his friend up their first snow climb, on hard crust. We'd met them lower down and even though not fully ready for it had gamely tagged along. They were thrilled (I think) with their experience, enough to buy their mentors a slap up meal later in the day. Though the N side was cold and frozen up, at the summit the early arrivals had enough warmth to enjoy the usual ridiculous summit antics that have become part of these more off-hand sorties. Needless to say the pantomime was led by certain unmentionable 'black-dog owners' and one notorious Gallic import!

Day 5 - a cold day, with loose early winter snow on just the upper 1000 feet of Judges. It was Tracy's first mountain trip. She

was great. She was decidedly a 'wilted rose' by the time we reached the final steep incline, but the joy of reaching the top and receiving the hearty congratulations of her two human and two canine companions bolstered her enough for the knee-shaking descent. She's now hooked.

Day 6- Christmas Eve, a final fling of the year to round off a perfect run of day's on what I'm now beginning to think of as my 'local alp'. Six perfect days on Arrowsmith have put me into Nirvana (don't scoff and try to tell me what it can be like up there, I've been there!). Valerio was his standard solid-self in leading the ramp in treacherous slab-ice. We were pleased we'd packed him along, as well as our crampons.

What a day; what a year on the peak! The descent was like a dreamscape, on this extra-special eve. We slithered down gazing into the light of a fine crescent moon, shining on the glistening white snows of a valley with only one distant light blinking at us from high up on the opposite ridge. We searched in vain for some sign from the sky but all we were dealt was a dimly lit rappel off a tree as we became bluffed out in the gathering gloom. But just like that far off time when no room could be found at the "inn," as we drove back south we were met with locked doors at all the local eateries. Poor Chris, he had to make do with broken up chocolate-chip cookies. He survived, but just.

*Participants- too numerous to list and probably too shy to want to be mentioned (apart from Mojo who's never embarrassed), but I want to give them all my deepest thanks for their companionship on these simple journeys.*

## Half a Whymper

January 1, 1995

Rob Macdonald

This year's plan was as loose as all the previous - see what the weather and snow conditions allowed and try to get up something. After the usual phone-in complaints about starting too early/late, stopping/not stopping for breakfast, taking/not taking skis, we set off from Helmcken late, stopped for breakfast and took skis - get with the program, that's what New Year's Day trips are like! Claire lured us up the Reinhart Lake road, a side branch of the Chemainus main. I really don't know quite where we went, except that the snow turned out fine and the logging road led us up nicely to an open shoulder where we had lunch under clear, sunny skies. We trudged further along the ridge, Ken and Claire showing the greatest stick-to-it-iveness by assaulting the SE slopes of Whymper.

Finally, after lazing around, we drifted in disconnected groups back along our route getting a surprisingly good ski on the way out.

*Participants: Mike Hubbard, David Soutar, Gerta Smythe, Judith and Viggo Holm, Yolande de Visser, Leslie Gordon, Julie Henderson, Ann and Ken Denman, Claire Ebendinger, and Rob Macdonald (organizer and reporter).*

# Reflections On Mt. Whympet

Jan. 28

Sandy Briggs

The ascent of Mt. Whympet is a justifiably popular hike which is becoming ever more problematic as access deteriorates year by year ( it is on privately held logging company land ). A traverse of the N. W. Ridge and its bumps, making a circular tour, has become my favourite south-Island winter outing. This route triples the length of the climb, involves considerable time in open alpine terrain and has a couple of short technical sections on which to practice one's skills.

Well, as the calls kept coming in, I found myself unable to impose a cut off, so the list grew and grew. I guess that having done the trip once or twice with about twenty people, I got overconfident. Anyway one knows things are getting a little crazy when one has to phone the Doghouse Restaurant the day before to warn them of a large breakfast party. The weather forecast was not so good, but a plan of this size gathers a certain momentum.....

So it was that at 10:30a.m. we arrived at the wash-out on the Chemainus River Road with a party of 31 people! I am not exactly sure what led me to schedule this outing, with its 1/2-2 hour road-walk approach, for the short days of late January, but I did. It was raining rather inauspiciously as we plodded off in our wide range of protective and not-so-protective clothing. We regrouped at the pass below El Capitan. Thoughts of group size and negative environmental impacts were somewhat mitigated by the fact that the first part was road and clearcut, while the rest was mostly snow.

A couple of vehicularly independent decided to return from here, so we were down to a mere 29. As we gained altitude on the ridge it became clearer that the rather different levels of experience, fitness and equipment quality, which can usually be compensated for in a smaller group, were going to be important factors in a party this large. In a way we were fortunate that the ultimate determining factor became the weather, which had deteriorated into a horizontal rainstorm.

On top of the first bump I consulted my colleagues and decided to split the group. Don Berryman headed back down with

a group of about 17, while a dozen of us set off with the modified (as it turned out still unrealistic ) goal of gaining the next bump and calling it good enough. Now however, being out of the trees, continuously exposed to the force of the lashing rain and faced with scrambling on verglas-covered rocks, we foundered and did an about-face. There is no standing-around-and-waiting in these conditions. Either you are moving or you are heading quickly for

hypothermia. We descended in the tracks of our friends, reaching the cars just at dark. We lost no-one and some even claimed to have had fun.

On sober reflection it's clear that the group was too big. Even had the weather been good, we should likely have encountered sufficient hinderance along the ridge that our descent would have been a prolonged one in the dark. I got contemplating the extent to which I would enjoy being responsible for 31 independent-minded wet, tired, hungry people, with ice-axes, in the dark. It's about having fun. It's not about me or anyone else playing sergeant-major. Fortunately, I had a lot of experienced companions that day, and I am grateful

for their advice, their watchful eyes and their helpful hands. I particularly appreciate Don agreeing to head up the other party when we split the group.

I'm sure there is an object lesson (whatever that is) here in my little tale, but for now, I'll let you decide what it is.

*Participants- Sandy Briggs, Richard Keltie, Kayla Stevenson, Heather Drummond, Mike Pelano, John Damaschke, John Barnard, John Owen, Catrin Brown, Pat O'Brien, Murrough O'Brien, Reinhard Illner, Mike Hubbard, Karen Legrand, Tony Pugh, Greg Gordon, Kate Darling, Valerio Faraoni, Claire Ebendinger, Russ Moir, Stacey Dewhurst, Chris Odgers, Graham Bennett, Judy Holm, Greg Lawrence, Don Berryman, Gerry Bean, Dennis Manke, Darlene Anderson, Gary Quiring, Philip Sigmund.....*



*Mt. Whympet "School Bus Party"*

*Judy Holm*

## Thumbs up for El Capitan

January 15

Catrin Brown

It began badly. Evidence of day break was scant as we drove north on the island highway in persistent rain. The Chemainus River Valley logging road, equally washed out, finally defeated our noblest efforts at filling the ruts, bringing us to a halt at least one and a half hour's hiking time further back than we had hoped. Then, on the point of departure, Claire's thumb had a lingering and untimely relationship with the hinges of the car door, incurring a painful injury. However, thanks to an instant supply of ice, the tender ministrations of Doctor Doug and a strong measure of willpower, she soon declared herself fit to tackle the day and whatever remaining thrills it had in store for us. It could only get better.

And so our frog march up the logging road began. For readers keen to follow in our footsteps the route goes something like this: From the trail head - where a turn to the right begins the well documented ascent of Mt. Whympier - plunge left into the bush. A section of clear-cut is to be negotiated, heading for bluffs towards the right hand skyline. (Informed sources advise that these bluffs are bloody awful in the absence of snow). Presently the route opens into a large bowl beneath the summit of El Capitan with a series of steep gullies. Looking up - as our day now was - we headed for the third gully on the left side. This proved to be an excellent route: steep but mostly with snow in perfect condition for the kicking of steps. True it was a little icy towards the top, but not a serious problem when following in the toes of my trusty

companions. This was really starting to be fun. The gully emerges on to a ridge, from where the final bid for the summit should have been an easy traverse to the left. However, very deep and heavy snow combined with iced-up rock prevented such a conclusion to our efforts. Doug and Russ explored some spiralling route possibilities around the small buttress and we pushed forwards to what we reckon was within about 30m of the top. But by now the meagre ration of afternoon light was all but spent and we had stretched our elastic turn-around-time well beyond its limit. Surely, we told ourselves, a summit would have been superfluous to our satisfaction on such a day.

What goes up must indeed come down, but oh what inequality of effort! After a few cautious steps over the steepest section at the top of the ridge, it was one big whoop and whoosh down the gullies and snow fields. Claire, not to be deprived of a moment of the fun, developed an interesting style of glissading with offending thumb held high above the head, looking it must be said like a frozen image from the Austrian yodeler.

Of course it was dark by the time we rejoined the logging road, but in the shadow of the full moon we relished the crispy hike out in the silver light. A fine ending.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Valerio Faraoni, Doug Goodman, Doug McGhee, Russ Moir, Catrin Brown*

## Prince of Wales Range

*Mt. Kitchener, north peak. 1450m.; Mt. Spencer. 1460m.; Jagged Mtn. 1701m.*

January 22-24

Lindsay Elms

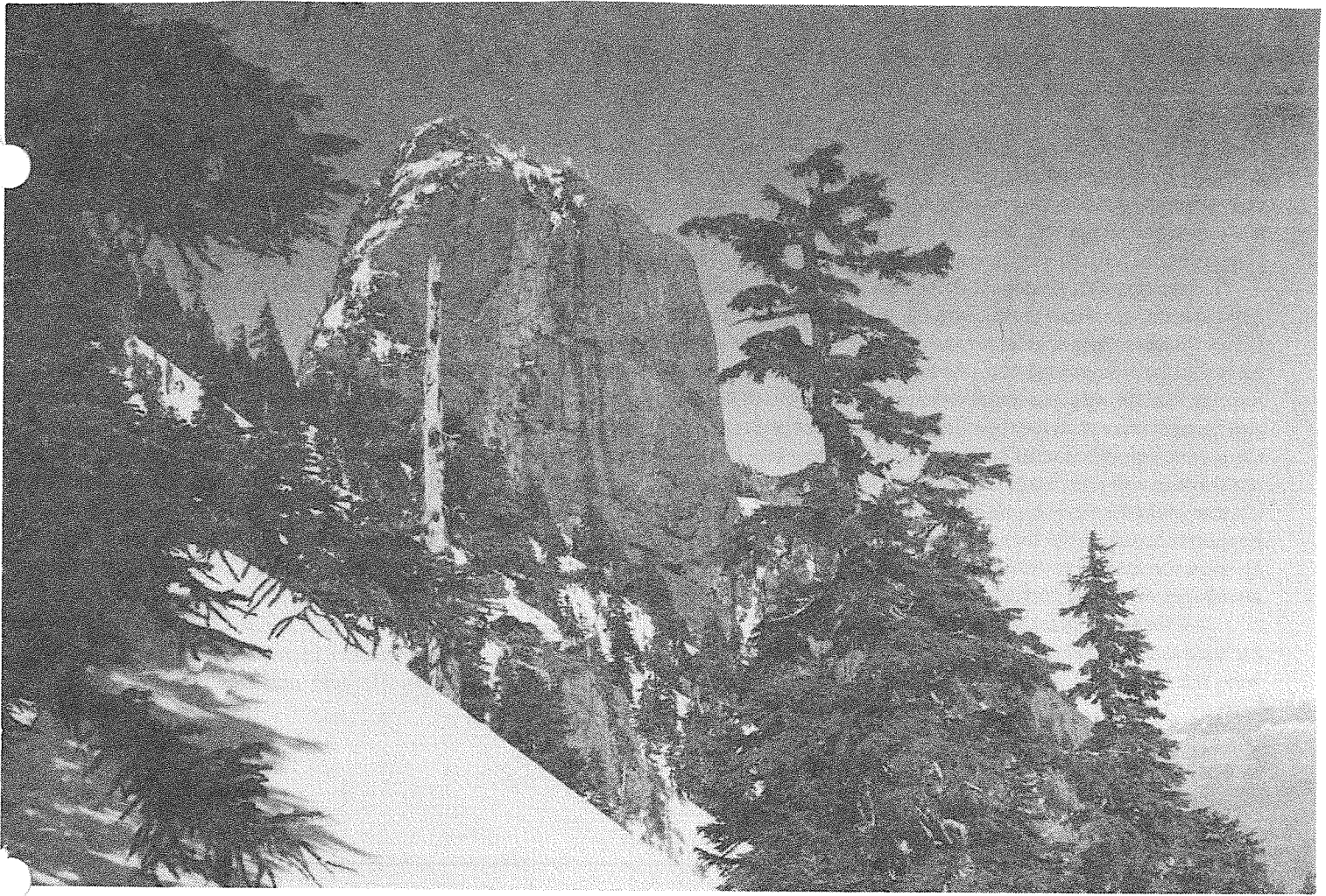
The weather forecast was too good to be true; three or four days of clear skies, something not too normal for January. Elaine, Tom and I had visited Mt. Kitchener (Prince of Wales Range) two years ago in February and had looked across at the north peak and thought we must come back here again some time. That time was now!

The three of us left Courtenay and drove up to the Big Tree Main, south of Sayward, which was clear of snow for about 5kms. With packed lunches and ski's we started hiking up the logging road. The snow was hard and we made fast time to the bottom of the big gully between the main peak and the north peak. Crampons on and away we went up to the col. We wanted to get up the slopes before the sun had a chance to soften up the snow. On the col we were greeted by a cold north wind that was coming straight out of the inlets from the interior. Here we left our skis and just took our lunches up with us to the top, which we reached via a steep, narrow gully. It was beautiful looking over the Inside Passage towards Waddington and the Coast Mountains but of course Vancouver Island looked pretty good too. After half an hour on top we descended to our skis and skied all the way back

to the truck. This is a very accessible mountain with lots of big gullies that are asking to be skied.

The next day Tom and I decided to go down to Mt. Spencer off the Alberni/Bamfield road. This mountain is across the valley from Mt. McQuillan and has a spectacular summit ridge. From the Bamfield road we turned onto the Museum Main and followed that until we reached the M3 branch. We weren't able to drive as high as we had hoped due to snow but that's winter. The road wound up and around for about an hour before we had to head into the bush on the southeast side. Too steep for skis so they stayed on our packs until it was time to descend. We angled up following a creek into an upper basin and then from there went directly up a large gully that took us onto the summit ridge. The snow was soft and we kept breaking through to our knees which required us to refuel (lunch) before we got to the top.

On top we were again greeted by a cold wind which quickly saw us reaching into our packs for warm clothing and then we sat down to look around. Again there were clear views all around. We were sorely tempted to ski off into the north basin of the mountain which looked exciting skiing but decided against it as it would



*The Needle Peak, Prince of Wales Range*

*Lindsay Elms*

eventually turn into a bushwhack back to the truck. So skis on and back down into the southeast basin. We managed to get a few good turns in but once in the trees we had to spend most of the time side-slipping until we were in the clear-cuts. Back onto the M3, down to the truck and back to Port Alberni for a beer. Self restraint was required here as we still had to drive safely back Courtenay. The weather was still holding and I wanted to head up Island the next day with Chris Barner and some of the Heathens Climbers.

That night, on the phone, we decided to go and attempt Jagged Mtn. All we had to go on was Mike Taylor's account of a trip there back in June 1975. We left Campbell River at 6 a.m. in the dark and parked the vehicles on the logging road beside the highway just as it was getting light. We couldn't drive too far on the logging roads due to the snow and since we didn't know which roads to take we decided not to beat around the bush, but hike straight up through the clear-cuts. This turned out pretty well as the snow was hard and we didn't have to thrash about in the undergrowth.

Once in the trees, we proceeded up onto the 'prominent curving north ridge' which, although free of bush, didn't offer easy travel due to the deep, soft snow. Even with our snowshoes on it was hard work for the trail-blazer. Eventually we reached a point where the ridge met a steep buttress; where to now? We consulted Mike Taylor's account and it said: "... we swung to the right on the NW side of the mountain. Game trails were followed which contoured around the west side,..." There were no games

trails for us to follow but around we went. We passed under a couple of small gullies until we came to a big gully that looked like it went all the way to the top. We climbed this slope which brought us out onto the summit ridge just five minutes away from the top. Obviously this was not the same gully that Mike Taylor's party went up but it appeared to be the easier and we didn't have to lose any height. We arrived on the summit after four and a half hours climbing.

The cairn was still there but nothing was inside it so all we could do was sit down and eat our lunch. We spent an hour up there taking in the view and trying to pick out the North Island peaks of which there are so many.

Our descent route was back along the ridge and then down the gully but instead of traversing back around onto the curving ridge we just boot-skiied on down the gully until we reached the trees. We were regretting not having brought our skiis, as the slopes back here were wonderful. Half an hour in the trees and we were back on the logging roads only different to the ones we had ascended. Three-quarters of an hour later we were all back at the vehicles getting into some comfortable shoes for the drive home.

*Participants:*

*Mt. Kitchener: Elaine Kerr, Tom Benson and Lindsay Elms.*

*Mt. Spencer: Tom Benson and Lindsay Elms.*

*Jagged Mtn: Chris Barner, Paul Rydeen, Scott Isbister, Gary Hartford, Tom Garrow and Lindsay Elms.*

## Mt. Brenton

February 5th

Mike Hubbard

Eight of us and one dog met at 8:00 a.m. at Helmcken. The false promise of a pink dawn had given way to Island grey and it was not with the greatest of optimism that we headed north in three vehicles into an increasing drizzle.

The road was freshly cleared of windfall and in relatively good shape to the usual parking spot at the bridge over Humbird Creek. Here we left the vehicles and after some debate decided to carry the skis in search of snow. As we tromped up the road, heads lowered into the rain, we found wrench after wrench - #19, #11, and #6 were recovered for recycling by your leader and others by Greg. Snowmobilers must be a wealthy or careless lot. Much to our surprise and after many "How much further's" from Caitlyn (7), our youngest member, we came upon skiable snow about one hour up the road. From then on there was no stopping Caitlyn and by noon the four of us who had skins and Caitlyn, who had an abundance of energy and bare skis, were at Holyoak Lake.

After a brief snack we headed back down the trail to search for the easterners who were relying on wax. Fortunately, they were not far behind and we all returned to the lake where we

decided to split into two groups with Mike, Julie, Greg, Barbara, and Max going on to the summit whilst the second group had their lunch and then returned to the cars. The record should show that it was only with difficulty that Caitlyn was persuaded to join this latter group. She obviously has a great future as a mountaineer!

On the summit we were rewarded by a brief lifting of the clouds and grey views both towards Landalt and the sea. The ski down was fast on firm but wet snow and by 3:30 p.m. (Sandy please note) we were at the vehicles. Sharon, Caitlyn, and Honour had unfortunately left some ten minutes before the summit group returned but the rest of us stopped for an enjoyable meal at the Pioneer House restaurant south of Duncan and were back at Helmcken soon after dark.

Once again Brenton proved itself as the nearest half decent skiing to Victoria.

*Participants: Mike Hubbard (Leader and Reporter), Barbara Molin, Greg Gordon, Aziza Cooper, Julie Thomson, Sharon, Honour, and Caitlyn McCann, and Max*

## A Factor of Ten

Feb. 10 & 11

Greg Gordon

I like extremes of weather, be it wind, rain, heat or blizzard. I've always said that the weather in the mountains is ten times more severe than at home. "The Nine Peaks beckon," Doug said, as we made our final preparations before leaving our car camp near the Bedwell Lake trail. Snow on the road prevented us from driving the final 2 Km to the trail head.

There were six of us altogether. Three of us planned to climb the Nine Peaks and three were out to enjoy a weekend of relaxed fun. We set out up the shallow grade of the road and were soon struggling up the steeper trail toward the lakes. The snow was refrozen and well consolidated making for easier climbing.

The Victoria weather forecast the night before was calling for cooler, breezy weather and a 40% chance of precipitation. Multiply that by ten and we had a 400 % chance in the mountains. (Right on the button as it turned out.)

By lunch we reached Baby Bedwell Lake where we paused for a half hour to soak up the increasing views and sunshine. We left the lakes and the main trail system and headed toward Big Interior Mtn. which we planned to climb en-route to the Nine Peaks.

By late afternoon we left Judy, Claire and Tim in an open meadow at the tree line where they camped for the night. Doug, Darlene and I carried on up the glacier toward Big Interior, planning to go on as far as possible before dark and get as close to the Nine Peaks as we could. Claire caught up with us, ski-less and pack-less and walked with us half way up the glacier before returning. The sun disappeared behind fast approaching cloud

before it set.

We camped high near the crest of the ridge on the lee side out of the wind and about half an hour below Big Interior summit. After dinner a few flakes of light snow fell as we tried an experiment. We buried a large pot of water under two feet of snow. It was -10 C (I guess that means -1 C at home) so it seemed like a good night to try it and hopefully save some time in the morning.

Sleep came easily that night but not plentifully. We awoke at 10 p.m. after one hour of sleep (the only sleep I got in 46 hours) to the flap and flutter of the tent. It was snowing and blowing quite hard outside and the wind continued to gain strength. Luckily I was on the windy side of the tent ensuring no chance of sleep and missing all the exciting weather. Darlene and Doug managed to squeeze in a few winks but eventually the wind was so strong we were all being smothered by the nylon walls. The tent poles were gyrating like Elvis; sometimes laying down flat but somehow always managed to return to their normal shape between gusts. Why had I not string out the storm guys?

At 2:30 am Darlene got up to check out the situation "It's as bad out here as it sounds" she cried out over the wind as she tried to dig us out. By 5:00 am the wind seemed to have died down but the snow was still really coming down. We didn't realize a large drift was forming outside the tent and blocking the wind. Higher than the tent itself, it was perched like a wave about to break upon us.

At 5:30 am the moat between the drift and the tent began to collapse. Doug and Darlene were out first to dig us out as I

struggled to get my gear out from under the collapsed walls. I could no longer push back the walls as I had been doing all night long. In only a few short minutes the tent was reduced to half its normal volume.

Finally, when I emerged, I was amazed by the fury of the storm and immediately began shooting video, much to the amazement of Doug and Darlene who had been shoveling so hard to save the poor tent.

At dawn we packed up our gear. Doug's down jacket blew away in the process. We roped up and cautiously made our way down. The snow was waist deep in places and scoured down to bare ice in others. I remembered something Doug had said the evening before... "if we don't get the Nine Peaks at least we'll get Big Interior". Yeah right and I'm Donald Duck. Once we were off the mountain we had a bite at the tree line and removed the headlamps we were still wearing.

Soon after we caught up with the others - who had slept well all night. The skies began to clear of course, offering

beautiful views and raising our spirits. Now the trip was getting down-right boring. We spent the rest of the day skiing out in fresh powder and made it back to the cars by night fall.

The storm made this trip very interesting. Better in some ways than bagging a peak. Doug lost his down jacket. My tent poles were damaged, I lost a fuel bottle, and we never did find Darlene's pot of water. On the day of the storm the Victoria airport weather office recorded winds of 48 Km/hr. That's 480 Km/hr for us. Wow!

*\*See Video 'Flirtation with Disaster' available at club library.*

*Participants: Tim Eaton, Claire Ebendinger, Doug Goodman (leader), Greg Gordon, Judy Holm, Darlene Anderson*

## Mt. Arrowsmith

February

Doug Goodman

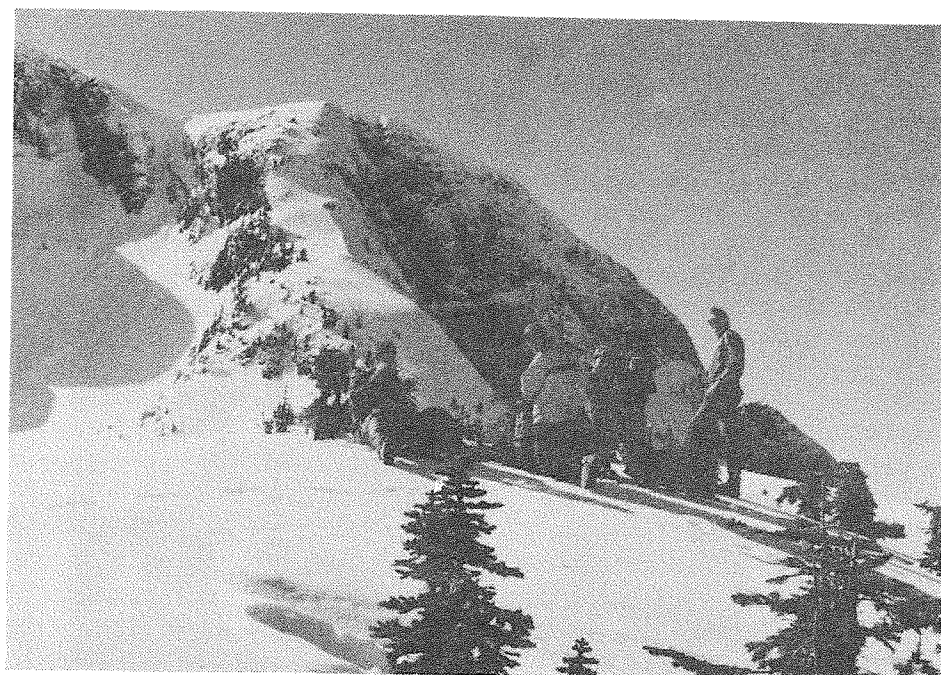
Only 3 hr from Victoria, and the road goes into the subalpine, so we can do a day-trip there and spend a maximum of time playing in the alpine zone. Elevation just shy of 6000 ft, but with spectacular vertical cliffs on all aspects of a multitude of termite hills. The snow line was high, conditions icy in the morning shade. Two keen young men (Stacey and his friend) joined our group as they happened to show up at the trail-head. Don declined my invitation to try a gully access of the north ridge, so I followed the sizable group up a steepish nose with sloughing crust. Marvy

views north and west, and the sun was warm. So warm that the thin surface layer on the south side of the ridge was very slick over a frozen base as we traversed it, more in dance than march. Russ and a few others gained some real life though not quite death defying self-arrest practice. The usual gully was full of snow, only a few rocks showing. I decided crampons weren't needed. As the snow became icier my kicksteps got more and more tenuous. So it was step cutting time, too steep to easily put on crampons. Below, Chris appreciated the debris. Meanwhile Valerio and Don

tied ropes on Stacey and friend and belayed them up. What with the first ascents, ice-axe serenades, and Illner cigars the sun-drenched summit party stretched long into the afternoon. The fun continued with a boot ski down the Judges', beer on the road, and Mexican cuisine in Nanaimo.

*Participants: Don Berryman (leader), Chris Odgers, Russ Moir, Reinhard Illner, Valerio Faraoni, Stacey, Stacey's friend, Claire Ebendinger, Doug Goodman, and others too numerous to remember 10 months later, sorry guys*

*(Editors' note: The term 'young' above has been stretched to its limit!)*



*The group discussion, Arrowsmith Col*

*Claire Ebendinger*

# In Search of the Elusive Cabin

March 4-5

Gerhardt Lepp

After we moved from Calgary to Sooke I was wondering where we could find snow close to home. Eventually we discovered the secluded Kludahk Trail, creation of the dynamic duo, Maywell & Phoebe (and Associated Adventurers). It turns out that we are closer to good ski touring terrain in Sooke than we were in Calgary. Ten km of logging road north of Jordan River takes one from ocean, flowers and leaves to snow and skiing.

The Kludahk Outdoors Club built a cabin in Maywell's Meadow in the fall of '94. We had never been to the cabin but I was confident that we could find it in the snow. On Saturday morning we drove up the logging road north of Jordan River and only made it 4 km before bogging down in 10 cm of fresh snow. Chris's 4-wheel-drive was threatening to slide off the road. By the time we had skied to the top of San Juan Ridge there was 30 cm of fresh snow and it was still snowing. It was pleasant skiing in open, old growth forest. We knew there was a view from the top of the ridge, we just couldn't see it.

After 9 hours of breaking trail and navigating by map, compass and altimeter, we were running out of light and energy. We knew that we were within 400 m of the cabin but no trail markers could be seen and we didn't know if it would take 5 minutes or 5 hours to find the cabin. Lynne was exhausted and in a mutinous mood. I kept telling her that the cabin was only a few minutes away but my credibility was wearing thin. With my usual lack of compassion, I was sure that there was another hour of trail breaking left in her before she lapsed into unconsciousness. Mutiny prevailed; Lynn and Chris put up the tent and Terry and I built a quinzey hut while Jo-Ann proceeded to butcher a pot of

noodles in the dark. A friend's saying came to mind: "I go winter camping once a year just to remind myself why I don't do it more often."

A quinzey hut is a marvelous invention that can be made in almost any snow conditions. All you need is a strong shovel and the energy to work for just one more hour. First you make a big pile of snow; at least 3 m across and 2 m high. Then you tramp it down with skis and shovels to make the surface firmer. When snow is moved and then packed it quickly gains enough strength to support itself. From one side you dig a big hole and hollow out the hut, shoveling the snow outside. Keep the sleeping surface high enough so that it will eventually be above the door. The big hole in the side gets filled in after the permanent door is dug. Digging out the door is the hard part. Tunnel down from both the inside and outside of the quinzey until the tunnels meet below the level of the sleeping bench. Last, plug the big hole with packs and willing victims and then pile snow over the hole to fill it in. Crawl inside, light a candle and make yourself at home. Quinzies can be built as big or as small as you like. I spent a week camped in a quinzey that was big enough to hold 15 people for a Christmas party.

The snow storm blew over and the next day brought sunshine, elk tracks and a great ski out. Winter is returning, but this year I want to sleep in a warm dry cabin.

*Participants: Lynne Peppler, Chris Peppler, Terry Hartrick, Gerhardt Lepp, Jo-Ann Draper*



*Kludahk Ridge*

*Gerhardt Lepp*

## Skiing Mt. Arrowsmith from the Englishman River Valley

March 12

Don Newman

Most of us are very familiar with the routes on the north and west side of Mt. Arrowsmith, the Judges Route and up from the Cokely/Arrowsmith Col., but how many know anything about the east and south sides?

What started this line of inquiry was an interesting view of Arrowsmith as seen from Mt. Maquellan. The most striking part of this view was the long alpine ridge which extends south-east from the main summit massif of Arrowsmith. Once home I looked over maps and found that this ridge was gently rolling and maintained an elevation over 1000 metres for 4 or 5 km. This looked like perfect ski terrain! The difficult part was how to get up there. I asked around and Sandy Briggs came up with a Ski Guide published by the Nanaimo Ski Club which showed a possible route up onto the ridge starting on the east side of Arrowsmith from the Englishman river valley. The route seemed feasible so I decided to lead a trip into this relatively untravelled area. Lacking a press gang to attract the necessary crew I settled for volunteers who were unlucky enough to respond to an entry in the club trip schedule.

The weather was unsettled leading up to the weekend and it was decided to make a day trip on Saturday. We drove up the Island Highway to 5 km north of Nanoose Bay, turned left onto North Bay Rd. which leads through a MacBlo vehicle yard (MacBlo access info 468-7621), and onto the 155 main line logging road up the Englishman River valley. About 20 km up the valley there is a branch road (143A) on the right which crosses the river and goes up a side valley, this being the valley which leads eventually to the east side of the Cokely/Arrowsmith col. We drove our cars up 143A until it became impassable at about the 500 metre level.

Now on foot we hiked logging roads up to the outflow of Arrowsmith lake and were soon skiing along the road which continued along the south shore of Arrowsmith lake. The road ended and we had to do some steep bushwhacking up the outflow of Hidden Lake. At the point which this stream meets Hidden lake we turned sharply south and ascended a steep ridge up from the lake. We stopped for lunch just above Hidden Lake and ate while a light drizzle fell. Gerhardt and his wife Joan who had recently moved from Alberta commented that the weather and style of skiing was very "different" from that in the Rockies.

The ridge above Hidden Lake ascends 400 metres onto the main south-east ridge of Mt. Arrowsmith meeting it at the 1,500

metre level. This was the most difficult part of the ascent but we managed to ski almost all of it with lots of traversing. We skied to a high point on the ridge at 1,560 metres and waited for everyone to regroup. While waiting Doug and I observed a pair of Ptarmigan white with their winter plumage. They were so well camouflaged that had we not stopped within several metres of where they huddled they would have been invisible. I often forget that some of the neatest things in the mountains cannot be observed while rushing for the summit. The summit group of Arrowsmith when seen from this side is an imposing mass with no obvious weak points.

Once the group was together again we decided to try an alternate descent route. This was in part due to the steepness and difficulty of our ascent route between Arrowsmith Lake, Hidden Lake, and the south-east ridge of Arrowsmith. From our high point we could see that the south-east ridge of Arrowsmith divides into two with one branch extending east in the direction we wanted to go. We followed this ridge top east to a bump near its end at 1,220 meters and then swung north. The skiing down to this point was what we'd come for, lots of gently rolling terrain and sparsely forested.

Now heading north we descended moderate slopes while skirting the cliffs which fell precipitously to a clear cut basin on the south-east corner of Arrowsmith lake. It was getting dark and based on our elevation of about 900 metres I knew that if we contoured around into the clear cut basin we would likely hit one of the logging roads I'd seen earlier in the day. Luck (or was that Lepp) was with us and the last of the light saw us groveling across slash to the end of a spur road. A very tired and happy group gathered at the end of the road and dug out their headlamps. As we descended the tiny pools of light strung out across the basin emphasized a feeling of insignificance while surrounded by so much black wilderness.

In retrospect our descent route would probably be the best ascent route also. The skiing would be on the whole easier and there was less bush. This route would take you directly from Arrowsmith Lake to a sparsely treed alpine ridge top with beautiful views, much nicer than that groveling down in the valley bottom.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Valerio Faraoni, Gerhardt and Joan Lepp, Doug Goodman., Don Newman (leader)*

## Douglas Peak

September 11-12, 1994

Elaine Kerr

After a second attempt at getting to El Captain and Landale, and being turned away by a locked gate and company personnel who acted like there was a war on, we gave up and headed back north to more familiar and friendly territory.

We had lost a day traveling down island, so there was little to do but a day trip. We drove the 10 km of Thistle Main from the Bamfield Road out of Port Alberni and arrived at the trail to Father and Son Lake, from where we planned to climb Douglas Peak.

The short well kept trail led from the logging road to the two lakes, a popular fishing hangout for locals. It was a beautiful spot, and we decided to circle the lake to the other side to catch the evening sun. The trail followed the lake shore, with many signs of campfires and good times. The beer cans and fishing tackle bags kept us aware that we weren't alone out there.

We arose early for the ascent to the ridge running up to Douglas Peak. We began with the sun rising over the ridge and the gentle hum of chainsaws rising from below. The going was easy, through beautiful open spaced old growth. There was little sign that anyone had been this way, not even any flagging tape to show that people had checked it out before us. Only deer prints and bear scats.

As we approached the summit, at 1,490 m, I was concerned that the views would be blocked by trees, as it was still sub alpine. However, the first thing we saw as we arrived was that some trees had been cut. Someone had actually carried out the concern of so many, that you just have to clear a few trees and the view would be better.

It turned out the trees had been cut to provide a clear signal and good access for the repeater station on the summit, as well as a helicopter landing pad so no one really has to bother hiking up.

We hung around for awhile thinking we might be able to

hitch a ride out. But I guess if they didn't have room in the chopper for the cement footing formers that were left over from building the platform, they probably wouldn't have room for us.

The views on all sides revealed a panorama of Vancouver Island mountain peaks. We noted the many trees still standing on the nearby slopes. Funny how different people looking at the same scene can interpret it so differently. Some people might feel an overwhelming urgency that so few slopes remain unscathed, that the very mountain which has just delighted them with its wonders may be next to lose its life. But there were a few treed slopes left, proving that, at least until they are gone, clearcutting is sustainable.

It was a quick descent, trying to get to the road for the lunch hour when we anticipated fewer logging trucks to be moving around. Being such a short hike, we had lots of room in our packs for the load of garbage collected en route. It only seems right that since we were using their land we should help out and pick up the plastic 12 gauge cartridges and half burned meat stew tins scattered in the bushes.

We looked back at the mountain as we left, noting the remarkable alpine meadows sloping up to the peak. Hard to tell apart from the clearcuts really. I wonder what chance the meadows have of surviving when the trees are gone from above? They were once a habitat of the rare Vancouver Island marmot, with only empty burrow systems left now to remind us of their past here. What made them leave? Perhaps our presence around Douglas was just a bit too much for them.

*Participants: Lindsay Elms and Elaine Kerr*

## Maquilla Peak

April 30-May 1

Lindsay Elms

After the last backcountry ski trip I said that would be the last one this year. My skins were threadbare, I was getting no traction and on hard steep snow I'd end up carrying my skis. I don't know how I got talked into doing another trip on skis but here I was carrying them through the bush once again getting to the alpine.

After an hour and a half through the bush we hit the ridge where we stopped for lunch. Chris was hurting after partying hard and getting only two hours sleep that night but the worst was over now. We snoozed in the sun for a while and then clipped into our bindings and began skinning up. The snow had softened up nicely and I was able to skin all the way to the top, but again I said this would be the last ski for the season. On the summit we sat around next to the repeater tower for awhile but decided to find a warmer, sheltered spot to do some more snoozing. We found a nice flat spot just two minutes from the summit so there we put the tent up and went to sleep. After a couple of hours we again got up, cooked dinner, then walked up to the top and hung-out there to await the sunset. After some beautiful lighting appeared in the West, the

sun went down and it was time to warm up the sleeping bag and get some more sleep.

I think we must have slept about nine hours, ample sleep before another day of strenuous exercise. We took our time over breakfast and slowly took the tent down. The snow was rock-hard and we wanted it to soften a little but by 9 a.m. we couldn't wait any longer so with our skis on, we pointed them downhill and away we went. It was perrrfecttt but it was over all too soon. Once we were in the trees the snow was deep and soft, not very pleasant at all. After an hour and a half we were back at the truck ready for the drive home. I think this was one of those trips where we probably spent more time sleeping than we did on our skis but I guess not every trip has to be a big push.

Access to Maquilla Peak is via Sandpit Road which is between Klaklakama Lake and Maquilla Creek on the Gold River/Woss logging road. The road climbs to nearly 3000ft (910m).

*Participants: Lindsay Elms and Chris Raikie*

## Kings Peak

May 13-14

Rick C. Roe

A sturdy crew of weekend mountaineers, lacking only Barr bodies, departed on May 12 for a scheduled trip to Elk Horn under the beneficent guidance of Russ Moir, who advised us that we would all die in an avalanche if we attempted Elk Horn. [*Editors' note: That's a lie!*] Though all reasonable people accept the inevitable return of their flesh to the patient earth's dusty embrace, it seemed premature that Friday evening to anticipate it the following day. Kings Peak was offered as a doable and survivable alternate and so the matter was settled.

From the turn off at Buttle Narrows, it is 19.6 km to the power line passing over the Gold River Road. Approximately 100 m further on the left a dirt road leads a few hundred meters over a small rise, the other side of which we parked our vehicles and camped. If you continue on the highway and find yourself crossing the Elk River, you have completely missed it.

May 13th we walked 3 km on the road under the power line to the major creek. Scrambling up a bit of slash to the forest, the trail can be picked up after crossing the creek. Here, one of our group demonstrated that a large knapsack, if thrown with vigour across the creek onto a large, solid, flat surface has the potential to bounce into a returning, though shorter arc, directly into the creek (and over the water fall and under a log).

We took this as a good omen and made tremendous time up the path until we found snow at approximately 1,700 feet and simultaneously lost the trail. This presented no problem as several alternate lines of ascent were immediately seized upon and pursued with independent vigour. In this democratic fashion we ascended through progressively softer, deeper, wetter snow to our campsite a few hundred meters shy of the outlet of the large snow gully below Kings Peak.

Under the cloudless, deep blue sky, people laid out rectangles of foam on the sparkling snow, exposed large areas of their skin to the carcinogenic welcome of the sun while watching sluffs of wet snow tumble down the cliffs.

Next day with an 0600 start we slogged up the gully and upper snow slope to the col. Breaking right, most walked to what was referred to as Queens Peak, then returned to the col to finish the scramble to Kings Peak. Visibility was decent though there was considerable high cloud. The view of Elk Horn draped in snow was particularly lovely. It was cool enough to discourage a lingering brunch and a quick sliding/running descent had us back in camp in about 45 minutes.

We had a delightful meandering descent through the snowy forest until we picked up the trail at the snow line. Near the bottom Russ demonstrated that it was perfectly possible to lunge head first into a broken branch tip on a log across the trail without killing or even blinding oneself though some bleeding and memory impairment from the concussive force had to be tolerated. Reassured, the group picked up the pace and made good time back to the cars.

*Note: Russ would have written this but he can't remember anything about the trip.*

*Participants: Russ Moir, Rick Roe, Tony Pugh, Pedro Montage-Pelaez, Jim Tansky, Gary Quiring (?)*

## Mt. Victoria and (not) Warden Pk.

May 20 - 22

Rex Andrew

Accounts of heavy spring snow made us wonder whether conditions would be *good enough* to merit the long drive north to attempt these two I.Q.s. Rick Eppler provided additional angst by describing to JF the "hairy and unprotectable" final 100 m on Warden -- which we, in our already feverish state, immediately envisioned as plastered with ice and snow, probably overhanging too.

Fortunately, forecasts of beautiful sunny weather sent us up-Island with rising spirits as we picked up companions at Helmcken and Mill Bay. We reached our logging road camp on the White River shortly before dusk.

Saturday: we left the road at 08:00, working our way up a flagged bushwhack, contouring above the tarn to a 1.5 hour lunch break in a broad col on the NW ridge of Victoria. Here an intense conference took place as we tried to correlate a picture of the route (taken late in the season with a wide-angle lens) with the snow-covered features of Victoria's heights before us. In turn, we all convinced each other to accept (what turned out to be) an incorrect hypothesis -- until MK with his sharp eyes pointed out the error of our ways. We then moved a bit higher to make camp at 13:30

in the snow-bound alpine meadows under the West face. We spent the rest of the afternoon snoozing in the sunshine, chewing over the route description, and reconnoitering the neighborhood.

Sunday: an alpine start at 05:00 - 05:30 provided enjoyable cramponing up across the meadow to a broad couloir leading to the west ridge. Along the way, WS toured a moat. The couloir itself was a long and committing challenge, with a bergschrund part way across the bottom, and all the more exciting for PT when a crampon broke, and for JF who conducted the repair on a 45° slope in the pre-dawn shadows.

Topping out on the S. ridge, we turned up-ridge to follow the class 3 "standard route". The ridge climbed gently for a few hundred yards before taking a horrendous drop into a monster notch and then steepening into a cliffy buttress that soared up 700m to the summit. There seemed no easy way for us to cross the notch (nor, for that matter, could we pick out a class 3 route up the buttress) so we retreated back to the top of the couloir for a council of war. The only remaining plan was the 4th class E. ridge, which AH had climbed 8 years earlier (which would upgrade the trip to C4?), but that entailed dropping off the S. ridge and contouring

around another quarter of the mountain. The prospect of much more work was so unappetizing that only RM, MK, MB, JD and I opted to continue.

So we crossed under the SE face onto a brushy ledge and around to a particularly exposed rocky impasse on the E ridge. At this point, MK and RM also decided to turn back. Having had enough of circumnavigating Victoria, MB turned directly up the E ridge, leading a short pitch to easier ground. We followed the ridge up until it narrowed and became a catwalk across to a vertical step festooned with rappel slings, a feature we assumed to be the class 4 crux. I led the short pitch, protecting by slinging two chockstones and placing a #7 stopper (thereby, I guess, upgrading the trip to C5?)

We now cut left on ledges back to the SE face. Normally, the route traverses diagonally up across this face, but the high-angle snow covering the slope seemed just too dangerous in the rising midday heat. Instead, we turned directly up, following moats up under the buttress on the right side of the face. The snow had the consistency of a Hawaiian treat known as a "shave-ice", but it was no treat here, sucking ice axes in without resistance up to and beyond the head. (*Piolet disparu?*) When we reached the summit rock band at the top of the face, we began to work our way across just below the moats, with MB leading one ominous slope and establishing a fixed handline for us.

About this time, after a civilized breakfast in camp, AH topped out of the couloir on the lower SE ridge, meeting JF and both RM and MK who by this time had returned across the SE face. Together they watched our progress, shouting support and directions at us across the intervening 1000m space. Their support was encouraging but their directions confusing: the standard exit from the SE face (which they could not see) was an alarmingly steep snow funnel which hadn't released yet. With time running out, the standard exit onto the summit was not an option.

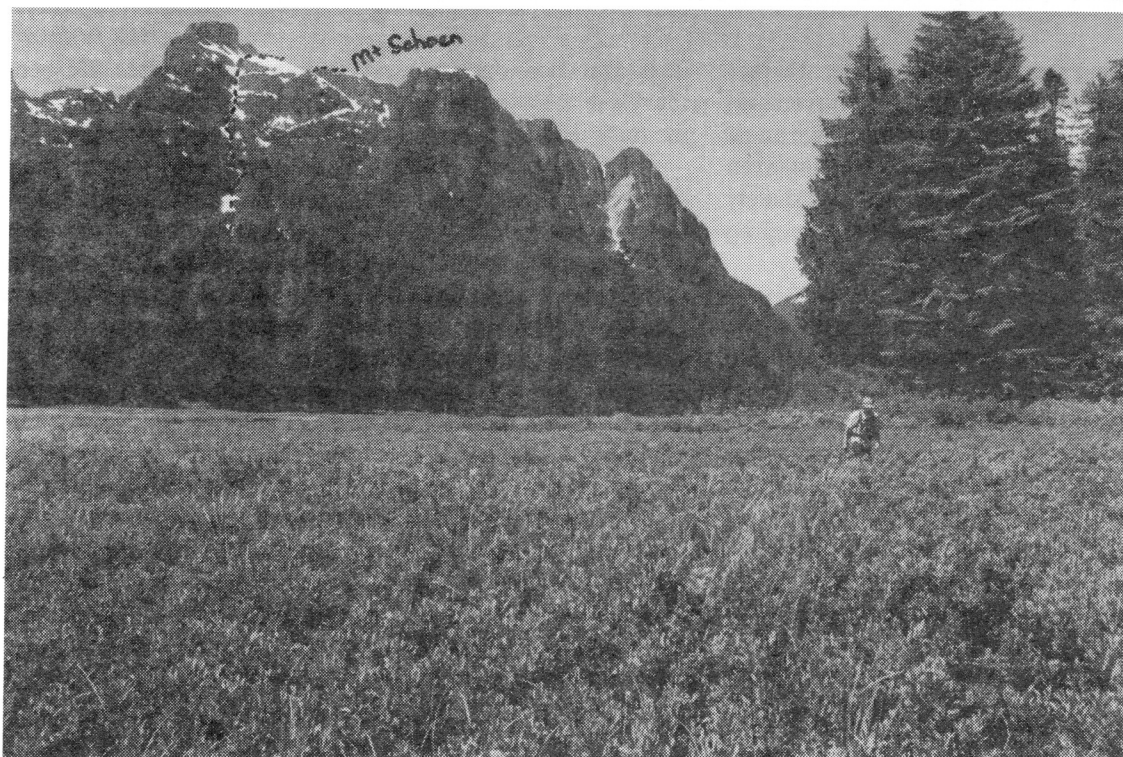
The summit rock band, however, had a line of weakness immediately above us: it looked to be just a short 3m vertical step.

MB offered to lead, but we could not find a belay anchor. Undaunted, MB lassoed a flake with a sling, yarded up, stepped into the loop (thereby upgrading the trip to C6?), sheared a snow column and mantled the flake, towing the rope behind him. Moments later he announced that he was on the summit ridge, and brought JD and I up on belay. We were on the summit at 15:30.

We didn't stay long: besides, the true summit was buried under a metre of snow. We rappelled back down to the SE face, and I belayed MB back across the handline. Then we tip-toed back down the face one by one in our thigh-deep steps, rappelled twice more on the E. ridge, re-crossed the snow bowl and regained the S ridge under a monstrous sagging cornice which had been basking in the sun all day. JD led the descent back down the ice couloir -- which now had the consistency of a slurpee -- and we all bounded back down the slope to the tents, arriving about 20:00.

Fortunately for us summiters, the wise men at camp had decided that the snow was too deep and unconsolidated for an attempt on Warden the following day. The next morning, we broke camp in two groups. The first group was away like a flash at 07:30. JD and I managed to attach ourselves at 08:00 to AH and WS, who were sniffing cautiously in the snow for our tracks from two days before. When we found the remnants of our tracks, which were almost completely melted out, we were puzzled to observe tracks from our earlier group veering away and dropping swiftly off the other side of the W ridge. Must be some undocumented short-cut. After not much discussion, we chose to retrace our original path, a task made much too cerebral by the effort of differentiating sun cups from size 11 footprints. Fortunately, when all seemed lost in dense bush, WS discovered that he was standing on AH's ice ax guard, which AH had left (by accident? by design? he wouldn't say) at a critical junction in the waytrail. We finally connected with the flagged route, and popped out right at the cars at 11:00.

Meanwhile, somewhere above, *en rappel* in the wrong gully, the first group were blazing a new descent route. They popped out



*Mt. Schoen*

*Lindsay Elms*

onto the logging road several hundred metres south and appeared around the corner at 11:30 with some new stories to tell. (But I'll leave that up to them.)

P.S. Logging road W.R. 500 has been considerably extended and now terminates essentially at the base of the SE face of Victoria. This should save climbers hundreds of vertical metres

of climbing and make approaches to this side later in the summer quite a bit easier (although on this weekend, the upper end of the road was still snowed in.)

*Participants: Jack Fisher (leader), Rex Andrew, Mike Bartier, John Damaschke, Graham Bennett, Albert Hestler, Mike Kuzyk, Russ Moir, Walter Speirs, Perry Therrien.*

## The Colonel Approached

June 15-17

Doug Goodman

This trip was the idea of Tim Eaton, middle-aged rock climber/mountaineer/mining engineer. I immediately accepted his offer, made a few minutes after we hit pavement beside Buttle Lake in February after our Big Interior fiasco. The three day weekend was chosen well in advance to fit our schedules, but the forecast of rain for Saturday wasn't to Tim's liking. He declined. Meanwhile Greg and rock climber Mike Bartier of Cumberland (a few houses down from Barb's place) had paired up, so we were three. Thursday after work, clear skies Victoria. to Cumberland. We wasted a few hours at Mike's place before going to sleep there, not keen enough to approach the Colonel by night. A reasonable start, 8 a.m. trailhead, 11 a.m. Landslide Lake, 12 noon Iceberg Lake frozen, snow firm, sky clear, the Colonel straight and proud before us. 1500 base of north tower, fog. 1600 tent up (well guyed

in memory of February), our energy gone, drizzle. 1700 rain. 2300 snow. Breakfast under a big rock and Mike barfs after my Emmentaler. Rather a comfortable spot gazing up through the fog at the North Tower in its fresh snow veneer. Round about midday sometime we sauntered around to a copse near the gully (standard route) and peered up at it through the blizzard. Staring silently directly in front of me on a dead side of a bole was the Colonel himself, giving no hint of caution or encouragement (see nature category annual photo contest). I said too bad we didn't start a day earlier, it would have been an interesting bivvy last night. By 8 p.m. we'd dropped Mike home to his wife and were at Barb's sharing a fine meal (thanks Carol), and home-made wine (thanks Barb, or was it your mom's?) 'Chez Ginger and Brooks' highly recommended.

## Mt Schoen

24-25 June

Lindsay Elms

One of the nice things about living mid-Island is the relatively close proximity to any of the mountains on the island. Two to three hours in either direction and you have most of the island covered. This means you are able to decide at the last minute where you want to climb. That is what we did this weekend.

I phoned up Jan (pronounced Yarn) around 9 a.m. and we decided to go in to Mt. Schoen via the Adams River and Nisnak Lake. I picked Jan up at Merville at 1 p.m. and arrived at the carpark at 4 p.m. The weather was looking good so we went really light weight. We found the flagged trail into Nisnak Lake but we weren't prepared for the bog. The trail started out through the trees but soon moved out into the marsh and for half of the fifty minutes it took to get to the lake, it was through calf deep peat bog. After initially trying to avoid plunging in we soon realized that the mud wouldn't kill us, we'd just get dirtier quicker than we wanted too.

Once at the lake we found a way across the marsh and followed the creek that came down off the mountain. Half an hour later we crossed the creek to the west bank and then headed up beside a smaller creek that came down off the mountain from the northeast. This creek descends from the glacier below the summit block. We climbed for another hour or so through open an open forest but had to cross a lot of fallen trees before we got to our campsite on a spur between two small creeks. The route above

looked steep with lots of bluffs, but we had seen a line from below that looked like it would go, this we would find out tomorrow.

We were up at 4 a.m. and left camp at 5 climbing up through steep timber between the creeks. Soon we came to a bluff so we crossed the left creek and worked our way up for another five hundred feet and got back into the creek which was now choked with snow. The climbing was straight forward now up onto the glacier. It had only taken us an hour and three quarters to get there from camp which was at 2800 ft. We now climbed out onto the East Ridge which we followed until we had to traverse out onto the Southeast Face. Here a loose gully angled up onto the summit which we stepped onto at 7.35 a.m. To our surprise we saw some tracks in the snow so digging into the summit cairn we found the register and in it was the names of three people who had climbed the mountain just the day before. It was Tak Ogasawara, Peter Aspinall and Darryl Hurrell from Campbell River. We suspect they had climbed from the Schoen Lake side. The old summit book that David Routledge of the CDMC had taken up there (date unreadable) was totally destroyed and the only other name that we could read was Earl Mord(t)en from the IMR on July 15, 1989. It didn't seem like the summit was frequented very often.

The descent was straight forward and we were back in Courtenay by 3 p.m.

*Participants: Lindsay Elms and Jan Neusniel*

## MS Mountain

June 26-27, 1994

Lindsay Elms

In five years a lot of trees can be but down. This is what I found when I returned to the Pamela Creek on the western boundary of Strathcona Park. That time I had been in to climb Mt. Kent-Urquhart and Mt. Donner and now I found the area unrecognizable.

To access this area, take the Ucona Road out of Gold River and then just before crossing Pamela Creek take U-21 and follow it to the end before it switch backs up the hill. The old road that follows the creek is ditched at this point (it is also the park boundary) so we began hiking. We continued along this for three kilometres until the road stopped at a creek. Across the creek (south side) was entered nice, open old growth forest and from here we struck up. For 250 m it was easy climbing then we had to zig-zag up through foliated rock bluffs until after another 300 m we emerged into the alpine just in time for lunch. A further half an hour found us at a good tent site. The rest of the day we spent scouting a route up through the rock bluffs to gain access to the upper snowfield for the morning.

It was beautiful the next morning as we wound our way up through the lower bluffs. The snow on the north face was nice and firm for cramponing so after about an hour and a half from camp we emerged onto the northwest shoulder of MS Mountain. The main summit was 100 m to the south across a narrow ridge and then up class 4 rock to the top. Half an hour later on the summit we came across a cairn and register. The notebook inside was wet but we were able to read the name of David Coombes, Al Harrison, Margaret Symon, Mary Spoke and Dana Kanachowski from the Island Mountain Ramblers who had been up there in May, 1975.

The only other names in it were again members of the Island Mountain Ramblers, Dave Coombes, Margaret Symon, Mike Taylor and B. McLean who were there on May 18, 1980. They had called this peak MS Mountain after the initials of the two woman who led the trip. On the 92 F/12 ed. 5, this mountain is incorrectly located (one and a half kilometres further south) but this will be rectified on the 92 F/12 ed. 6.

In 1989 when I climbed Mt. Kent-Urquhart, it was an unnamed peak so I applied to the Toponymy Dept. of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks to have it named. I recommended it be named after W.R. Kent who was the photographer and W.W. Urquhart the topographer, who was employed by Reginald Thomson in 1913-14 when Strathcona Park was being developed and first surveyed. This Dept. suggested that there should be a mountain for each of the two gentlemen and it was proposed that the unnamed peak to the south (MS Mtn.) should be Mt. Kent and the one I had climbed Mt. Urquhart. These two names were accepted and currently are shown on the 1:125,000 map of the area.

Upon our recent ascent of what we thought was Mt. Kent, I contacted the Toponymy Dept. and sorted this discrepancy out. They have now gone with the original proposal (1989 ascent) of Mt. Kent-Urquhart.

Elaine and I spent half an hour on the summit of MS mountain before it was time to head back down the camp and then descend on down to Pamela Creek and the car.

*Participants: Elaine Kerr and Lindsay Elms*

## The "Alava / Bate Sanctuary" Update

July 1st-3rd

Rick Eppler

As Rob once commented, this area is as unique as it gets, their just isn't any other place like it on the Island. "The Sanctuary", as it has been affectionately called because one is drawn there repeatedly, has very little vegetation, or soil, with extensive slopes and slabs of clean, grippy rock. Like crawling around on a sheet of 10 grit sand paper. It is comprised mostly of gritty reddish-brown Karmutzen volcanics. The more traditional subalpine bushy ridges found elsewhere at this elevation (1000 M) don't exist here. Those seem to end at the edges of the Sanctuary. The terrain is open and stark, as if the ice age has just left this area. The occasional tuft of course grass has claimed the sparse soil pockets, with a variety of alpine flowers colonizing the fissures and fracture lines in the rock. One has the feeling of being an explorer in a place of very special significance.

Paul enticed 5 of us into another trip in with the prospect of "air assist", reasoning that would save a day and capitalize on at least one good day of climbing weather for a shot at the "Thumb". Both he and Rob needed that one to complete their hit

list and clean out the area. Sounded good, as every trip I've been on into this area has been plagued by bad weather, and last year we'd paid our dues on the eastern approach route. So, assembling Saturday morning at the end of drivable logging road up Sebahall Creek, we waited for the air lift in. The plan was to set up a camp in the hanging valley above Peter Lake at 1200 m elevation. This basin invited exploration on previous trips, but there was never enough time for it. I estimate it would take half a day, or better to traverse around the west and south side of Peter lake from the traditional outlet campsite, (*referred to in 1982, and 1991 Bushwhacker articles*), to reach this valley; valuable time when you're on a tight peak bagging schedule and only have a long weekend.

The Van. Isle. Helicopters pilots refer to this upper basin as a 'Shangri-La'. The visual impact is dramatic. A deep bowl flanked by the 300 m near vertical wall of the NE ridge on Mt. Bate, the lesser angled but equally high eastern wall of Thumb Peak, and the rock walls of the ridge swinging east and south from

Thumb Peak. A few clumps of gnarled firs and hemlocks to break the starkness of rock and snow. A low col on the west makes the only viable connection with the bigger basin below holding Peter Lake. A shimmering lake surrounded with extensive gravel flats and grassy meadows usually nestles in the bottom, spilling out into a thundering gorge eventually dumping over a glacial wall into the Conuma River. The sense of human frailty is overwhelming in this place. Upon rounding the corner it became evident the whole basin was frozen up and choked with snow. So much for a warm meadowy campsite beside a picturesque little lake. In fact, we spent the next 1/2 hour trying to select a camp spot which would provide sheltered rocks to cook and sit on, and a spot to dig in from the cold winds dropping off the north slopes. A couple of melt pools near camp gave a hint of the meadows lying under the 11/2 metres of snow on which our tents were pitched.

The domestic chores done, Rob flashed up the northern slopes toward Thumb Peak, with the rest of us in hot pursuit. We gained the main summit easily up snow slopes from the east. Mount Grattan immediately west, commanded one's full attention. Now having seen it from three different directions, it is one of the very few peaks that looks virtually the same from all

directions - like a steep symmetrical pyramid ( which originally was going to be the proposed name). "The Thumb" proved a lot harder. The 300 metre high west face of the Thumb Peak massif is a steeply angled slab, almost like a fault line. A quick foray into this face for a route was stopped by a slight overhang. The traverse along the ridge to the south summit contained some nasty gaps, so rather than spend time getting the 5 of us over these we backtracked and dropped down much friendlier snow slopes until able to traverse under the east wall. From camp the arcing South Ridge had a striking profile - an elegant looking route on a narrow arete. Up close and personal, with fading energy in the afternoon light, it looked more challenging. Another foray onto the slabby west face proved too time consuming on delicate, thin holds, with lack of protection for the rope. - A soloists dance floor. The ridge would have to be it.

In fact, it was straightforward and elegant. Probably 3 rope lengths of class 4, followed by another of class 3. We did it as one long continuous rope of 5 slotting in the odd chock and hooking horns along the way. An easy 50 m traverse on an east face ledge for the last 15 m of class 4 ("Thumbnail") put us on top at supertime.



"Shanori-La" - Mts Alava/Rato

Rick Fnnler

Peter Lake, 600 metres below was still sheathed in ice, although skating was out on Alava Lake 200 metres lower. Mounts Alava and Grattan guarded the western flanks of the Sanctuary, with Malaspina Peak in the distance, standing sentinel over the western access to the Perry River valley. For years I had looked over to this peak and to finally sit on the summit was exceptionally climactic. Tomorrow's booty - Mount Bate, dominated the southern view.

"The Thumb" was snatched from the long fingers of darkness. Supper was late that night.

The weather held for Day Two, so after a hearty breakfast, Paul and Karl broke trail up onto the old morainal bench on the eastern slopes of Mount Bate. Rob, Julie and I plodded along behind. The evidence of past glaciation was everywhere. As in other Island places, Haite Range a good example, the retreat of the ice has left a two tier pocket glacier with slabby bands of rock between. It must have been an impressive sight when this area was draped with glaciers. Travel would have been less problematic. We opted for the south-east ridge, and scrambled along from gendarme to gendarme in a spectacular setting, until it became obvious that if we hoped to summit in daylight we would have to backtrack, drop north onto the snow, and boot straight for the summit. Out in the middle of the upper snow field we happened

upon a few large spiders crawling along slowly with no particular purpose. Staring intently at one of them I had to wonder what sort of prey they were after way up here. Reminded of the Larson cartoon of the two spiders that set the net across the bottom of the playground slide (*...if we pull this off we'll eat like kings...*) I gave them a wide berth.

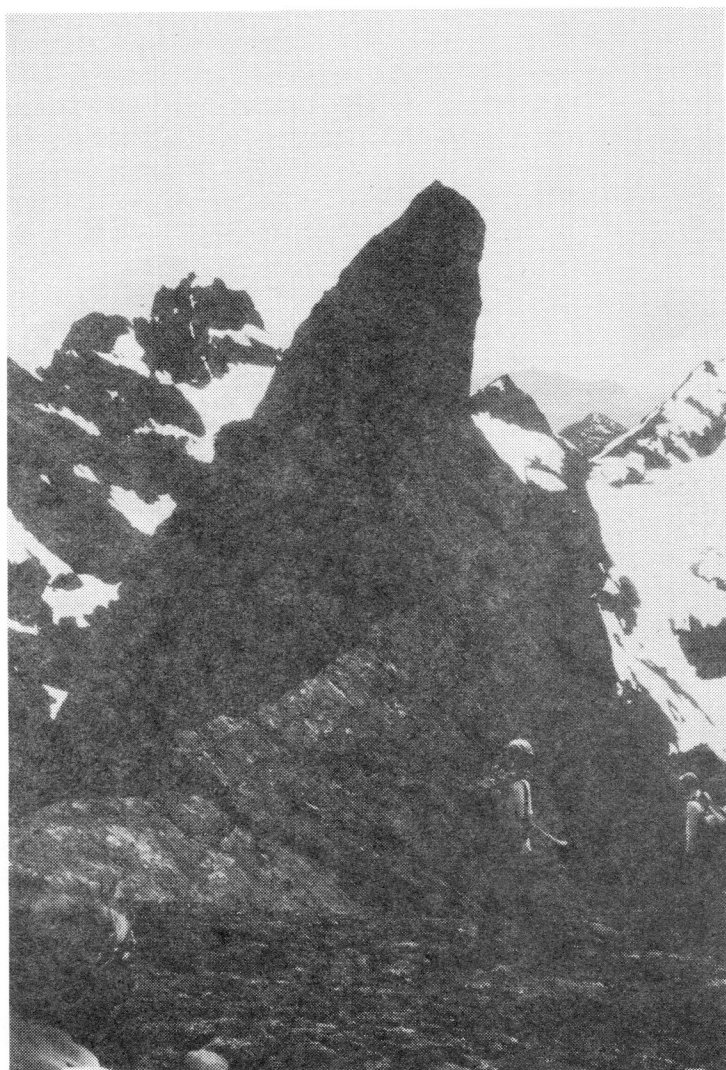
The final tower is a leaning spire of black basalt - slightly overhanging on the west with a slabby ramp on the east. The top is a precariously placed block. (which one day I'm sure will fall off!) Our approach from the east took us to within 30 m of the top on snow, where we stepped off onto the rock for the final scramble. This was *deja-vu* for Rob and Paul. They recounted their original ascent back in 1982 when, after forging a route through the rock bands from the west, they popped out around an exposed corner onto the same ramp, - and knew then they would top out. Rob commented he didn't remember how thin the holds were on the last 8 m of the summit block. (*- 'you were younger than Rob, and if the above holds true, you likely won't have to make those last few moves again.'*)

In the 1982 article Rob had mentioned that Mount Bate is the "plum" in the area. Perched, *au cheval* on the summit peering out over the rest of the Sanctuary I had to agree, although Alava, Grattan and Thumb come close seconds, the visual impact of Bate overwhelms the senses. The sheer bulk and complexity of terrain, steep rock walls, hanging pocket glaciers, cascading waterfalls into the deep cwm filled by Peter Lake. Sitting on top of Thumb Peak the day before was an emotional high, but for me, reaching the summit of Mount Bate felt like closure on the Sanctuary saga, which had been ongoing since first peering into this area from the flanks of Malaspina Peak 19 years ago. I figure I will come back some day, maybe to look at a different route up one of them, or a traverse of the group, or some other excuse, but for now I took comfort in knowing the first order of business was done.

A couple of the nearby gendarmes on the north-east ridge fell host to our rampant wanderings before scooping our packs for the long glissade to the moraines. Below the morainal bench coursed the stream which drained south from the hanging valley and our camp. Dropping through a series of pools and waterfalls, this flows into the Conuma River system. Fresh logging is in evidence right up under the southeast slopes of Mount Bate. Could this provide another possible approach to the Sanctuary via the Conuma roads. ? Maybe Bate is day tripable??

Day Three was the walk out. We laboured up the 350 metres to the ridge top, now having to pay the price of luxuries brought in by burning the calories of av gas rather than carbohydrates. The weather was turning nasty - fast. Banks of heavy dark cloud boiled over the surrounding ridges, fog filled the valleys below. The clumps of wet Krumholz bristled from the ominous wind.

Out came the map and compass. There were a couple of wrong turns on the ridge we did not want to make. Scrambling over several steep bumps we topped out on the high point of our escape route. Through brief gaps in the mist, the route from here looked more straightforward, the ridge flattened out, snow covered and sloping gently, - a mindless plod and slide to the col (gap) The weather system



*The Thumb*

*Rick Fennler*

was moving in fast, and with rain threatening, we moved quickly.

The end of the ridge turned out to be steep and slabby. Everyone picked their own way down, eventually collecting in the col for lunch. The rain showed up and chased us on.

A bear path around the corner led up through steep bush. Half way up a wrong turn into a bushfree rocky slot seduced us higher, into steep, wet, greasy scrambling, and the only injury of the trip when Paul took a slip on an ugly loose block. Twenty feet higher it laid back and we again picked up the bear track leading in from the right. We flagged it for future use. It started to rain again, and the route ahead was once more obscured in fog. After a traverse along a snow covered bench on the west side of the next bump, a brief glimpse of the terrain showed the way down to the final col leading into the exit gully.

Standing at the top of the gully looking down into familiar slopes was a welcome relief. The weather could do what it wanted now. I felt nothing could stop our 'escape', especially as most of the gully was filled with snow. This should be a quick descent. Aside from the angle being steeper than I remembered in the top 3rd (which required careful movement on loose dirt and rock), the descent to the snow filled section went well. - And the rain had stopped.

Half way down, this mountain still wasn't finished with us.

A nasty, thin snow bridge suspended 30' over a waterfall section, required the rope and a solid boot-axe belay to safeguard it. Finally, carefree glissading and creek bashing spit us out onto the logging road for the 3/4 hour walk to the cars.

The celebratory meal (beer) in Campbell River tasted sooo.. good. Three strikes and we were out.

*Thumb Peak - 1st recorded ascent, East Slope, July 1/95: Paul Erickson, Karl Erickson, Julie Henderson, Rob Macdonald, Rick Eppler.*

*"The Thumb" - 1st recorded ascent, South Ridge/East Face, July 1/95: Paul Erickson, Karl Erickson, Julie Henderson, Rob Macdonald, Rick Eppler.*

*Mount Bate - 2nd recorded ascent, East Glacier/Face, July 2/95: Paul Erickson, Karl Erickson, Julie Henderson, Rob Macdonald, Rick Eppler.*

## Colonel Foster

July 1-3

Chris Odgers

We were a party of six on the north shoulder of Colonel Foster at about six. Conditions were iffy with low gray clouds moving but plenty of blue patches, presumably sky. The usual wuffling ensued, the essence of which was as follows:

"looks like it's gonna clear up"

"can't see it"

"gonna turn bad"

"don't buy that either"

"probably gonna stay about the same"

"naah"

Having settled that, Rick and Claire decided to go, weather or not, the rest of us didn't. I was just about packed to go down when Claire, leaving to go up, said something to me that could only be interpreted by an insecure male as meaning "quelle wimpe, n'est-ce pas?" forcing me to repack and follow her up to get a translation.

Claire led the first technical bit, getting out of the first schrund, a short vertical wall of alpine ice, then we got by the second schrund by getting onto the rocks on the right. At the top of the gully, we got onto the rock on the right following Rheinhard's (very good) description. There were 1 or 2 pitches of mid 5th class which Rick led. We had lunch on the "heli-pad"; very good views. Rick ate all my cheese.

A little while later, climbing at a pace that would have left the aged and infirm simply nowhere, we got to a subsidiary summit (the north-north-west-north-west summit, perhaps). It was 3 p.m. and the main summit (now visible) was still a long way away. Claire and Rick were making noises about continuing to the summit and bivvying, but my little feet were telling me that this was as high as we were going to get that day. Claire strode

confidently on hands and knees to the edge of our little platform and looked over.

"Tres merdeuse," she said. She knows I hate it when she speaks German.

"The shock is all writ," she translated pretentiously.

"Oui?" we replied.

"You knows, the rack is really croppy."

And croppy it is. In my private opinion, a major earthquake in the general vicinity of Colonel Foster would precipitate the whole contraption into the lake. People I've talked to since have said things like, "You thought THAT part was bad, wait till you get to the JAWS OF DEATH!" These guys, of course, haven't actually climbed it yet. Like me.

Getting down was uneventful except for the part where we were all nearly killed. It happened like this. We were about 2 or 3 raps above the gully, traversing left on one of those loose, airy catwalks with which the Colonel is so well equipped. Claire was below, I was in the middle, and someone else was above. At one corner was a large flat rock near the edge. I remembered treading on it on the way up and it rocked slightly (what else could it do?) and on the way down I trod on it again, and I remember thinking - how long has that rock been there? Then I thought - how long is it going to stay there?

The person above me (whose name has temporarily slipped my mind) knocked this rock off the ledge. Shortly after that, with a robust, convincing sound like a medium-sized car accident, it hit the ledge about 40 feet below us. Then, traveling in a long, graceful hyperbole (not unlike this trip report), gaining velocity, mass, kinetic energy, and fandangular momentum, it hit a second ledge, about 200 feet below the first one, with a noise that would



have been pleasing to an adolescent male who was fond of nuclear explosions. Thus answering questions 1 and 3.

The rest of the descent to the gully was less interesting. We collected our snow stuff and proceeded down the gully, which, to Rick's disgust, we rapped. On the way down the sun set, the sky turned from blue to indigo to black, the stars got bigger and closer, and we skipped dinner. Nice way to spend an evening, except for the dinner bit. The top schrund has quite a dubious rappel anchor. The bottom schrund, where incidentally our rock is now situated, we rapped off snowstakes through a waterfall at 1:30. Serendipity. The Milky Way was very bright, but we heeded it not.

If you haven't climbed it yet, but are going to, here are some suggestions: go in a party of two, take the hard hats, be prepared to short rope small sections, go fast, and take two 45 gallon drums of contact cement.

Finally, I'd like to thank Rick for leading the rock pitches, and Claire for that little dinner she gave last Christmas.

*Toughies:* Rick Johnson, Claire Ebendinger  
*Ambivalents:* Chris Odgers  
*Wimps:* Russ Moir, Judy Holm, Derek Fletcher

*The couloir on Foster*

*Claire Ebendinger*

## Mount what? Russell! Where's that?

July 7

Lindsay Elms

Those were the replies I got when I said I was going into Mt. Russell. No doubt a lot of other people will be thinking the same but it is a beautiful 1740m peak on the east coast of the island and from what I could find out it is rarely visited (if at all) as no one I knew had been up there. Mt. Russell as well as the nearby Mt. Palmerston is mentioned in Fairley's book and all he says is "Logging roads up Palmerston Creek leave the Eve River main road 2 km from tidewater and lead to the east slopes of these mountains."

I phoned the Eve River Division of MacBlo and found out that there was active logging going on in the valley but I could go up there after 4:30pm and that I could drive to 750m on the mountain. I arrived up there at 8pm that evening and couldn't even see the mountain because of the mist but around 9pm it cleared and I was able to pick out a route onto the ridge between the steep walls.

I left the truck the next morning at 6:15am and again the mist was shrouding the tops. I climbed through beautiful old growth timber for 250m and then trended to my left through some slide alder and then out into a big scree basin. The basin still had lots of snow in it and for most of the 550m to the summit ridge I was able to stay on it. About 50m from the ridge I entered the mist and visibility was down to roughly 30m. No problem I thought as I'd been able to see the route the night before. From the ridge, two bearings covering a horizontal distance of 750m and then a height gain of 200m should see me on the summit. I started to follow the bearing gradually ascending the ridge but after 20 minutes I reached a high point that dropped off steeply to the east. This is what the map said would happen but then there was no way I climbed 200m and I'd only followed the one bearing. There was no way I could follow the second bearing so I began to wonder exactly where I was. I sat down and pulled out the map and tried

to work out exactly where I'd camped that night and came up with two places. Both creeks went up to the ridge in the same direction and the general topography looked similar. One would put me to the south of the peak while the other would put me to the northwest. What I needed was for the mist to clear even if it was just briefly. I waited for half an hour, nothing, so I started back along the ridge and then miraculously it cleared to the south for about 30 seconds (I still couldn't see the summit of Russell) so I took a bearing off a nearby peak and low and behold I found out that I was to the south of the peak. I was right underneath the main summit without knowing it. Just as well the compass doesn't lie.

I climbed through the bluffs via big bouldery scree slopes and 20 minutes later I was on the true summit. Nothing to be seen not even a summit cairn, an obvious sign that it wasn't regularly frequented. After 10 minutes on top I descended into the back basins and found some wonderful ski terrain dotted with little

alpine tarns still partially frozen. There was also the potential for some interesting rock routes. Back to the ridge and then down into the basin and back to the truck. I was disappointed that I really didn't get to see much but then what I did see warrants a return trip and also to the neighbouring Mt. Palmerston.

Access: From the north Island Highway turn off at the Eve River Division sign and drive past the Headquarters. The road soon forks, the left road is for logging vehicles while the right road (East Main) is for private vehicles. After about 12-13km the two roads again converge. You are now 3km from the dryland sorting yards on Johnstone Straits. Where the two roads converge, turn back up the logging road and after 100m take the East Palmerston Main on your right. After 7km turn right onto the West Palmerston Main, cross a bridge and drive the 3km to the end of the road. Both mountains are an easy day climb from here.

## Mountain Nomads

July 8-13

Greg Gordon

"How was your climb Doug?", I asked. "Fine, a little wet but we got the summit." He and Claire had just climbed Victoria Peak before coming to meet Judy and I at the south end of Buttle Lake.

We were all ready for a week of climbing as we set off along the Price Creek trail toward Cream Lake. Our plan was to try to climb Mt. Septimus, Mt. Rosseau, Big Interior Mtn., The Nine Peaks, and Mt. Tom Taylor on the way out down the Bedwell Lake trail.

We reached Cream Lake in the late afternoon to find that it was frozen solid. Claire and I walked across, not so much to save the effort of going around, but more for the satisfaction of being able to cross in July.

The next day we got off to a late start toward Mt. Septimus. (The true summit, 10 m lower than Rosseau). We picked a gully route that Doug climbed last year. A gully leads to the col between the third and fourth summits from the north. A good route, mostly class 4.

We started up a steep tongue of snow toward the rock wall. The weather turned bad and I felt like a sitting duck anchored to a lightning rod as I belayed the others in a sudden thunder storm. Doug led a second pitch onto the rock but we decided the conditions were not in our favour to go on, so we went down to our camp and spent the rest of the day relaxing under the shelter of a large erratic.

It continued to rain all night and all the next day. The odd break in the clouds sent us out dancing on our shadows in the snow. But this did not last long and when boredom turned to insanity we began giving names to all the insects in our tent.

Day 4 started bright and sunny. We did not want to spend more time trying to climb Septimus so we set off toward Big Interior Mtn. and the Nine Peaks. We followed the route down toward Little Jim Lake and walked across it also. We turned south to the glacier on Big Interior Mtn. where we met a C.O.L.T. party practicing crevasse rescue techniques.

At the top of the glacier we looked for some lost belongings

from a previous trip in February but they were still buried under snow. After a quick lunch we tossed Big Interior Mtn. into our bag of peaks and carried on down its S. Ridge where we set up our camp.

Everyone was feeling strong and, although cloudy, the weather was holding so we decided to climb the Nine Peaks that day. We left camp with lighter packs and pushed onward.

The glacier travel on the Nine Peaks was straight forward. There was no sign of crevasses so we reached the summit block quickly. An easy rock scramble carried us to the misty summit. Hugs were exchanged, cameras clicked and then the cloud began to part. We watched as small windows spread to great vistas. Great fluffy clouds rolled all about us and we sat for two hours watching and enjoying the view.

After a quick sunset glissade down the glacier we were on our way back to our camp. Along the way Doug suggested returning to Nine Peaks the following morning to climb the remaining sub summits. None of us could be persuaded, but he was hungry for rock so he suggested going all the way back to climb Septimus. At first I thought he was nuts, but the idea sank in overnight and I was game.

The fifth day dawned calm and clear. Doug and I began our hike back to Septimus while Judy and Claire enjoyed a more relaxing day and moved the camp as far as Bedwell Lake where Doug and I would meet them later.

By the time we reached Cream Lake we were nearly exhausted but we kept pushing to beat the daylight. By five o'clock we began our climb up the rock. We chose a slightly different start than before, and this led us to some low fifth class rock. It was difficult to protect in places and slowed us down considerably. We found our way back into the main channel of the gully we had originally planned to use and things went smoothly from there. We used the rope on four pitches and dropped our gear at the col to make a quick scramble to the top. We arrived on the summit only minutes before sunset. Doug

searched the cairn he built the year before and found the film canister that he'd left with a note inside. Apparently no one had been here since (that we know of) as his was the only name on the register.

Five minutes later the sun was on its way down and so were we. We down climbed the whole gully without rope to save time and managed to get off the tricky rock before deep darkness. A full moon shone brightly on the snow covered landscape as we walked in silence down to Bedwell Lake. It was a beautiful night and my soul was content.

Apart from plunging through the ice up to my thighs on Little Jim Lake the trip to Bedwell Lake was uneventful. Snow

turned to mud, aromatic trees filled the spaces and we were in camp before 1:00 am. The tent was a welcome sight. Thank you Judy and Claire.

On the final day of our trip we wandered slowly down the mucky trail to our cars. Judy asked me why we camped at Cream Lake to climb the Nine Peaks and why we camped at the Nine Peaks to climb Septimus? Simple. To get a good view from across the valley of the mountain we intended to climb.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Doug Goodman, Greg Gordon, & Judy Holm.*

## Merry Widow Mountain

July 10-11, 1994

Lindsay Elms

We got a call the other day from the Merry Widow inviting us up island for the weekend. Now it is not every day that one gets an invitation from her so we were both eager to pay our respects. She is a bit of a recluse and rarely sees anybody, this could be because not many seek her out. No one knows how long she has lived there but it is rumoured that she has been there since before the raven arrived on Vancouver Island.

Finally the weekend arrived and we made our way to her place. We knocked on her door and she greeted us with a warm embrace. She is a lady with finesse and went all out to please us. Her cloak was aqua blue with the occasional white fleck and a bright golden orb enveloped her.

She invited us to come in, make ourselves comfortable and to stay the night. In her garden we strolled and all the little secrets we saw we took great delight in. Over dinner she told us her story of how she had always lived her life in harmony with her surroundings. The mighty trees, birds and animals both small and large, rocks of different colour and water clear and pure, once made their home around her. But alas a disease had got into her skin and those that had made their home here were vanishing. She said she was beginning to feel old and didn't have the strength to fight the illness that was afflicting her. She was becoming weak and didn't know if she had the ability to continue standing tall and proud. Her world and everything she stood for were crumbling down around her and to us she asked for help.

We left we looked back and could certainly see the disease that was affecting her. We were saddened to see her go this way and said we would do what we could to help her regain her grandeur. She is the queen of the north.

(Merry Widow Mountain is located west of Port McNeill at the head of the Benson Main Road. The mountain has twice been ravaged by industries eager to profit from it. First a large open pit mine has scarred it for life and now the logging desecrates its slopes almost to the alpine. MacBlo staff had flagged a trail to the alpine that starts high up on M1080 branch road and it was this we followed when we climbed the peak..)

*Participants: Elaine Kerr and Lindsay Elms*

## Mt. Septimus

July 15-16

Rob Macdonald

This was to be the "real" Septimus - not that Septimus wanabee called Rosseau. So we set off in fine weather after collecting ourselves at the S end of Buttle's Lake at about 1 p.m. It took a couple of hours to get to Little Bedwell Lake where we took a short break at the tent platforms. About 200m above Little Bedwell we hit snow - a lot of snow - which slowed our march into the big rock at Cream Lake. Cream Lake itself was frozen and covered in a thick blanket of snow, notwithstanding the apparent heat from the sun. Despite our late arrival, Rick still had time to wolf down his Raman noodles and go off exploring up the narrow gully on the W side of Septimus (see Rick Johnson's 1984 Bushwhacker article) to see what he could see through the keyhole at the top. Unlike the butler's case, what Rick saw seemed not to please him.

The next day we set off at 6 am and, based on Rick's reconnaissance, we decided to go up the standard broad gully and try the steep rock buttress to the left at the top of it. Half way up the snowfield, in the middle of nowhere, I found a quarter - Scots heritage, I guess. At the top of the gully I found some glacier goggles which, as it turned out, belonged to Doug Goodman - lucky for him I wear prescription! The route from the top of the broad couloir proved interesting - a traverse into a loose gully was topped by an exposed, loose arete. After half a pitch up the arete, and wondering what was holding some large items in place, I decided that this was not the way for 9 of us. About the same time Tony decided to pitch his camera off the north side to leave a little time-capsule of the first half of the trip -- I'm guessing this should come out at Cream Lake in about 2536 AD or so. We climbed back down the gully where I had an opportunity to see what happens when a volleyball-sized boulder going a few clicks hits a wall, and then we quickly traversed the snow-covered western flanks of Septimus to reach the small rock outcrop below Rosseau. No real difficulties lay between us and this summit which all of us reached just before noon. The dash back to the tent and then out to the car reminded me that Septimus is a two-day trip only for the fit.

*Participants: Julie Thompson, Gerhard Lepp, Pat and Murrough O'Brien, Tony Pugh, Charles Turner, Brian Ross, Rick Epple, Julie Henderson and Rob Macdonald (organizer and porter).*

Mountains, for some obscure reason, never get a say in what names they're given. It's somewhat of a similar position to that of the burbling infant gazing up at his/her adoring parents, imploring them not to lump them with such millstones as 'Letitia', 'Valentine' or 'Astroflash'. It can be argued that wanton christening of peaks is an environmental degradation, somewhere between clear-cutting, open-pit mining and summit gondolas.

Of the myriad Island peaks, a long list could be formed of gross discrepancies 'twixt name and form: Victoria - bulbous, squat and prim persona; Warden - images of some unshaven, dungeon dweller; Colonel Foster - inspiration to see in the raw, but what do we know about the mountain's 'benefactor'?

Perhaps the closest link between name and form is Elkhorn. It stands out boldly among its neighbours as well as sheltering on its flanks a band of forest wanderers with imposing heads and mysterious ways, noble, aloof and sculptured.

The most magnificent of the mountain's sittings has to be, in my book, the classy shot seen from its nearest partner, King's Peak. For those not lucky enough to have ventured there, the photo by Jim Sanford, in Fairley is a tempting substitute for the real drama of Elkhorn. It's seen at it's best at sunrise, and the memory of such a moment, seeing the ridges and faces etched out by the ruddy glow of an early Spring sunrise, makes the timing of a King's Peak trip well worth thinking carefully about.

For our own steps up the monolith, Rick, Gerta and I had chosen a spell of fine, stable weather in late July. For reasons of savouring the full joy of mountain travel I'd opted for a lightweight, fast "day trip". A word of caution is needed here. Any mountain trip, normally taken in two or three days, imposes it's own 'load' on your shoulders when taken in one fell swoop. As you progress through the route, questions rebound in your mind. Where will we be when night falls? Are we prepared to face events as they unfold? The game plan of being back the same day keeps your eye constantly on the watch, not the most enjoyable thing to remember to do in the outdoors.

Our planned route was to go up the long, open ridge that leads from the lower Elk Valley log crossing, to come up to the summit around the imposing gendarme on the NW Ridge.

Three months before, this passage through the lower ravine had been chock full of hopelessly loose, heavy snow. Now the only evidence of one of the biggest snowpacks in memory was the freshly broken branches and rubble littering the slopes. Our ascent to the wide open spaces between King's and Elkhorn went well. However, as we approached the final pyramid itself, our original plan, to repeat an earlier club route (B.W. '93) via a prominent "bicycle ramp" didn't look as clear cut as we'd been led to believe. Knowing the need to use all speed on the way (half

the original party had to shiver overnight in the bush for their sins), we debated for 5-10 minutes, before choosing the more inviting and "known" route via the gully system which rises through the west face.

Without much incident, save for a bonk on the bike helmet (pseudo climbing hat) to remind us that Elkhorn is loose and falling down annually, we scrambled up through the cracks. Here and there we caught fleeting glimpses of Foster and surrounding hills, which spurred us on to see the full view if we could only beat the cloud layers. The final stretches up to the summit, though irritatingly unstable, seemed to drift by in no time. There's a strange sense of elation when you finally know you'll reach a challenging summit, yet still face obstacles to overcome. The barriers appear to melt away from under your feet.

We enjoyed some partial scenes from the top, marveled at the huge drop down the S. Face into Cervis Creek and reflected on the bonds of the climber's fraternity. To us some unknown person was brought to "life" by the memorial plaque, left by mourning friends, to a young man mysteriously cut from them in his prime. Whoever it was didn't seem to matter, just that friends, with whom he'd enjoyed the mountains wanted to capture for others their mutual joy and sadness at their loss.

We left the summit later than we should have at 5:30 and crashed our way down the gullies, out onto the remnant snowfields below. The exhilaration of glissading rapidly down those sunny, open slopes was a tonic to get us through the wooded bluffs above Landslide Flats. We wandered our own route heading towards the tents we could occasionally see far, far below. Three hours of frequent bush rappels found us thrashing through the undergrowth in gathering gloom, somewhere near the roar of the hidden river. Rick and I crossed together, he brave enough to go barefoot, something my feet seriously objected to. Gerta had meanwhile found her own crossing higher up, but with whistles and yodels we soon re-established ourselves as a team and set off down the darkened trail.

By now we were TIRED and the prospect of a bivvy was front and centre. The legs voted for rest but the soul wanted the distant comforts of the van. So, with headlamps ready, a satiated trio ground out the final hours down the vague trail we peered at. We made landfall at the welcome parking lot at 12:30 and savoured the luxury of a comfy mattress and Rick's cool beer. We slept well after 19 1/2 hours on the move!

*Participants: Russ Moir, Gerta Smythe, Rick Roe*

## Nahmint Mountain

August 15

Doug Goodman

From Sandy's, with a short stop in Nanaimo to see if Dennis M. was coming, Beverly Main was reached in an easy five hours. Thick bush was rumoured, otherwise we knew of the route only the map's indication of a 3.5 Km gently sloping NE ridge, accessible by 2WD to ca. 800 m. The most demanding climbing, both technically and physically, was through a 1000 m or so of blowdown (ca. 1500-2700 ft elev.). Got some caulks? A look of great determination gripped Sandy's face. Perseverance and a short refueling stop saw us through to the tree line at 3500 in 3 hours and to the summit in 4.5. The rock offers good scrambling and bouldering. Another tube of soggy paper convinced me to carry a waterproof register on future climbs. Views from the top are probably excellent. We saw glimpses of lake to the SW, and

5040 Pk. to the W. Whines of logging equipment drifted up from the Nahmint river. We returned down the NE ridge, removing ribbons along the way, until 3500 ft, where we made a right turn down the SE side of the mountain towards Beverly creek. Old ribbons led us onto a slippery slab over bluffs. After a careful traverse back into the bush we were not surprisingly bluffed out. A short rappel led to another 90 minutes of a bit of bush and blowdown and a dash of slash before landing on the road within 15 min. of our car (8.5 hrs. round trip). though unseen, I recommend the NW or SE ridges.

Participants: Sandy Briggs, Doug Goodman

## Triple Peak

August 23

Doug Goodman

The week before Sandy's glorious ascent, he and John, Lindsay, and I made a non-glorious ascent of Cat's Ears Creek Road and the slopes south of the Effingham/Cat's Ears pass. The road was barely drivable 1/4 of the way in, walkable another 1/2, and bushwhackable the final 1/4 to the pass. Fine berries, no bears. A very slippery and steep bush bash up to the alpine ridge NW of the 3 peaks left us (at 1 p.m., 6-hr. post-start) in clouds, tired and without sufficient daylight for a peak and return to truck. No interest in dark bush bashing. As we descended the clouds cleared showing us a new road directly below us, at a point it had taken us 2.5 hr to hike to. Sandy returned with Don Berryman the next

week to this road (Marion Main) which now goes to the head of Marion Creek, and nabbed the central and highest peak via a 4th class route on the north Face. Hey John, how about that trip home? We ran half the way to Port A. then spent half the night in Duncan. And Lindsay, do you go to that pub in Coombs often? I do admit that the tales of exotic mountaineering almost made up for the gooey liguine.

Participants Sandy Briggs (instigator), Lindsay Elms (driver), John Pratt (flagman), Doug Goodman (student)

## Warden Peak

August 26 - 27

Rex Andrew

Sealed in my tiny ripstop nylon cocoon, I listened to the rain splatter across my shelter. Rain. More rain. Maybe I should stop moaning and learn to accept it, learn to accept *this* as the Northwest mountain experience. After all, wasn't I a NW native? Hadn't I learned *yet* to become "one" with this incessant grey drizzle? One would think I was half-way there, what with the pallor of a mushroom, moss developing on my back and webs growing between my fingers. I should be accustomed to rain by now. I should become one with these bleary liquid skies.

But I haven't. And as I lay in my bivy sac, the weather forecast replayed endlessly in my mind like the taunts of schoolyard bullies: 10% chance of rain on Saturday, 0% on Sunday. Of course, I didn't believe it. Throughout June, July and particularly August, my mountain trips had been the foci of particularly foul weather. But PMP assured me that *his* mountains trips had only had the best and brightest weather, and, since his karma was strong, things would turn out okay.

PMP, SZ and I were perched just below the Victoria glacier. We had followed the survey ribbons up the faint waytrail to a bench, where a well-flagged line took us off course and

straight into the cirque below the tarn. Under thickening clouds, we crossed the cirque and continued up the prominent gully that drained between Warden and the Victoria glacier. The gully walls, however, converged to a narrow bottleneck where we found a waterfall blocking a dihedral rock step. Impasse. So we backtracked and ascended the rightside gully wall (nearly everywhere vertical rock) via hand-over-hand maneuvers up a 60° moss-lined trench of bush, with an exit traverse via Tarzan-like swings on scrub juniper branches. A light rain started (we expected that -- 10% chance, right?) as we pushed up through more brush and easier cliff bands to a small rocky meadow above and well beyond the tarn, and immediately under the final rock band below the glacier. Here we made camp.

Much later, when the splatter of rain stopped, I had to look out: I wanted *so much* to believe the forecast. A vast clotted ceiling had built up overhead, stretching off to the west in soggy furrows of grey, slate blue and lavender. Monstrous white blobs were oozing unsteadily up the valleys like those shapes in a horizontal lava-lamp. Only to the north, out over Sayward, was there a rent in the ceiling, and through it I could see a patch of powder blue.

I stared hard at that tiny patch of blue, as if in so doing I could make that rent expand, reverse the jet stream, and drive away these gathering clouds. I stared at it until my vision tunneled and my eyes ached. I stared at it until I fell asleep. Sometime later I was awakened when fresh rain struck my face, and I sealed myself back inside for the night.

In the middle of the night, though, I awoke to absolute stillness. So quiet, in fact, that my mind began racing with the hope of clearing weather. I had to look again. Zip. A demoralizing sight: summits enveloped in fog against a cloud-choked sky. But even as I watched, a billow detached from the peak, cartwheeled overhead, became self-luminous, and suddenly dissolved away, revealing a perfect vignette of stars! The display was gone a moment later, but another soon appeared off to the right. Again and again the clouds re-enacted this delicate theater. I watched for at least an hour, mesmerized by colliding visions of starry skies and memories of sunny climbs. Maybe this time .....

Sunday morning we awoke at 05:00 in a "cloud sandwich", a thin horizontal layer of visibility compressed between a bloated ceiling above and thick white stuff overflowing the valleys below. But it was dry at our level. Perhaps this moment was our "0% chance of rain"! We climbed quickly up the rock terraces below the glacier to the Warden-Victoria col and swung over to confront the route.

Jack Fisher had filled me with ominous tales of a loose, scary, unprotectable "fourth class" gully with hair-raising exposure. Possibly, but we wouldn't have known: a SE wind had cleared the clouds from the south side of the summit block, but had left an eddying cauldron of dense fog in the lee, and the looming silhouette of the north face was a featureless shadow above us *except* for the wet gleam of moisture glinting from a myriad of rock facets. Wet rock and a bad rep were enough to persuade us to simul-climb on running belays up the gully. I led on our first 9mm, with PMP at the junction, and SZ at the rear of our second 9mm.

The rock was surprisingly good with plenty of reasonable holds, but very few opportunities to protect. I succeeded in placing some smaller pieces (#6 stopper up to a #3 hex), mostly as an academic effort. As soon as I popped onto the summit platform, I anchored to a nearby boulder and brought the others up. While I was belaying, the fog continued to thicken, spitting first rain and then little clots of snow onto me. This, of course, was our "0% chance", our window through the clouds. *This* was our

best and brightest. I shivered and took lousy pictures of fog diffracted through the raindrops on my camera lens.

We signed the register in boiling fog at about 11:30 and rappelled back down the gully in two full-length rappels. Here we were caught by a pair of Campbell River climbers who were day-tripping Warden. As they passed us, a hard squall hit. Water running off our helmets, we turned the west ridge and rappelled the last short section, PMP meanwhile fending off a flying grapefruit-sized rock with an instinctive *jodan uke* block (and without breaking his arm!)

The Campbell River pair summited, caught up with us on the rock terraces and accompanied us back through the cliff bands. PMP took a direct route and made the first descent of a more challenging variation possibly called *Oh yuck it's a drippy slimy mess here*. We conferred at high camp, reassuring each other that the "standard route" down contours above the tarn, connects to the flagged waytrail to/from Victoria's west side, and drops through cliff bands to the point where we had left it the day before. We hastily packed, took a last glimpse to memorize the lay of the land, and started down. It was raining steadily now.

Descent through bush is tedious, but in the rain it holds a particularly unique cachet of misery. Zillions of tiny needles and leaves rallied to douse us with their precious thimblefuls of ice-cold water. Downsloping branches and vines became launch-pads that sent us on wild, careening bum-slides. Mossy hollows turned bottomless and poured grungy beer-colored water into our boots. Sod-overhangs and slimy log jams wrestled us down and dumped us into the mud. "0% chance of rain," replayed the taunts in my head.

Back at SZ's car, in a grey twilight rain, PMP admitted that this had been the *wettest* ACC trip he had ever been on. I managed a sympathetic smile, watching the eternal rhythm of the windshield wipers --- *and seeing only that last distant patch of powder blue sky* .....

Postscript: As I write this, it's raining again. It could be June or August or October. Curtains of rain are slashing down outside my window. The sand in the hourglass is draining slowly away. I watch the half-light fade from grey to black as another day escapes -- but this time, I can tick Warden off the list.

*Participants: Rex Andrew, Pedro Montoya-Pelaez, Sheldon Zakreski*

## Some Don'ts, Not Many Do's

"Go Carefully", not a frequently used adage for a beachwalk between Nootka Sound and Hot Springs Cove, but hindsight has proven it to be appropriate.

A little walk - 50 miles - along our isolated west coast sounded just like what we needed to get the cobwebs out of our legs, so we trailered our 12' Zodiac to Tlupana Inlet just north of Gold River and proceeded down Nootka Sound and across to Scalante Point on the north side of Hesquet Peninsula. We felt quite confident about leaving our outboard and inflatable pulled up behind some big logs (1st "don't") and proceeded happily down a trail past incredible Cedar giants of approximately 20' in

Murrough O'Brien  
variety of marine life in the tidal pools. As the tide came in we were forced to hike above the high tide mark and it slowly became apparent that we were following the prints of either one bear taking many trips or worse, many bears taking fewer trips.

Whistling seemed like a good thing to do at this time and it became embarrassing how often we could whistle the same bad tune. But it worked since we did hear a number of crashings in the underbrush as big and clumsy animals fled rather than put up with that annoyance. We also began to follow a lot of wolf and what appeared to be cougar prints for mile after mile along a narrow corridor between high water and the underbrush.

which unfortunately for our comfort level, was only a couple of feet off this bruin route (2nd "don't"). Now tenting so close to a bear pathway is not anyone's choice spot; however, the thought of hiking by flashlight over slippery logs and rocks did not sound nice either. The food bag we placed at the end of a long pole well off the ground and out of sight of the test. (If a bear is trying to get your food during the night, you don't want to know about it.)

Our third big "don't" was to camp near a large Styrofoam fisherman's float. Sometime around 2 a.m. we woke up in horror as a bear was tearing, biting, snorting, punching, ripping, and mauling this three foot block into a pile of packing chips. Then he went past our tent and left some impressive claw marks on our food pole. It turned out that bears in this area love to tear apart Styrofoam, so all white floats used as trail markers have lots of bites taken out of them; likewise hanging bleach bottles are often flattened and look like they're peppered with buckshot. Incidentally, we heard that bears here like to destroy inflatable boats whenever they can sink their claws into them! The next morning as we tried to nonchalantly fold up our tent, I found a number of bear paddies under the ground sheet. I think if I had been able to see that number of droppings in the fading light, I would have happily hiked all night long.

Near Hesquet there are some areas that would make excellent campsites, however it is Indian land and they understandably don't (#4) care for campers on their property. There is also a beautiful wide and long sandy beach at the head of Hesquet Harbour. As we were hiking along it, a pilot from Powell River landed his little plane on the sand. He had flown to Courtenay, picked up his girlfriend and had taken her to the west coast for a

date.

There are many interesting things to see on this hike: a pictograph on a beach rock, fascinating beachcombing, Estivan Lighthouse (supposedly shelled during the war by the U.S. Navy masquerading as Japanese so Canada would rise to the anti-Japanese sentiment). We also saw a lot of ancient canoe trees, cedars where planks had been taken from them, and one with very old rough axe marks. The former homestead of the late Cougar Annie who (some say) murdered 3 or 4 of her approximately 6 husbands is close to the beach. Husband number one is buried under a big Rhododendron tree in her garden.

On day 5 at Boat Basin we ran into a complication; we had completed nearly 3/4 of the hike but we were told by a resident that even if we did complete the hike to the hot springs we would not be allowed to fly back to Escalante Point. There now didn't seem much point in hiking further. We waited for a day until a pre-arranged seaplane brought in a passenger and we then had the pilot take us back to our starting point, only 7 1/2 air-miles away. The resident who had arranged the flight turned to us and said, "This flight is on my account and if you want to fly out you will have to pay me \$200.00." Pat wrote out the cheque and we very happily left that episode behind us, though on our return home we sent the "opportunist" a cheque for a more reasonable amount as suggested by the pilot.

The plane landed near Escalante Point; we hiked a short couple of miles to our Zodiac and to our relief found it was intact. We loaded up and set off down the inlet as the perfect weather we had enjoyed for the whole week deteriorated into rain and choppy sea conditions.

## Warden Peak or Mr. Moose and the Tumbling Glacier

Sept. 2-4

Gerhardt Lepp

It was a warm sunny day in Sept. It had been a good summer of climbing. We could do no wrong. At the Sayward turnoff we took a wrong turn and wandered around on logging roads for an hour. So much for overconfidence.

The next task after finding the road to the mountain was to bushwhack up two thousand feet through the usual blueberries and white rhododendrons. Ian Brown's long legs carried him so easily through the rhodos that he became "Mr. Moose".

Camp was made on a beautiful little lake that reflected the impressive shapes of Warden and Victoria. Everyone insisted on camping on the side of the lake that had no flat tent spots. Many times that night I woke up crumpled in the bottom corner of the tent and climbed back up onto the thermarest to start the next slow slide. Greg Gordon was very proud of his Shoe-Goo strips that kept him stuck firmly to the slope.

The steep north gully of Warden kept us entertained the next day as Gerta bagged her last Island Qualifier peak. As we started down, the glacier calved and shed a mass of ice. Like moths circling a flame we seemed to be drawn toward the site of the slide and everyone eventually passed below the line of broken ice. We could do no wrong.

At camp that night we had a celebration for Gerta to honour her achievement in climbing all nine of the Island Qualifiers. Gerta recalled her memories of the climbs, Judy

presented Gerta with a bouquet of mountain flowers and I recited the following Eskimo kayaking song. Way to go Gerta.

The great sea has set me in motion  
Set me adrift,  
And I move as a weed in the river.

The arch of sky  
And mightiness of storms  
Encompasses me,  
And I am left  
Trembling with joy.

Participants: Gerta Smythe Judy Holmes, Ian & Margaret Brown, Greg Gordon, Julie Thompson, Richard Keltie, Kayla Stevenson, Gerhardt Lepp

## Steamboat Mountain

September 16-17

Tom Gleeson

This was my first sojourn into the mountains of Vancouver Island and my first affiliation with the Alpine Club and although an extremely pleasant experience I quickly made two realizations: that Bushwhacker is a very apt name for this journal and that the sun doesn't always shine on the West Coast (my first few weeks in Victoria were glorious). Coming from the limestone crags and well-marked hiking trails of Ontario really wasn't a good background for this type of mountaineering after all.

We left Victoria early Saturday morning and cruised up past Port Alberni under fair skies. The rewards of the approach included stops in this limestone formation area where a rocks looked more like wildly eroded gigantic sand castles than limestone crags and hiking above the tree line having views to the ocean and in most other directions. We camped by a nice alpine lake below Steamboat Mountain.

The next morning Doug Goodman, Mike Hubbard and myself scrambled up to the summit and we were greeted by a view of about 20 ft past the cairn upon getting to the top. We took a compulsory summit photo, had some gorp and then headed down to descend with the rest of the group. The descent was a lot of bushwhacking but we also found a dried stream bed which we followed. The company was all fun and we ended the great outing at the Mexican Restaurant in Nanaimo; a excellent and welcoming introduction to the Alpine Club.

*Participants: Tom Gleeson, Leanne Seibel, Bev Fletcher, Tom Wilson, Mike Hubbard, George Smekal, Doug Goodman (coordinator)*

## Strathcona Park

Sept. 30 - Oct. 1

Wayne Sawtell

We awoke at 5 a.m. rubbing our eyes in disbelief at how dark and early it was. Without eating breakfast, we drove for 5 hours north to - WAIT! STOP! This is all wrong! Nobody wants to hear this! Remember ?? - Oh, yeah, I forgot. OK. OK!

Going up island with Greg and Cristobal, with Greg driving and leading the expedition. As I listened to the banter between these two, I started to wonder if we were going to get to the right place.

*Greg:* So, what's the name of that place we're going to? Some park?

*Cristobal:* I dunno, man.

*Greg:* Wasn't it something like Stacoma Park?

*Cristobal:* No, I think it was Stadacona Park.

*Wayne:* Hey, Greg, could I look at your map of B.C. for a second?

*Greg:* Sure.

I thought that the only park around was Strathcona Park. And, yes, as I checked the map there was no Stadacona Park. Later, these jokers finally let on that they were joking. Apparently, Stadacona Park is in Victoria.

We reached the first ridge fairly quickly after ascending the pretty steep first part of the mountain. Doug and Greg stopped at an "el primo" spot with a view and waited for me, John, and Cristobal. We had an awesome view of Lake Buttle, a huge artificially created lake, like most lakes in B.C. Greg and Doug pointed out all the peaks across the lake which they had climbed. Greg pointed out "his island" (the one which he recognized to be an island and not just a promontory when boating with his wife one time, while all the other boaters on the lake had no idea. He and his wife apparently were able to relax in total privacy in the channel). By that time, however, the powers that be at the dam had arbitrarily lowered the water level in Buttle Lake since the year before Greg discovered his island. The island had almost become an isthmus and the shore was inaccessible by boat because of the silt deposited by the river coming down the mountain. The

siltation made a pretty pattern, though, in the water.

We had almost reached the elevation which we had planned to do that day (about 1,400 m out of 1,600 m) in about three hours. The rest of the hike to the campsite was easy going. Thus, when we got there, we all decided to go on for another hour. However, the new campsite which was selected was high on a seemingly exposed ridge on rocky ground. Fortunately, as it turned out, the winds were from the south, and so we were protected by the top of the ridge. Later in the evening I pointed out that a thick fog was moving toward our camp. Someone objected, saying that these were clouds!

*Someone else:* No, it looks like fog to me!

*Someone else:* Clouds, fog, it's the same thing!

*Cristobal:* I dunno, man. It has real fog-like qualities.

Attempting to divert the discussion to something else. Doug said something about the lake down below. "Shark Lake," a beautiful lake but, as it turned out, another source of jokes. Doug said, "I wish I brought my rod." Then Greg said, "Oh, really, Doug? You mean you can leave it behind?"

The conversation quickly descended to another level.

*Doug:* Yeah, haven't you heard that they've developed a detachable penis?

*Greg:* Oh, yeah, it has threads and you just screw it in. My wife really likes it.

Laughter all around. later, my faith in humanity was restored somewhat when we started talking about Doug's job and Ph.D. project about some microscopic biological organisms that help trees to survive.

That night the weather took a turn for the worse and we got some blowing snow. Originally, we had planned on climbing Auger Pt. Mt. and Mt. Mitchell. However, we "whimpered out" because Mitchell was just too far away and tricky to get to. That night we decided to summit Auger Pt. Mt. and Sid Watts Peak. "Who the hell is Sid Watts?" someone asked. Greg explained that he was a pioneer climber on Vancouver Island and is still

around. Better than naming peaks after monarchs, I figure. The next day the weather took a turn for the worse, and we got blowing snow. Thus, we decided only to climb to the top of Auger Pt. Mt. Cristobal opted to say behind and relax instead. We were worried about the tents blowing away in our absence, it was that bad. Then Greg said, "We've got Cristobal to hold ours down. He's still sleeping inside it."

On the way up there were blueberry patches galore, so I stopped and indulged a bit. I discovered new evidence relating to the age old question, "Does a bear shit in the woods?" I came across a purple blob containing half-digested blueberries sitting on a rock. So, a bear does definitely shit in the mountains, anyway.

At the summit the snow became worse, blowing horizontally. After taking a few photos for posterity, we made our way down. However, on the way down Doug and Greg got into an argument about whether or not one should knock down the cairns marking the trail on one's way down. Greg said, "No, because

people are expecting the route to be cairned and may depend on them for their survival." Doug said, "Yes, because people who don't know how to use a map and compass should not be hiking in the mountains alone." Ironically, in the meantime, because of the poor visibility, I fell behind the other three and missed a turn and strayed off toward Sid Watts Peak. Fortunately, I had a compass, and when things got to be unrecognizable, I took it out and realized I had gone the wrong way. Making my way back I met Greg who had come back to look for me. No problem.

The excitement over, we packed up camp and started the downward trek. We got totally soaked as the snow turned to rain. As usual going down was faster and a lot of fun. However, I personally felt my legs getting extremely tired and sore, of course due only to the extra climbing I had done when I had got lost (wink, wink, nudge, nudge). Nevertheless, when each of us reached the road, we howled out in triumph and relief.

## Douglas Peak

September 11-12, 1994

Elaine Kerr

After a second attempt at getting to El Captain and Landale, and being turned away by a locked gate and company personnel who acted like there was a war on, we gave up and headed back north to more familiar and friendly territory.

We had lost a day traveling down island, so there was little to do but a day trip. We drove the 10 km of Thistle Main from the Bamfield Road out of Port Alberni and arrived at the trail to Father and Son Lake, from where we planned to climb Douglas Peak.

The short well kept trail led from the logging road to the two lakes, a popular fishing hangout for locals. It was a beautiful spot, and we decided to circle the lake to the other side to catch the evening sun. The trail followed the lake shore, with many signs of campfires and good times. The beer cans and fishing tackle bags kept us aware that we weren't alone out there.

We arose early for the ascent to the ridge running up to Douglas Peak. We began with the sun rising over the ridge and the gentle hum of chainsaws rising from below. The going was easy, through beautiful open spaced old growth. There was little sign that anyone had this way, not even any flagging tape to show that people had checked it out before us. Only deer prints and bear scats.

As we approached the summit, at 1,490 m, I was concerned that the views would be blocked by trees, as it was still sub alpine. However, the first thing we saw as we arrived was that some trees had been cut. Someone had actually carried out the concern of so many, that you just have to clear a few trees and the view would be better.

It turned out the trees had been cut to provide a clear signal and good access for the repeater station on the summit. And a helicopter landing pad so no one really has to bother hiking up.

We hung around for awhile thinking we might be able to hitch a ride out. But I guess if they didn't have room in the chopper for the cement footing formers that were left over from building the platform, they probably wouldn't have room for us.

The views on all sides revealed a panorama of Vancouver Island mountain peaks. We noted the many trees still standing on the nearby slopes. Funny how different people looking at the same scene can interpret it so differently. Why, some people might feel an overwhelming urgency that so few slopes remain unscathed, that the very mountain which has just delighted them with its wonders may be next to lose its life. But there were a few treed slopes left, proving that, at least until they are gone, clearcutting is sustainable.

It was a quick descent, trying to get to the road for the lunch hour when we anticipated fewer logging trucks to be moving around. Being such a short hike, we had lots of room in our packs for the load of garbage collected en route. It only seems right that since we were using their land we should help out and pick up the plastic 12 gauge cartridges and half burned meat stew tins scattered in the bushes.

We looked back at the mountain as we left, noting the remarkable alpine meadows sloping up to the peak. Hard to tell apart from the clearcuts really. I wonder what chance the meadows have of surviving when the trees are gone from above? They were once a habitat of the rare Vancouver Island marmot, with only empty burrow systems left now to remind us of their past here. What made them leave? Perhaps our presence around Douglas was just a bit too much for them.

Participants: Lindsay Elms and Elaine Kerr

## Mount Donner

September 18-19

Charles Turner

We arranged to meet at Bino's Restaurant in Courtenay. Three of us were inside the restaurant while the rest waited outside in the parking lot. We came out after 45 minutes wondering where everyone was. There they were. Next meeting place Chemere Restaurant Gold River. No problem there. We leave the restaurant to head for the trailhead. The last car in the line somehow turned left when the rest of us turned right. We noticed his mistake so stopped to wait (for 1 1/2 hours). We finally gave up and headed out of Gold River on the Vcona main; then turned off on V21 which follows north side of Pamela Creek. We found the missing people camped at the end of the road. They had snuck by us in town on back roads and had been given directions by hunters.

After spending a chilly night on the logging road, we followed the creek up from the logging road and then into the

forest, which was beautiful old growth with many large trees and plenty of good-looking mushrooms. The trail stays on the north side of creek. We came across an elk trail which we followed for awhile, until it became obvious the elk were not heading for Mount Donner. Then it was into the slide alder and blueberry bushes, until we came out into the alpine with a fine view of our route up. But do not be fooled, the real summit is hidden behind somewhere.

Once again we lost the same vehicle on the way home.

We arranged to meet at Strathcona Park Lodge for dinner. They never did show up. Perhaps Big Foot got 'em...

*Participants: Doug Goodman, Julie Thomson, Brian Ross, Andrew Simpson, Richard Gage, Barb Brooks, Frank Willie, Denis Vacha, Charles Turner*

## Lanelcapivice

September 20, 1994

Lindsay Elms

The weather for the month of September was so good that I really couldn't keep myself out of the mountains. Working as an instructor at S.P.L. I spend all of my work days out in the mountains. You would think that on days off, one would normally go anywhere but their place of work but no not me although I do try and get out of Strathcona Park. In August I had tried to get into Mt. Landale via Cottonwood Creek but because of fire danger the logging roads were closed so this I decided to try the via the Chemainus River.

I waited until late in the afternoon so as to avoid meeting the logging trucks and then managed to drive high up on the eastern side of Mt. Landale. I had brought a few supplies from the Dairy Queen at Ladysmith, and on the summit of Landale in the last rays of the sun, I had dinner. That night it was clear as a bell out and the lights of Vancouver were almost bright enough to be able to read a book by. Later, the full moon cast its spotlight on me so that everybody in Vancouver, Nanaimo and Chemainus, could see me perform one of my best performances ever of the "Wolf howling serenade."

Next morning I left almost everything on the summit and went as light as possible off to Mt. El Capitan. From the top of the gully coming up from Lomas Lake I tried to follow the ridge up onto El Capitan but found steep rock bluffs, foolhardy stuff when going solo. I traversed down and around on the south side

of the bluffs and then regained the ridge. An easy walk then led me onto the summit.

Now I wanted to get across to Mt. Service. The west ridge down off El Capitan into the saddle was relatively easy but it was not really a pleasant stroll. There were several bluffs to climb around and it wasn't nice open old growth, more like young fallen saplings (they were probably a little bit bigger than that). The climb up onto Mt. Service was much the same sort of terrain and in a short while I was sitting up beside the summit cairn. Clear views all around of the mountains as well as unobstructed views of some of the most heavily logged areas on the island. It would have been pleasant up there if it wasn't for the constant sound of whistles all around me and these weren't from the marmots.

After twenty minutes on top I descended back down to the saddle but I instead of going back up onto El Capitan, I traversed around to the south and soon gained the Lomas Lake trail. This was much easier than thrashing through the bush. I was soon at Lomas lake and from there I just followed the flagged trail up the gully passed the old mine shaft and back onto the summit of Mt. Landale. It was a round trip of five hours and I was quite glad it was all down hill from here. It was a fast trip and not the normal time that a Lanelcapivice Ridge traverse would take but I needed to blow the cobwebs out after tromping around at work all the time with a heavy pack.

## Nine Peaks in Nine Years?

Gerta Smythe

After climbing Warden Peak last August, we had a little celebration by the lake to honour my achievement of climbing all I.Q.'s. It's nice to know that I am now a 'qualified' mountaineer; but it is even nicer that I am still able to climb and that I have such good friends who are willing to invite me along...

Many years ago, when I was a teenager in Austria, I joined the Alpine Club there. I cycled to the mountains in those days and did my first climb, hindered by our traditional dress. But I

and the wonder of a tiny flower peeking out from under a cushion of snow.

I came to Canada as a young woman and soon gravitated to the mountains. I lived in Jasper for almost ten years and managed to climb the odd mountain while having four babies. But life in Jasper was great, I raised our three sons on the ski hill and nursed our daughter while sitting in the heather.

There followed many years of exile. I did not know about

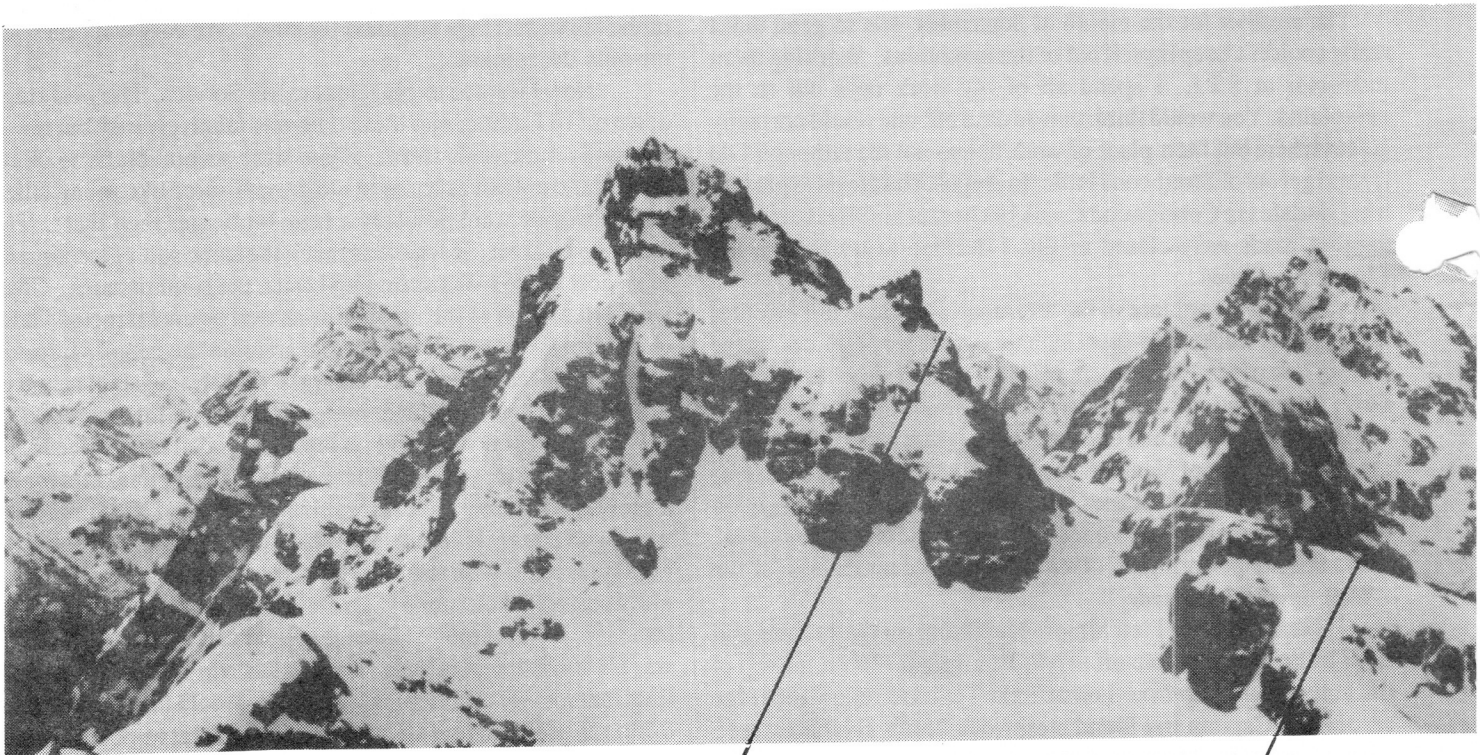
# Strathcona Park

Photo by T

Golden Hinde

Elkhorn Mt.

Rambler Pk.

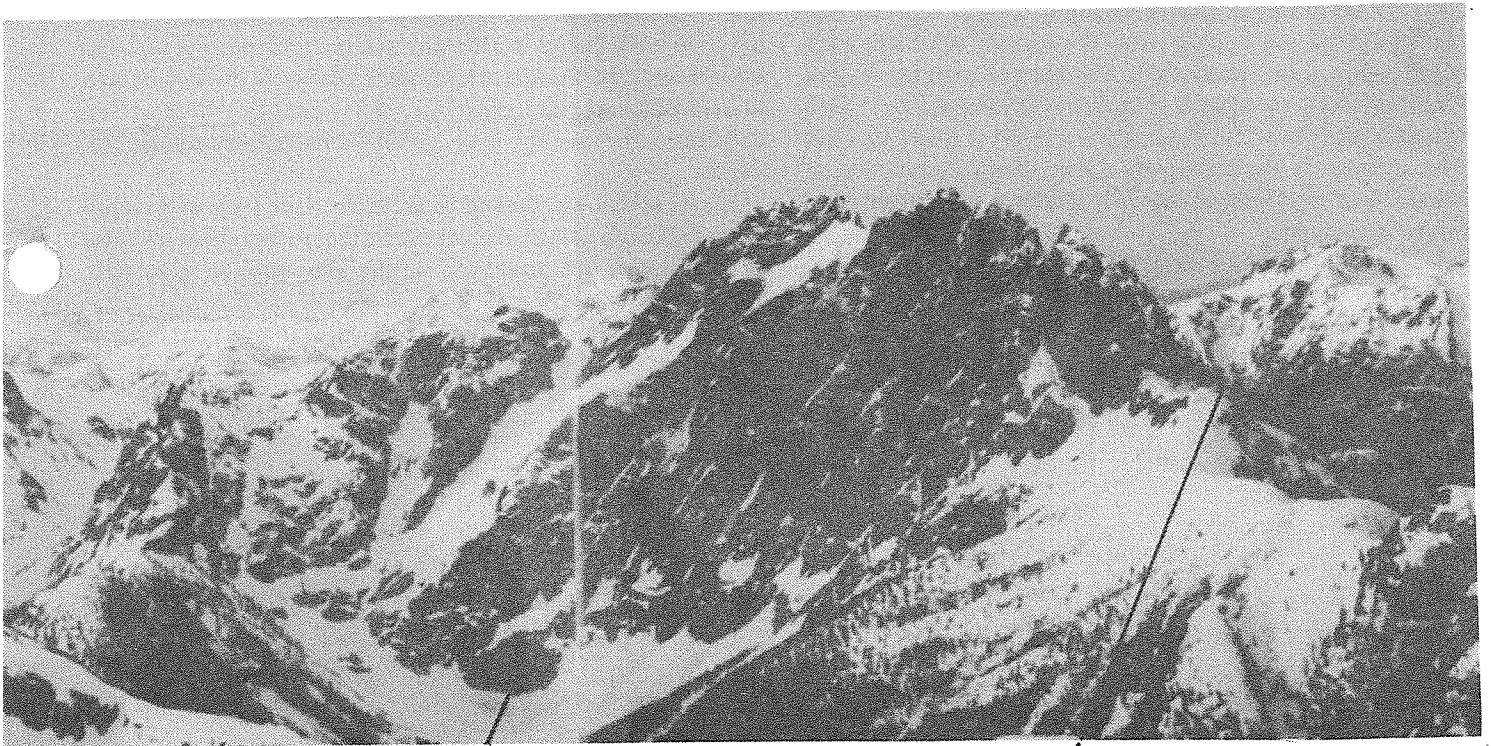


"Bicycle Ramp"

NW Ridge

**Tom King's Peak**  
*by Pugh*

Colonel Foster



Iceberg Lake

Shoulder bivy site

meets and baseball games to realize how much I missed 'the air above the ground.' Then I saw an ad 'To Climb the Golden Hinde' with the FMCBC. I saw this beautiful picture of an alpine meadow in full bloom; I signed up for the trip and soon became a part of that picture! Jim Rutter was our leader, we crossed Strathcona Park from the Elk River to the Western Mines and climbed the Golden Hinde en route. I met Syd Brown and his septuagenarian friends on this trip as well as the Brown Family. Both parties left a lasting impression: the first for their strength and endurance, and the second one for doing this wonderful thing as a family. After having climbed in the Alps and in the Rockies, I had come to rely on huts and hostels; now I learned the beauty of independence. By carrying your gear on your back, you could make your home wherever the terrain permitted or nightfall dictated. Our campsites were always idyllic, often by a lake, always to be swum in (sometimes just for a quick dip!), when ice floes warned of the real temperature. Every time we crested a ridge, I discovered new mountains and I was told "Yes, this is still Vancouver Island." Now, after nine years, I am beginning to recognize familiar peaks and I have started to greet them like old friends.

Victoria Peak was my next I.Q., although I still did not know then of the significance of these mountains. We were four in the party and 'day-tripped' from the logging road: Margaret and Ian Brown, young Beau and I. All went well until I took a fast glissade on an icy snowpatch, bruised my insides on a large rock and totally wimped out for two hours. I was just so glad to be alive and to my surprise, the Browns are still inviting me on their trips. I was able to climb Colonel Foster, Mt. Harmston, Nine Peaks and Warden with them.

In 1992, I climbed Rugged Mountain with Sandy Briggs

and Don Berryman as a 'Winter First Ascent' on a beautiful weekend in February. The weather deteriorated and we quickly touched the summit in a whiteout, but I shall never forget the clear crisp day that showed us this beautiful mountain on our approach. (Well, I have a lovely photo hanging on my wall; one of many others!)

Rob Macdonald was the leader to Mt. Septimus. It was a trip in September; I found a lot of new mushrooms with the help of Rudy Brugger and to my surprise, Chris Holm helped me eat them. I am sure none of my children would have been so brave. We camped by magical Cream Lake, marveled at the constellations in the sky and had to take turns standing on the tiny summit on the next day, since there were so many of us.

In 1994, I came back from Nepal, forgetting my disappointment of altitude sickness and missed summit opportunities there by dreaming of climbing Vancouver Island's most difficult climbing challenge. I was lucky to have had Ian Brown and Reinhard Illner as my rope partners. Their experience and my own personal fitness made the long climb and the chilly bivouac one of my most cherished memories. After the successful climb of the Colonel, I knew that the completion of the I.Q.'s was in my reach. The same fall we climbed Mt. Harmston. The summit itself a bit of a rubble heap; but the way to it most memorable with the hazardous drive, the beautiful Comox Glacier, a boletus the size of a loaf of bread, that fed all my camping partners, the deep blue of Millar Lake and the long circuitous route back around Mt. Argus.

Last year we climbed Nine Peaks on the long weekend in July. The Browns had reconnoitered the perfect route up from Bedwell Lake. We scrambled up the lofty summit ridge after



*IO Celebrations on Warden Peak*

*Gorhardt Lenn*

traversing endlessly long snowfields and camped that night by lovely tarns in karst-like rock and surprising bunches of heather.

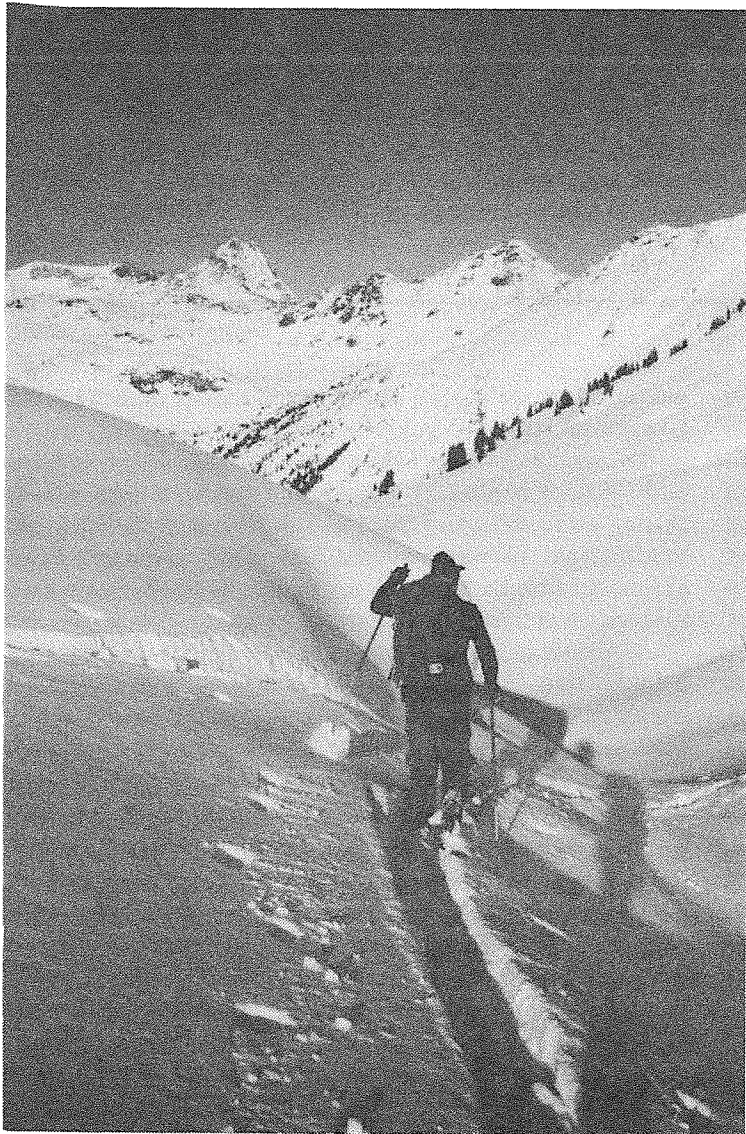
Later in July, I 'day-tripped' Elkhorn with Russ Moir and Rick Roe. It was a lengthy approach, a blissful climb, a late summit and an amazing descent through tiny gaps in a forbidding cliff system. Although I am used to working twelve hours in my hospital job, those 18 hours on Elkhorn left me a little tired and lagging behind on the dark trail out to the van.

In August, I finished my quest by climbing Warden Peak, again with Ian Brown as leader. His route-finding skills are legendary; the climbing on dry rock so much fun, that we forgot

to use our ropes. The weather was so perfect, that we lounged and danced on the summit, making up for all those other windy and stormy times, when a handshake is often the only stopping we allow ourselves.

After I realized that my husband just could not share my love of the mountains, I swallowed my disappointment and told myself I just had to stay in shape until my children grow up. After they grew up and showed no interest, I was lucky to find new friends who shared my dreams, and a husband who allows me to follow them. All I have to do now is stay in shape until my grandchildren grow up. Some of them are already born!

## Coast Mountains & The Rockies



### Mt. Rohr

January 21-23

Margaret Brown

This trip is one of many accessible from the Duffy Lake Road. It can actually be done as a day trip if you are in the Whistler-Pemberton area. As we were starting from Victoria we chose to stretch it out leaving town Saturday morning and skiing into a campsite at 6,000 ft. just above the treeline. This took about 3 1/2 hours from the road.

From the campsite we looked across the valley to Cayoosh Peak (8,500 ft.), another delightful ski objective and into the upper reaches of Marriot Basin. Aspen or Marriot Peak (9,015 ft.) is at the northern end of the Basin and Mt. Rohr (8,000 ft.) is at the south western end. We were extremely lucky with the weather and snow and enjoyed perfect conditions all the way to the summit.

The open, reasonably gentle slopes make perfect telemarking terrain. There is immense slope that you can ski if the conditions are reasonably stable from Mt. Rohr to Mt. Aspen, even over into adjoining basins to the east of upper Marriot Basin that would link up with a route coming up from the valley below Cayoosh Peak.

To access the area park where "highways" has ploughed a parking lot for their ploughs, about 1 km west of Cayoosh Creek on the (R), ski Gaeli a 100 yards or so to a logging road heading northeast. Follow the logging road for a couple of kilometers keeping to the (L) until you enter the woods. Follow the red trail markers through the woods and up until you reach a split. There is a sign indicating Mt. Rohr to the (R) and Aspen Basin to the (L). It is a steady steep climb until you reach the Alpine.

Participants: Ian and Margaret Brown, Rudy Brugger



*Mt. Rohr Ridge*

*Margaret Brown*

## **Garibaldi Neve Traverse**

May 6-8

*Tom Wilson*

The ski conditions did not look particularly propitious at the Diamond Head parking area; aside from dust and heat shimmers, the dominant feature was day hikers returning in shorts and T-shirts. Judy claimed to have had to ski up to the lot just two weeks earlier, and we accepted her story rather sceptically as we headed off in the early afternoon heat. However skiable snow was encountered within a kilometre, and we assembled at a nearly empty Elfin Lakes hut for an indolent evening of feeding, Pieps practice and speculation as to the route onto the Neve.

As it transpired the consensus route was confirmed by a set of tracks one or two days old. Small avalanches obliterated the tracks in several places along Ring Creek and on the flank of Opal Cone, and we were pleased to be doing that section early in the morning. Judy decided to play twister with herself on one descent and required the assistance of Jack to untangle herself.

The view from the crest beside Mount Garibaldi was spectacular, prompting a prolonged lunch stop. Judy pointed out a lifetime of potential trips. When we finally set off down towards the lake Viggo lead the way with his parallel form, while the others displayed a spectrum of techniques including graceful telemark, capable snowplow, and advanced tumblemark.

The glaciology huts at Sentinel Bay were unoccupied. Earlier plans to sleep under the stars dissipated as the sun sank beyond the horizon and the cool breeze swept down from the

glacier. There was a great deal of mouse activity in each hut but no outbreaks of hantavirus were reported.

Crossing Garibaldi Lake the next morning, Viggo momentarily mistook himself for a Swede and decided to interrupt his skating with a refreshing dip. He recovered his senses about the time his right side was immersed. Fortunately he was only about a kilometre from the Garibaldi day shelters, or else he might have suffered a bad sunburn changing on the lake.

Visions of a fast descent to the parking lot were dashed by a cruddy trail disrupted by snowshoers, snow slides, and ultimately by dirt. Ablutions in the stream prefaced a mad dash to catch the 5 p.m. 'floating buffet'; a miraculous series of green lights and light traffic had us arriving ten minute before the hour, only to be told there was a one sailing wait. Even worse, the 6 p.m. ferry was buffet-less, Jimmy! Great weekend, notwithstanding.

*Participants: Judy and Viggo Holm (leaders); Jack Fisher, Bev Fletcher, Tom Wilson*

## A Merry Dance : The Bossa Nova

May 26-28

John Pratt

The weather had been perfect and warm, clear, sunny weekend was obviously going to happen, so I organized an impromptu trip to the Northern Tantalus Range to climb Mt. Ossa. Thus it was that Martin, Valerio, Pedro and I boarded the 7 a.m. Saturday sailing from Nanaimo and a few hours later began the walk up logging road A200 just across the Ashlu River. This led, after about a 15 minute walk, to the turn off to the Sigurd Creek trail (as described in my B.W. '93 article on Mt. Pelion). The trail had clearly been much improved since Sandy Briggs and I had been there and it was actually a pleasure to follow. The sun was shining, the packs were not too heavy, the scenery was enjoyable, people were smiling and happy; it was terrible....

About the only thing that happened was our sighting of a large black bear which loped across the trail (at this point deep in snow) about 50 m. ahead of us. Eventually, we came into the big open area under Ossa and Pelion, passing just a couple of hundred metres from the spot where Sandy and I bivouacked. The scenery was truly lovely; there was no other word for it. We decided on an indirect ascent route up the long right-hand ridge because some cornices high on the upper mountain made a direct approach a bit risky. At about p.m., we made camp in a secluded snow hollow at 1400m. While the tents were being set up and the stoves coaxed into life, Valerio and I went up another 100 m. or so to check out the rest of the route, which looked long, but not unpromising.

Next morning, we arose at 5 a.m. and just failed to get a a.m. departure. We ascended the ridge via an indirect route to

avoid more cornices and after a short pitch of very deep snow, we gained the ridge-top. The view of Tantalus was spectacular from this point - so much so that had I not "done" it (in 19860, it would have immediately have moved to the number one spot on my "must do" list. The ridge consisted of level- running sections alternating with a few humps the largest of which looked very off-putting. However, on contact it proved quite user-friendly and the only obstacle of note was a small, sharp gap immediately before the final summit. (To negotiate this, descend an easy gully a few feet down on the right, then cross the gap and traverse via a short ledge to where it becomes easy to scramble up.)

We reached the summit just after a.m. and relaxed there for about 3/4 hour, eating taking pictures and admiring the views, which were superb.

We returned to camp via a somewhat different route- even more indirect than our ascent, but owing to the vast snow slopes we were able to just slide down, the descent thus went very quickly and we were back in our tents comfortably in time for a leisurely lunch prior to packing up and moving out. The rest of the exit went routinely and enjoyably and we eventually reached the cars just before p.m., a great trip behind us. As ever, thanks to all my victims- I mean fellow climbers- for their enjoyable and scintillating company. Here's to many more!

*Participants: Martin Davis, Valerio Faraoni, Reinhard Illner, Pedro Montoya-Pelaez, John Pratt (leader)*

## Of Hot Springs and Heli-Skiing and a Mountain Called Frozen Boot

Albert Hestler

From June 6 to 8, Ian and Margaret Brown and I visited the Julian Harrison Hut (1720 m./5650') above Meager Creek Hot Springs. We intended to climb Overseer Mountain which, at 2745 m./9000' is the highest summit of the Pemberton Icefield. We approached the hut via the 'alternate route' (so described in Fairley's Climbing Guide) following a broad timbered ridge south of Madhorse Creek. Ian, who had traveled the 'standard route' previously, agreed afterwards that the alternate is actually a lot easier and deserves to be recommended.

Unfortunately, the snow conditions were very poor and extremely unstable, so we decided to avoid any glacier travel and leave Overseer for another day (another year?). Instead, we scrambled up the ridge behind the hut to its highest point, called Frozen Boot Peak. I assume that this peak was named in the days before plastic boots, when frozen tootsies were a common occurrence in the fraternity of alpinists. Still, from its height at 2515 m./8490' we enjoyed a beautiful view of the Pemberton Icecap, the Meager Creek Valley and the Manatee Range beyond.

All in all, the trip ended up being a very casual outing, as behooves us old-timers in the Club now and then, concluding with

a lovely soak in the hot springs before turning home. As a matter of fact, we did a lot of talking about mountaineering 'then' and 'now' of how the spirit still craves the healing aspects of the high mountains, yet how the inevitably aging body objects more and more to the effort required in getting there. In this context, we remarked how beautiful the area would be for telemarking, if only there weren't the painful walk-in. It was only a short logical step to suggest that a fly-in by helicopter would make it feasible for those who no longer had the stamina or the inclination to hoof it in on foot.

However, upon reading the cabin log, we realized that this very topic had already been brought up and had engendered some rather nasty comments, including reference to heli-skiers as scum and other low-life forms. Among the many voices, some for and some against, some funny and some serious, we found a response by Sandy Briggs, written in 1991. I couldn't resist copying same and, with his kind permission, I present below his poem "The Shafting of Heli-Hater McGrew". (Incidentally, if I do go back, it will have to be by helicopter, courtesy of my failing knees.)

# THE SHAFING OF HELI-HATER MCGREW

(with many, many apologies to Robert Service)

A bunch of guys were whooping it up in the Harrison chalet.  
The kid that blows the harmonica was blowin' our blues away.  
At the back of the jut in a mellow state sat heli-hater McGrew  
keeping his eye on the beautiful Di he's hoping one day to ... wed.

When out of the night, which was fifty below, and into the dim and  
the glow  
there staggered a fellow fresh from the woods all sweaty and  
covered in snow.  
On his back was a pack that you wouldn't believe, behind him he  
dragged a long sled  
with things sticking out in front and behind, "God, it's cold in the  
forest" he said.

There was none could place the stranger's face, so we gave up by  
and by,  
and the party raged, and the stranger stayed and he winked at the  
girl named Di.

There's men that somehow just grip your gaze, whose appearance  
tells no lie;  
such was he, and he looked at me like a man who was born to fly.  
With the clean-cut hair and the sprightly stare of a hawk upon the  
wing  
as he sipped on the green stuff in his glass and softly began to sing.  
I got to figuring who he was and wondering how he'd fly.  
I turned and there was that gorgeous gal giving him the come-on  
eye.

The revelers dropped off one by one and Di, she turned in too.  
I feigned a sleep, but I stayed tuned in to see what the stranger  
would do/  
He took out a light and into the night he snuck with a parka and  
mitts,  
then he pulled out a big piece of paper like instructions for one of  
them kits.  
Even now as I tell it I hardly believe, you may say that I'm telling  
a whopper,  
but he bent to his work and inside two hours the bugger'd  
assembled a chopper.

Were you ever out in the great alone when the moon was awful  
clear,  
and the icy mountains hemmed you in with a silence you most  
could hear?  
Well, I thought all night and I lay awake. In the morning I scarce  
could speak.  
In the name of God, why would anyone drag a chopper up from  
Meager Creek?  
And my mind went back to some notes in the log, some disparag-  
ing things that were wrote,  
as the puzzle began to come together and a lump arose in my  
throat.

As light began to push out the dark and the stars began to fade,  
there sat the stranger in Plexiglas a'lookin' up at his blades.  
He cracked a smile and a whine arose, and the blades went round  
and round.

Bleary-eyed skiers rushed downstairs to see what was making the  
sound  
Some just stared and some complained; McGrew ran out shaking  
his fist.  
But the rotors were ripping and snow obscured the whirly-bird  
like a mist.

Then the stranger turned, and his eyes they burned, in a most  
peculiar way,  
in a clean wool shirt that was neat and pert he sat, and I watched  
him sway.  
His lips went in in a kind of a grin and he spoke, the loud-hailer  
pierced the drone,  
and "Boys" says he, "you won't know me and none of you care  
a damn;  
but I want to state, and my words are straight, and I'll bet my shire  
they're true,  
that one of you is a goddamn wimp, and that one's named  
McGrew."

"I saw the note in the chalet's log calling my heli-scum.  
I was you called me a mountain pimp and prayed that I'd never  
come.  
I understand where you are coming from, but I won't be called a  
jam;  
so I dragged this f...ing machine up here to show who's a real man.  
Keep it clean and cool your jets, let's have a little respect.  
If all of us don't co-operate the wilderness will be wrecked."

When he said his piece some smiles appeared, bad old McGrew  
dropped his fist.  
The stranger torqued on the throttle, the chopper began to lift.  
"Good skiing" he said, then he flicked off the mike, to concen-  
trate on the breeze.  
He scanned all around, in the sky, on the ground, and located all  
of the trees.  
From the back of the crowd, dressed up in a shroud of colourful,  
down-filled gortex  
came a figure crouched low and ran through the snow into the  
whirling vortex.  
The door on the bubble popped out on the double, the stranger he  
waved us bye-bye.  
Then he hovered aloft and we all saw the soft glowing eyes of the  
beautiful Di.

*Offered in the spirit of lightening up,  
by Sandy Briggs August 23, 1991*

P.S. Hey, I'm not a fan of helicopters to areas traditionally reached on foot, but name-  
calling doesn't accomplish much.

P.S.S. The term "guys" in the first line is used in the widely accepted sense of  
including both sexes.

# Tantalus

July 30 - August 1

Pedro Montoya-Pelaez

Tuesday morning found John, Russ and me, at the end of a logging road, all set to canoe across the Squamish river, to begin our journey. In two trips, muddy feet, and a couple of wasp stings, we were on the other side ready to proceed. Average time to Lake Lovely Water was 3.5 hours, but after ten minutes of hiking, I was convinced that there was no way I was going to achieve that. My pack was as heavy as I have ever had it, my feet were complaining, giving sporadic cramps. I switched to "heavy truck grinding up a hill" mode, slowly inching my way up the trail, stopping sporadically to devour some juicy blueberries that infested the trail. The last hour of the trail is definitely the most beautiful. You follow Lovely Water Creek up a series of spectacular waterfalls.

After a short break to admire the gorgeous lake and its surroundings, we acquired the Alpine Hut canoe and headed West across Lovely Water. After stashing the canoe and enjoying lunch, we headed up on the left of waterfall, bypassing a bluff to finally make it to the 'Russian Army Basin'. It had begun to pour down on us, so we set up tent, and passed out for a couple of hours. During a reprieve in the weather we stuffed ourselves and retreated once more into the warmth of our bags. This basin is truly an ideal campsite. Surrounded by cliffs, with two glaciers emptying into it - the thunder of crashing rock and ice sporadically falling down would resonant around the basin - Lydia, The Red Tusk, Pandareus, Ionia, Serratus and Alpha protruding into the sky, as you turned clockwise.

The next day, at 7.00 am we headed up the left gully just below Serratus, going to the right of the stream that went down it. You gain about 1000 feet of elevation at a pretty steep grade, ending up on the snow slopes at the base of Serratus. We traversed along the base of the mountain, descending slightly to get down to the Serratus glacier. We passed some tarns that would make a practical basecamp, allowing one to have access to all the peaks west of the lake as well as day trips to Serratus, Dione and Tantalus (albeit a long one). Once on the glacier, we roped up and trudged up to the col between Pandareus and Ionia, which gave us a look at the possible route up its SE face. You also get a good view of the North ridge of the Red Tusk. There was a foreboding feeling coming from that route, as it was steep, and much loose rock could be seen. Focusing back on Ionia, the SE face looked feasible, but we decided to try Ionia's West face which seemed to have the lowest grade, 50°, consisting of slabs, some cliff faces, and some patches of snow. It seemed the most obvious and forgiving route.

Getting onto the rock proved to be a quite a mission. The moat was fairly developed and required a 5.6 move to get onto it. We managed to divert our attention for an hour by trying to find an easier way onto the rock. The mountain has a buttress which extends east, which we managed to get onto and climb up to the ridgeline without much of a problem. Proceeding along the ridge we came across a smooth slab leading to more vertical faces. Visual inspection of what was to come made the outlook of the route fairly grim. John, in his rock shoes, gave the slab a shot (exposure, but not too hard) as well as the proceeding face. We were going too slow and didn't have the right protection for such a venture. We turned back and gave the moat another look.

Our fearless leader gave the move a shot, made it up, set up a station and hauled us up with our packs. The slabs proved easy going (Class 3), but at the end of them we hit another bluff. After an abortive attempt up them, a rappel and a near fall trying to retrieve a sling, we veered right to the second snow patch. We were able to climb the rock on the right of the snow, struggled up a minor chimney and found ourselves facing yet another vertical face. Time was getting short, Ionia seemed reluctant to let us succeed. This time we headed to the left of the blocks, traversing until we reached yet another snowpatch. Another scramble on its right side and the summit was at hand. One final pitch of class 3, on a cracked slab and we found ourselves on the second summit of the possible three of the mountain. John wasn't sure it was the highest, so proceeded to the south summit. Definitely lower... Amid the brandy celebrations was the worry that we would get caught by the weather, as black clouds were threatening, so we headed down after a very brief pause. Getting off the mountain proved to be no problem, and once we were on the snow again, the route we had taken seemed so obvious. Hindsight is a powerful, yet useless tool. We stumbled back into camp after 12.5 hours of joy. It had been a tough and fulfilling day.

The next day we decided to climb Alpha, heading up from the southwest, as John had previously been up that route, and we thought the routefinding would be no problem. Big mistake. We got disorientated in the mist that produced white out conditions and once that lifted, John was no longer sure of where to go. Despite Johns hesitations, Russ and I pushed him up the "obvious" gully and ended up on a ridge about 200m off route, with just a huge false peak between us and our desired location. The summit ridge headed west from the summit, links up to this subsidiary peak, then turns north. In between lies a glacier which we considered climbing down to and then heading up the col in between the two peaks, but we had no crampons, and a cursory look at the moat (dreadful), scrapped that idea. Munching on lunch, I reveled on the beauty of Alpha from this angle, watched a tourist plane drone its way around the range, and wished for a giant fly swatter.

We headed down, backtracked and traversed below the false summit, along moderate rock and snow. The last pitch to the col proved unpleasant as the gully was wet and full of moss. Once on the col you see a campsite to the east (mighty fine views!). The summit was reached by scrambling up the west side of the mountain. Another fine peak.

The next day we packed up camp, headed down to the lake, and had a most wonderful skinny dip. We canoed across the lake back to the alpine hut, had tea with a park ranger, and caught up on the future developments of this pristine range. At the beginning of the trail we had passed a fresh clear cut, which we found out to be on private land so be forewarned if stumps disgust you. On the positive side, a trail is being developed that travels along the north of the lake allowing access to the 'Russian Army Basin', without the need of a canoe.

Participants: John Pratt, Russ Moir, & Pedro Montoya-Pelaez

## "The Rain is Getting Sunnier" (G.G.)

12-14 August

Judith Holm

Yes, we feel damp, cool air, rain, even a wet sleeping bag in the parking lot Friday night before the climb has even started. But it is a keen group, a good group. On Sunday, we will step through about 8 cm. of fresh August snow and about 10 more cm. of loose snow underneath, when in the higher section of our climb.

This is a return to one of my favourite areas. I like to return. Each time is so different.

Saturday's route: fun of the cable car over Cheakamus River, wooded Helm Creek trail; sudden opening onto Black Tusk meadows (not quite as spectacular in the cloud this year - two years ago fast moving clouds were sweeping across the Tusk, the following year we came in warmth and sparkling sunshine); the marvelous wind-sculpted snow on the side of Gentian Peak is hidden; a curtain of cloud masks the drama of Castle Towers from Gentian Ridges; down to camp in Gentian Pass.

On Sunday "the rain is getting sunnier!" The cool temperature (3 degrees at breakfast) keeps the fresh snow stable as we cross under the south side of Castle Towers and below Phyllis' Engine. At noon we top out on the ridge between the Engine and Mt. Carr. The warm sun breaks out for the first time, the expansive views open and marmot-like contentment sets in as we munch lunch. Then the cloud socks in. I really want to navigate toward Carr, but can't get moving quickly enough. James has his whole rack of climbing gear, so the tempting granite of Phyllis' Engine calls. Most chose to return, taking time to Enjoy. Three check out Phyllis' Engine which is wintry with the cloud and fresh snow on the ledges. The styrofoam quality of snow atop Polemonium Ridge is great for playing with ice axes on the vertical top of a snow slope and deer are sighted on the ridge. We linger and take in the vastness of snow-capped mountains.

Monday. Gentian Peak. Contrasts abound! My heart leaps. Along the Garibaldi Lake side of Gentian the lushness and colours of soft plant growth lead us to slow our pace and admire the detail. Everywhere Valerian, marsh marigolds, towheads of western anemone, then a field of columbines, arnica, paint brushes and higher up self-heal, saxifrage, stonecrop and many more. Marmots, mice, bear and possibly wolf tracks, the bird life and so much that we could see if only our stay were longer and our observation skills greater. This day the walk leads up to a damp, almost freezing rocky ridge and a wind that knocks me right off my feet. On top, Gerhardt recites a wonderful poem. The snow slide down to the Helm Glacier has us moments later onto the melting ice. From the crunch of the ice we move to the crunch of the eroded Cinder Cone, black and so very volcanic. I love the timelessness of this visibly volcanic area, the excitement of its geological history, the sharp awareness of our fleeting presence. From harshness we are soon swimming through acres of lupines. Greg and James move quickly, but Greg's artistry stops him in a sea completely blue with



Statlu Lake, Chehalis Range

Albert Hestler

lupines except for one bright yellow arnica. We are in three small groups.

Yes, there was mud. At home, I hose off the gear and even have to wash both backpacks. I wonder how James is managing to clean up, as he is staying in a reputedly immaculate West End Vancouver apartment, with white carpets.

Participants: Kate Darling, Greg Gordon, Gerhardt Lepp, Mike Hubbard, James Hubbard, Barb Broster, Dave Scandrett, Viggo and Judy Holm (coordinators).

## Mt. Grainger - Where?

August 19-20

Albert Hestler

Let me just say up front that we didn't climb Mt. Grainger or any other peak in the Chehalis mountains on this weekend, but had a wonderful time on Lake Statlu. The weather on Friday and Saturday was just too atrocious; out of a dozen prospective participants only four remained. Although Sunday turned out to be a glorious, sunny day, there wasn't enough time left to do anything else but continue exploring the area. In this respect, I refer the reader to Fairley's Guide, chapter "The Chehalis," but would also like to add a few cautions to warn climbers of outdated information, specifically the following:

a) The approach to the Grainger Peak - Nursery Pass area recommends that one should cross the Chehalis River Bridge at 34 km and continue along the east side of the river. Don't. We had no luck in following these instructions, but encountered no problems when staying on the west side of the Chehalis River. The second bridge over the upper Chehalis River at approx. 37 km has been repaired and the road is in passable condition to the bridge across Eagle Creek (as mentioned in the Guide).

b) As for Grainger Peak itself, the Guide recommends that, about 1 km west of the Eagle Creek crossing (actually more like 100 m), one should continue up the west bank of the Eagle Creek to a logging landing where a trail and partly flagged route leads on up the west side of the creek to the basin SE of Grainger Peak.

The road description is still valid, and we camped at what we presumed to be the logging landing. However, the route (flagged) now starts at the end of a new logging road spur (not passable by car) which is clearly visible as a diagonal slash on the hillside heading north on the east side of Eagle Creek, just after the bridge crossing. We followed the route for about 1 1/2 hours,

first across a clear-cut and then through standing timber, and confirmed that it does indeed lead to the basin (as mentioned in the Guide).

c) The road on the west bank of Eagle Creek continues to provide access to the Nursery Pass area. Just keep following the road as it turns left immediately before the logging landing and leads up into an easily recognizable basin. The section of the road after the turnoff was not passable by car.

d) The road description regarding access to Statlu Lake is OK. We found that the lake is indeed a gem in a beautiful alpine setting. A good trail, well marked, leads along the north shore to the very end of the lake. After that it becomes a flagged route, starting with a treacherous log crossing over the Chehalis River (which feeds into, and drains, Statlu Lake).

e) To reach Mt. Clarke and Viennese Peak, the Guide recommends climbing a steep gully from the north side of Statlu Lake, about a quarter of the way along the lakeshore. It is much easier to continue on the lake trail until one reaches a waterfall, from where a well-constructed trail, marked as "Brotherhood Trail," leads up towards the alpine areas.

Murrough, Pat, and Darren climbed a good part of this trail and pronounced it as a very rewarding trip. Albert went to the end of the lake to check out its continuation in that direction. Martin Davis, during a trip this summer, followed Fairley's Guide and had a pretty rough time climbing the gully in the heat. Be warned.

*Participants: Murrough O'Brien (leader), Pat O'Brien, Darren McNeil, Albert Hestler (reporter)*

## Classic Peaks II - A guided trip in the Rockies

August 20th - 26th

Tony Pugh

We met at the Edith Cavell hostel, south of Jasper under the snow-capped summit of Mount Edith Cavell, one of our major objectives this trip. This was to be our "home" for the next four nights so we chose our bunks with care (bottom bunk, close to an opening window and as far away from the front door as possible).

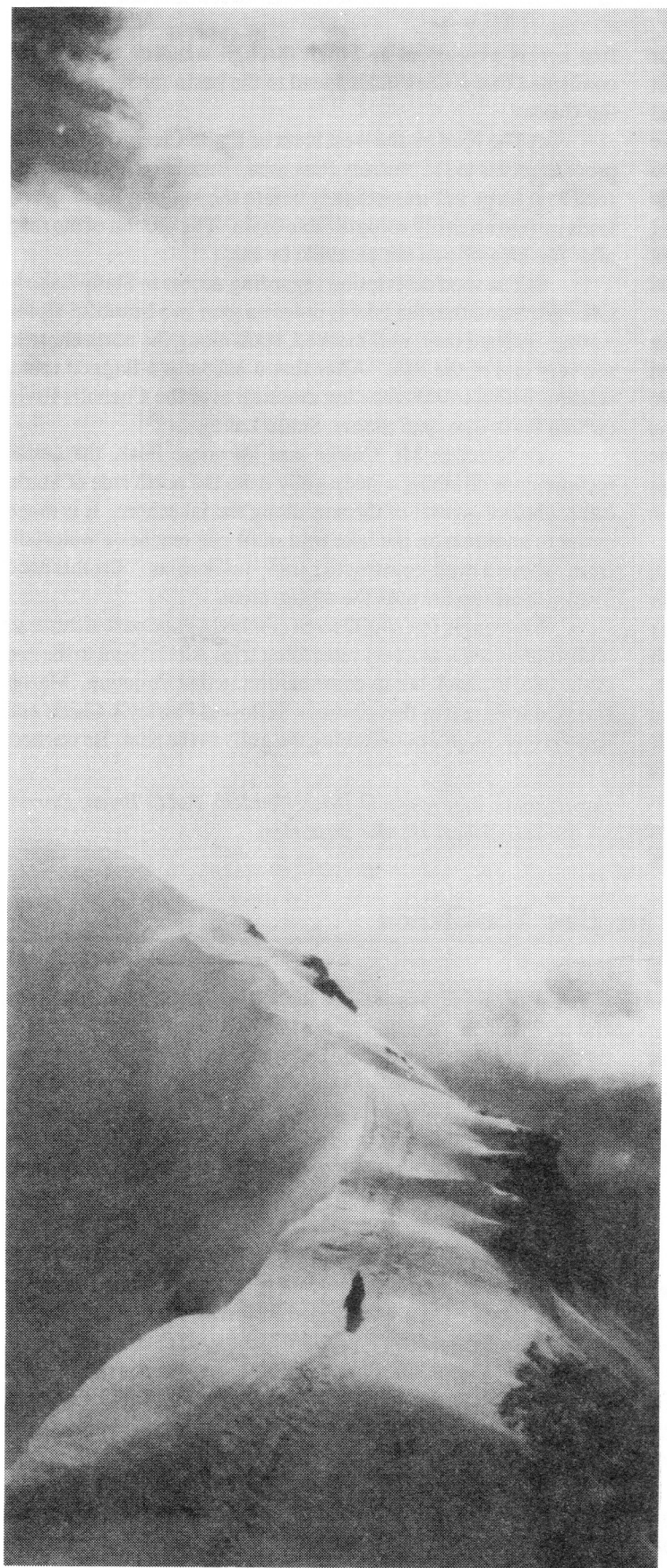
The group consisted of eight from various parts of the country, though predominantly the West. Our guide was Peter Amann from Jasper and the camp manager, Ken Larlee, from Edmonton.

Following introductions and a brief review of the group's experience, we were informed that due to poor snow conditions we would be unable to climb Edith Cavell, it seemed the weather in the Rockies was the same as the west coast; but not to worry, there were lost more mountains to choose from. Tomorrow we'd climb Peveril Peak (8689 ft.) and have to turn out at 5:30 a.m. So after a long day of travelling we all headed for the cookhouse to prepare pack lunches for tomorrow and then back to our bunks for a good night's sleep.

**Day 1 - Sunday:** As promised we turned out at 5:30 a.m. and were welcomed in the cookhouse by the delicious smell of bacon, eggs, and fresh coffee. Ken, in what we soon found was his typical fashion, was first up, cooking the first of many delicious meals for the rest of us. After carrying out the usual camp chores, hauling

water, washing dishes, etc. we loaded our gear into the vehicles and at 7:00 a.m. headed out for the trail head (4680 ft.) which turned out to be the head of the horse trail into the Tonquin Valley. At 7:30 a.m. under partly cloudy skies we started along the trail adjacent to Portal Creek heading towards Preveril Peak. After about 5 km of easy hiking and horse manure dodging Peter led us off the trail into the bush and towards the N.E. ridge. Following a bit of bushwacking (Rockie's style, not west coast, didn't really miss the devil's club) we reached rock, loose, crumbly Rockie's rock. After a bit of scrambling we roped up for about 300 ft. of belayed climbing, which took us to a broad ridge below the Summit block. Here we stopped for break and to wait for the second rope team to reach us; they had stayed clear of our line of ascent to avoid rockfall. From here the two rope teams split. Peter led us around to the south side which after a short roped rock scramble led to the Summit, while Ken leading the second rope team made a more direct but much steeper route up to the top.

On the summit we admired the fantastic views of mountains and valleys far below us, and were introduced to Gerta's tradition of Kalhwa and flute music. We then took the customary summit photos, had lunch, and signed the register while Peter called up the weather office in Jasper for the latest forecast on his radio phone.



Coming down from the Summit we headed southeast, "short-roped" until we reached the scree slopes down which we slipped, stumbled, slid, and cursed until we reached the horse trail again which we followed back to the trail head.

After surviving our first day, several of us had developed a raging thirst, so we drove into Jasper for a pint of cold beer, while the rest headed back to the hostel to prepare dinner, arriving at 6:30 p.m. We got back to a great dinner of soup, BBQ steak, corn, and salad washed down with good B.C. wine. Of course we who had frequented the beer halls of Jasper had to do the dishes.

**Day 2 - Monday:** This day was to be our easy day and so our destination was Roche a Perdrix, a 6936 ft. craig opposite the east part gate of Jasper National Park. Once again we rose at 5:30 a.m., followed the same routine as day one and left at 7:00 a.m. for the 1 1/4 hour drive to the east gate. We parked beneath a rock face just off the highway (3350 ft.) and headed up the N.W. ridge until we reached the diagonal route. This route consisted of four short belayed pitches of about 5.4 on limestone rock, followed by short roped scrambling to the Summit, which we reached at 2:00 p.m.

The weather up to this time had been overcast with threatening clouds developing in the northwest. Shortly after reaching the summit a thunderstorm rolled in, which resulted in us making a very rapid descent to the tree line, where we stopped for lunch. The storm quickly passed over and we carried on down to the vehicles without too much difficulty.

After two days of sweaty hiking and climbing several of us decided to take a detour on the way back to the hostel to soak in the Miette Hot Springs located 16 km off Highway 16 (a commercial venture with hot showers, towel rentals, and mountain sheep wandering around the parking lot). It was truly a great way to finish off the day although some of the other customers in the hot pool may not have appreciated four grubby, unshaven climbers dropping into the same pool as them. We arrived back at the hostel at 7:15 p.m. for another of Ken's delicious meals.

**Day 3 - Tuesday:** Got to sleep-in until 6:00 a.m., no driving required today as we were going to climb Mount Chevron (9360 ft.), located between Verdant and Campus Passes, so we could start hiking right from the hostel. Peter had never climbed Chevron so he wasn't sure what conditions would be met on this mountain; so we carried all our climbing gear, including crampons.

We set off at 7:00 a.m. heading down the Hope Trail along the Astoria River for 5 km and then branched off for a further 5 km up to Verdant Pass. From here we climbed up to the east ridge on great blocks of jumbled rock. At the base of the Summit we stopped for a break and left our extra gear as it was now obvious that there would be no ice conditions to contend with.

One belayed pitch followed by a short roped scramble up the final 500 feet brought us to the small cramped summit, where we had lunch and took photos, etc. There was no summit register on this peak so we made our own.

Coming down from the top we down climbed to the

base of the summit block, picked up our gear then headed down the southeast scree slopes and through scrub to the area south of Verdant Pass. This really looked like grizzly country and it was comforting to see that Ken was packing a pepper spray pistol. According to Peter it is very seldom that anyone travelled into this area. We hiked out through this beautiful meadowland until we reached the trees and the main trail which brought us back to the hostel at 8:00 p.m. (13 hours of steady hiking and climbing). It was a pretty tired group who got supper together that night.

**Day 4 - Wednesday:** Today was our rest day and a move to the Hilda Creek Hostel, near the Columbia Icefields. To clean up we all spent the morning in Jasper at the laundromat, showering and washing our clothes, etc.

At 1:00 p.m. we met at the Columbia Icefield parking lot, 100 km south of Jasper, for Peter to run us through crevasse rescue and ice techniques on the Athabasca Glacier. Then it was off to the hostel for supper and to get settled in for the next two nights. Here we were joined by another guide, Roger Laurilla from Golden who was going to be with us for the rest of the trip.

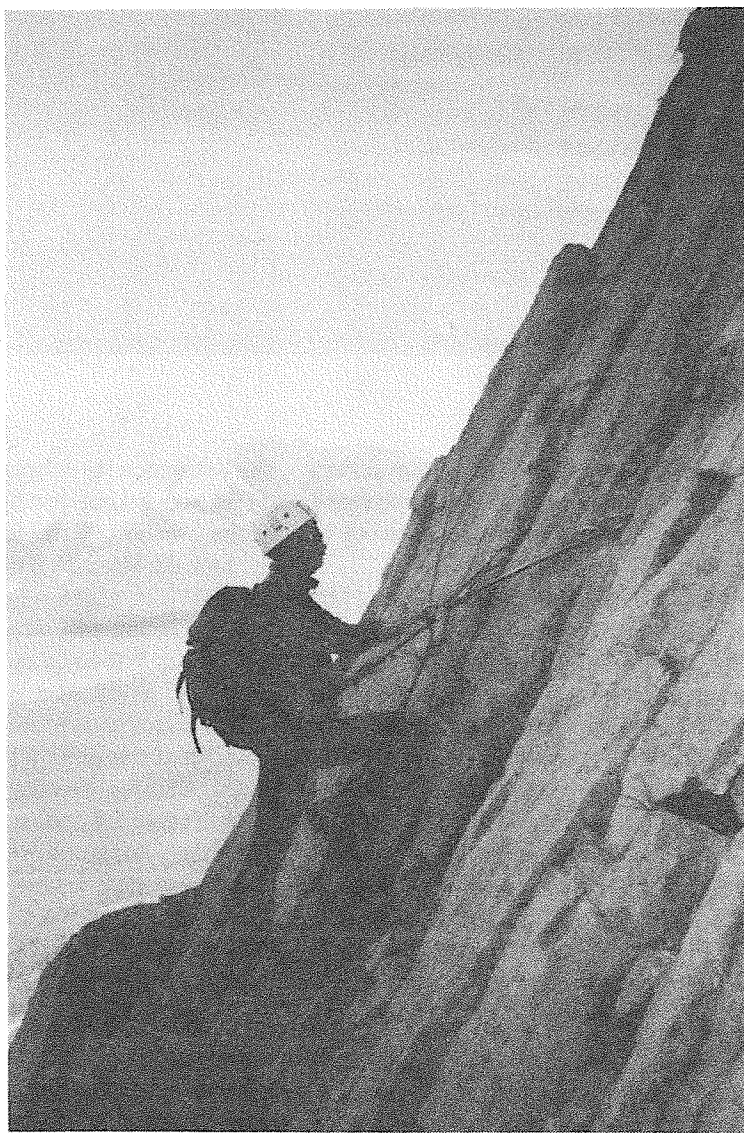
**Day 5 - Thursday:** Up at 3:30 a.m. to a clear, frosty, and starlit morning for today we were to climb Mount Athabasca (911,346 ft.) and wanted to be moving onto the north glacier at first light. For this climb the group was split, as two of our party had climbed Athabasca before so they were off with Roger to climb AZ (9,945 ft), a tower located 1 km northeast of Mount Athabasca.

After the morning coffee and breakfast, courtesy of Ken, we loaded up the vehicles, scraped the frost off the windshields and drove up the highway to the climber's parking lot across from the icefield chalet. There were already vehicles parked so we knew there were other climbers ahead of us though we couldn't see any sign of them.

We strapped on our headlamps, hoisted our packs and headed out up the Moraine following a well worn track, eight small circles of light in single file slowly plodding upwards towards the snow and ice of Mount Athabasca.

First light found us roping up to travel up the north glacier with not a single crevasse in sight. Snow conditions it seems were equal to those normally found in May. By this time the weather had started to change; gone were the stars and clear skies, daylight brought with it clouds and wind. We started out in two rope-teams

of four to travel up the glacier heading toward the snow col below Silverhorn (a subsidiary peak on Athabasca). The journey up the glacier was uneventful except that Roy, who was on the other rope, informed us afterward that he figured he had found the bergshound when he posthaled through the snow with one foot and felt nothing but space below his boot, which he rapidly extracted. By now the weather had deteriorated even more, bringing in snow. There were also signs of a party above us so we stopped for a break in the shelter of some cliffs to let them get clear before heading up to the prominent saddle between Silverhorn and the towers of

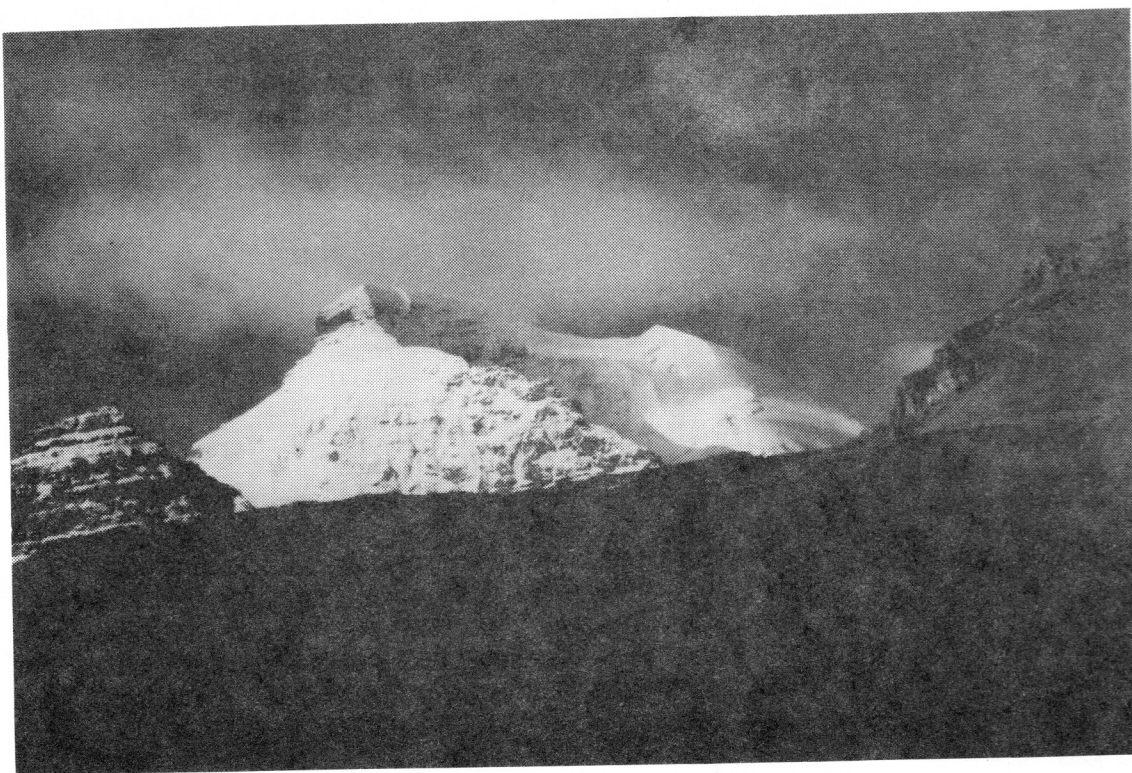


*Peter Aman on  
Roche a Perdrix,  
Jasper*

*Tony Pugh*

the northwest ridge.

Here we put on our crampons and stayed short roped for the climb up the ridge to Silverhorn and the summit. What a fantastic experience it was, climbing that final ridge to the summit with corniced snowslopes to one side and shear rock on the other. The cold, icy wind howled around our ears, the clouds raced by, and the sun broke out. We reached the summit at 10:30 a.m. after 5 1/2 hours; unfortunately we were not alone. One group of climbers had reached it first and another was heading towards us



*Mt. Athabasca*

*Tony Pugh*

from the opposite direction. However, the first group hadn't climbed along the top of the ridge; they had opted to climb along the snow slope under the cornices below the ridge leaving us virgin snow to travel on up to the summit.

Due to the wind we didn't stay long on the summit. Just long enough for a quick handshake and "bergheil!" then it was down to a sheltered spot for lunch which we had with the other two groups. One of them reported that there had been an avalanche that morning over toward AZ, so we had some concern over the safety of the others from our group who were climbing AZ. Following lunch we started down with a considerable amount of plunge stepping towards the glacier which was crossed once again without incident. Then down the Moraine and along the road we tramped under the curious gaze of the bus-loads of tourists heading for the snowcats and a ride on the glacier.

The road out to the highway is gated, restricting access to tour buses only. The gate was open when we came in, but was now closed so we had to wait for a bus to come by and slip through with it. As it was still early in the day, around 2:00 p.m., we stopped in at the coffee shop located in the icefield lodge for a snack before returning to the Hilda Creek Hostel where we found the AZ group back safe and sound after also having had an excellent climb with no sign of an avalanche. The evening was spent eating and drinking in the cookhouse for tomorrow we had to hike into the Colin Hut and needed to reduce our load as everything had to be carried in on our backs. Contrary to what the trip information package had said about a porter carrying most of the food up to the hut, there wasn't one. We were to be the porters!

**Day 6 - Friday:** A 6:00 a.m. wakeup call had us packing up and driving north, back towards Jasper and then east towards the Park's east gate where we were to meet at the trail head for the hike into the Colin Hut.

We all met below a cliff adjacent to the highway, just over

the Athabasca River bridge where we divided up the gear and at 11:30 a.m. set out, heading south along the trail on the east side of the Athabasca River for about 1 1/2 hours until we swung east to reach the hut trail. This followed Garonne Creek up to the hut at 6,600 feet, which we reached at 5:00 p.m.

The hut only sleeps 6 so as there were 11 of us, we set up a tarpaulin lean-to on each side of the hut for those who couldn't fit inside. While Ken got started on cooking supper the rest of us had a look around the area, collected firewood, and got a fire going as it was getting pretty cool with a cold wind blowing.

That night we managed to get seven sleeping inside the hut with the door left open so we wouldn't suffocate. We managed to get a pretty good night's sleep only disturbed by a porcupine which decided to take a fancy to the outhouse and spent the night chewing on it.

**Day 7 - Saturday:** 6:00 a.m. saw us up preparing for our final day. The weather did not look promising, it was overcast and looked like rain. We hoped it would hold off until later in the day.

For me it was time to leave the Colin Hut and the rest of the crowd and hike out to the car. The remainder of the group climbed Mount Colin, but I had a commitment to be in Calgary later that day. So at 7:20 a.m. I bid farewell to a great group of people and headed out after a truly memorable week of climbing in the Canadian Rockies.

*Participants: Guide - Peter Amann (Jasper), Camp Manager - Ken Larlee (Edmonton), climbers - Gerta Smythe (Victoria), Judy Foraie (Calgary), Tony Pugh (Victoria), Jeff McIntosh (Sterling, Ont.), Judy Dickie (Vernon), Marina Martin (St. Albert), Iskander Ahmed (Vancouver), Roy Preshaw (Canmore)*

## ACC Youth Camp

August 1995

Hal Ferris

Each year the Vancouver Island Section sponsors three teenagers to take part in the A.C.C. Youth Camp at Canmore. This year I was one of those kids. When I first heard about it I thought it would be great but as it got closer to going I wasn't sure I wanted to leave my friends and skate-boarding for a whole week. My parents and their friends were so excited that I thought one of them should go instead.

I flew to Calgary and got a Brewster Bus to Canmore. The bus left us at the wrong place so Laura (another person in the camp) and I started walking. Bob Shore (the camp manager) found us pretty quickly so we did not have to walk for long. The club house was really nice and I met the rest of the group the next morning.

The first two days we climbed the "craggs" around Bow Valley. We learned how to put on the equipment properly, how to tie a bowline and climb roped to another person. It was cloudy but not cold. In the afternoons Marty, the camp cook, climbed with us. He cooked gourmet food for the camp and had a really cute kid who was staying at the Club House.

On the third day we drove up to Hilda Creek Hostel in the Ice Fields and we fiddled around at the bottom of the mountain. Friday was stormy; bad weather for skateboarding. Greg (a guide) took us to the top of Mt. Athabasca (11,000 ft.). We learned how to walk on a glacier while being tied together. It was hard to keep up and when we got to the top I could taste blood in my mouth and I felt really sick and tired.

Saturday was a much better day. We hiked on the Columbia Ice Fields, looked down crevasses, learned how to use crampons and ice picks, how to stop if you fall down a glacier. Using our ice picks we lowered ourselves down into a crevasse and just as I went down, the sun came out and everything was blue. We looked down some dark holes that go into the glacier and I wondered what it would be like down there - probably not like a movie! On the way back to Canmore we saw a black bear.

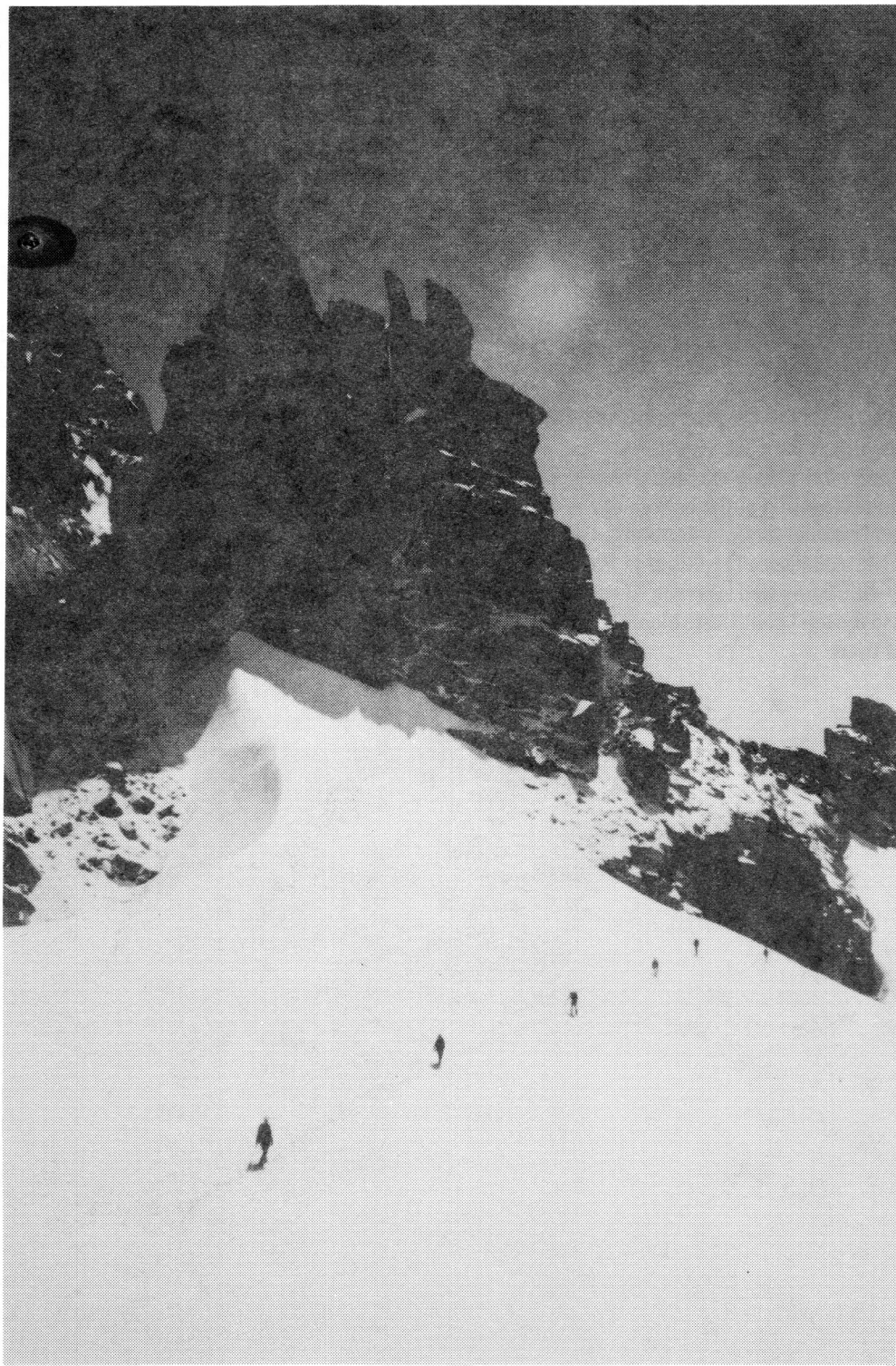
The last two days of the camp we climbed in the Lake Louise/Hart Creek area. We learned rappelling and belaying and I found I was a lot better at climbing. I also found that one of my feet is a lot bigger than the other and it hurt! Jacob, the kid from Ontario, was so strong he could pull himself up over rock ledges with his hands.

After the camp I went to visit my Dad's friends, the Josts, in Banff. My Dad worked for Mr. Jost at Sunshine Village a long time ago. Their son took me skateboarding in Banff and I met a lot of other kids. I also saw two moose in town who were not skateboarding.

I really loved the climbing and did not want the camp to end. I have never been so high or so steep. I learned a lot from the leaders, more than I can remember to write here. All the kids on the course were nice and we were good friends by the end.

Thanks to the Vancouver Island Section for helping me to go on the course and for lending me some equipment. Thanks to David Lemon for lending me equipment and clothes.





*Mt. Garibaldi*  
*Greg Gordon*



*ACC film director, main crew,  
editor, cameraman...*  
*Claire Ebendinger*



## Meeting Mr. Cloudraker (Rambling & Scrambling in the Upper Stein)

Dave Scandrett

Actually, the scrambling began at the Nanaimo Ferry Terminal on Friday evening, August 25. We wanted to park Catrin's vehicle and walk on, as the plan was to transfer our gear to George's 4-wheel at Horseshoe Bay. But the lot was full. We squeezed into the last possible spot in the overflow parking lot, only to discover we needed 28 loonies! We had 2 and the ferry was leaving soon! Luckily, we bought the remainder from 2 other patrons and a cashier. Rushing aboard, we discovered that Judy and her heavily pack-laden Volvo and crew had missed the ferry! But they had the faster ferry and both docked in Horseshoe Bay simultaneously. We transferred packs from Judy's to George's vehicle and set off to initiate the first set at ACC'ers to the Brown's Lillooet Lake cabin.

Finding it was a chore at midnight! We quickly made ourselves at home and slept peacefully between interruptions of loud snoring and someone's nightmare noises (perpetrators remain nameless).

The road up to the trailhead is for 4-wheel drives or people who drive like Judy! The trail was in good shape because one of the four builders of the Lizzie Creek Cabin had been through before us with a chainsaw. They were having a reunion after 26 years, so we felt fortunate to talk with them about their adventures back in the late '60's. Dave Nickerson still lives at Lillooet Lake and is the principle maintainer of the cabin. The highlight of the trip was meeting George Richardson as we left the cabin on our way to Heart Lake. He is the one who took "those young fellows" into the area in 1967 and inspired them to build the cabin. A soft-spoken, unassuming "Geordie" from Northern England, he first climbed and named Cloudraker Mountain as well as many of the surrounding features - Gates of Shangri-la, Cherry Pip Pass, Arrowhead Lake, Anemone Peak, etc.

The weather held for us. We camped 2 nights at Heart Lake. The first day, after setting up camp, we scrambled up Anemone Peak, then over Tabletop Mt. What a world! Views forever of mountains and glaciers! Open, easy hiking country nearby.

The next day, we split into 2 groups and reversed each other's trips - not knowing originally it would take us less time than planned to reach our goals. At Caltha Lake, one group went to the col overlooking Tundra Lake, then up to NE ridge to Caltha Peak. Don't miss Tundra Lake if you do this trip! It really is a jewel (gentian blue). Figure of Eight Lake was worthy of the time to hike there and it is a stroll from Caltha Lake. There is lots of boulder-hopping between Cherry Pip Pass and Caltha Lake. Caltha Peak affords views that entice a return to the area to hike other peaks. Our return time was 11 hours.

A few miscellaneous comments from others: remember Judy running back up (700 ft!) Cherry Pip Pass to see if 4 of us were safe (we had traversed a sidehill and were behind her group) only to discover we were taking a lazy snack break; we saw pikas, marmots, cougar, goat and bear tracks; one glacier in the distance was dubbed Red Algae Glacier; Stein Lake and Skook Jim Glacier looked inviting; awakening from a frosty night; when Judy asked Ken if he was going to join her and three other naked nymphs for a swim in Lizzie Lake, enticing him by saying there were lots of berries nearby and Ken replied, "There's lots of forbidden fruit around here."

*Participants: Ken & Ann Denman, Kate Darling, George Smekal, Chris Schreiber, Catrin Brown, Dave Scandrett, Alan Danesh, Judy Holm (leader)*

## Brunswick

November 19

Russ Moir

If we as Islanders could overcome the 'ferry gap' syndrome, we'd open up a whole new field of week-end rambling locations, as accessible as many of our Island favourites. With a limited budget, a free trip to Vancouver, under the guise of a professional workshop, was too tempting to miss. So, on a bright Sunday morning, painted with the hues of a lovely sunrise, I was glad to be awake enough to pick up Valerio from the first Nanaimo ferry. Pessimistic as ever, he'd watched the day begin from the ferry's deck, believing what he saw to be a mental aberration. He'd become mildly enthusiastic by the time he'd set foot on the dock, when he saw the North Shore mountains glistening under fresh snow. We trudged up from trailhead at Lion's Bay in good spirits, heading towards the well-marked track through the open forest above Howe Sound.

We'd elected not to bring crampons, then weakly regretted the decision, as we slithered up frozen soil and ice-glazed rocks. The trail up to the junction with the Crest Trail is obvious and well graded, and above this, where it gets steeper and less distinct, it's still not difficult to pick your way through the scree slopes to the

elevated col between Brunswick and the lesser summit of "The Hat". Here the snow depth allowed us to kick partial steps but contrasted with that of an earlier, February, visit, when the ridge to the summit was fluted with sculptures of snow.

The views across in all directions were spectacular, showing us just how fortunate Vancouverites are in their location beneath the North Shore peaks. Surprisingly on this fine Sunday, we met with only a handful of fellow wanderers. Brunswick and adjacent hills are so accessible from Highway 99. Route finding is easy, though in winter conditions the narrow, corniced ridge must be treated with care. From the location of the defunct microwave tower, the plunge down to the North can be unnerving.

If the summit was a superb palce to 'peak spot' from it was too breezy to loiter on, so we retraced our steps along the very narrow crest until we found a sheltered niche to bask in the sunshine and enjoy the panorama. All our favourite haunts were in view, from the Olympics to the S.W., around to the still clouded Island peaks, through Tantalus and Garibaldi, to the beckoning slopes of Baker's north side. The air was so clear that we could

distinguish individual whitecaps on the Sound.

The quick descent was speeded up with some unexpected glissades down the treacherous slopes, enough to allow Valerio to catch the p.m. ferry for an 'early night' in Victoria and for me to enjoy a pleasant supper with friends. It all seemed a very fitting way to "professionally develop".

*[Editor's Plug- two impressive observations from the trip seem to be symbolic of the 'power of the press', no matter how humble the 'press' may be. (apologies to B.W.'s ego). I've railed against the siting of micro-wave towers on scenic ridges in previous articles (B.W. '93). My boon companion, John, had even*

*attacked the Brunswick tower in his venom. Well, to our great surprise and joy, we now found the summit bloc free of this gross, ignoble phallus. On the same trip, I'd also bemoaned the dangers involved in sliding from a sloping Thermo-rest into oblivion. Well, imagine my thoughts when, on the previous day's visit to M.E.C. (ca), I'd seen the new mats with non-skid strips glued on!*

*What do you know? Someone, somewhere listens in and ACTS. I feel loath to claim credit for such diverse events, but maybe, just maybe, it's worth the ink to voice concerns where and when you can. No-one can predict the outcome of our published rantings.]*

## South of the Border

### Cascade Alpine Ice

March 2-5

Michael Kuzyk

It was early February and I hadn't been on a trip since September. I was aching to get into the mountains and I wanted to climb something that would both challenge and excite me. I had pondered over several possible ski trips on the island, but I couldn't convince my friend in Bellingham to come up to the Island. Fair enough, I love the Cascades. I caught the Anacortes ferry the next day thinking that I would save myself both time and money by having my friend, Alex, pick me up on the other side. The weather that week had been perfect and that afternoon was no exception as Alex and I mulled over routes. We decided to do the north face of Chair Peak (6238 ft.) near Snoqualmie pass, east of Seattle. This 5 pitch, 50-70° ice route was in perfect condition after the past week of cold, sunny weather.

That night I endured a cold bivi in the upper parking lot of the Alpentel ski area. The next morning, around 5:50 a.m., five vehicles rolled into the lot within 5 min. of each other. I was certain these couldn't be climbers. But, I forgot we weren't on the Island, where you can often enjoy an entire mountain to yourself. We were poised to climb a high access ice route, described in an affordable guide book and only 40 miles east of Seattle. As it stood, 12 people were aiming for the N. face of Chair that day.

On the approach hike I was comforted by thoughts Alex's description of the approach: "only 40 min. with a 500 ft. elevation gain... max.!" After approximately 30 min., with the mountain still in the distance I started to realize that Alex's description did not add up: we camped around 3200 ft., the route was 5 pitches (~750 ft. vertical), and the approach was only 500 ft. of elevation gain... this only added up to 4450 ft. and this peak is 6238 ft.. Upon confronting Alex with this minor detail, I learned that he had been in here on skis the previous weekend in zero visibility. Not a problem, I just soaked up the view and enjoyed the sunrise and within 2 hr we were at the base of the N. face. All we had to do now was wait for eight others to start the climb before we could.

Within 30 min., Alex was starting up the first pitch which consisted primarily of 60° water ice with a few 70° stems. This face

was beautiful, and so was the route, it didn't feel very exposed because it followed a gully system in the center of the face. The route also ran out on 1000 ft. of 45° snow leading down to scenic Snow Lake. At the top of the first pitch, I saw that Alex had setup a solid belay with his pickets. We exchanged a few pieces of gear and I lead on for the second pitch. This pitch was mainly 50° snow. If we had a 200 ft. rope we could have made it to some trees for the next belay, instead I had to setup an anchor off of my ice axe driven up to its head equalized with a picket. The third pitch was much of the same except Alex was able to setup a belay off of trees at the top of the pitch. The fourth pitch ended up being the gem of the route and I got to lead it. It looked deceptively gentle from below, but was actually comprised almost entirely of 60-70° water ice. I was able to get in two screws before reaching a tree ~100 ft. out from Alex. From that point on we simul-climbed to the summit ridge. From there it was a 3rd class scramble up 50 ft. of snow and rock to the summit where we were treated to views of Rainier, Glacier Pk., and dozens of serrated peaks I wish I could name.

The descent route consisted of a loose, rock gully, followed by a double rope rappel which lead to about 300 ft. of 45° snow to down-climb. As much fun as this route was, I can't help but wish that we had been the only people climbing it that day. I would hate to say that the crowded circumstances took away from my enjoyment of the climb, but it really does make you appreciate the isolation of the majority of our peaks on the Island. Granted, this was a high access climb and the Cascades do have remote areas that see less traffic, like the Picket Range, and Glacier peak is definitely less often climbed than Baker. I think we are privileged in southwestern B.C. that we don't have to look hard to find solitude in our coastal ranges.

Participants: Alex Krawarik & Michael Kuzyk

Mt. Rainier is of course a dominant influence over the Puget Sound region. It's everywhere: it's the backdrop for local TV news programs: it's on a local beer label: it's even on the state license plate. But it's more than just a feature on the horizon: it's a landmark on the psychological horizon of everyone who has lived in its shadow. It's like a silent stranger standing right next to you, right smack in the middle of your personal space. Whether it's clear or cloudy, or day or night, even if you close your eyes and turn away, the mountain just stays in your face and will not go away. It's huge, and for Puget Sounders, it cannot be ignored. And for any mountaineer from the region, it is a required and unavoidable rite of passage.

AM and I had attempted Rainier via the Tahoma Glacier in 1986, but were turned back near 4000m by a glacier-wide crevasse. We, of course, wanted to try again, scheduling it for "sometime in the future".

Years drifted by.

Then my *mañana* attitude was abruptly terminated when a Seattle-area TV talkshow highlighted some U.S. Army soldiers who had been playing with an Ouija board during the Gulf War. These screwballs claimed to have received apocalyptic predictions for the future, including, of course, a prediction that Rainier would blow in 1994 or 1995. Egad, I was running out of time! Having dawdled all of 1994 away, I frantically started laying plans.

Now, having grown up in the aura of Rainier, I can understand why I am drawn to the mountain. But I was totally unprepared for the response of Islanders to this climb. After all, Rainier is at best a fleeting white mirage on the horizon. I imagined having to plead to get enough participants for a "critical mass" of 2 rope teams. Instead, my phone rang off the hook, and I felt compelled to set a 9-person limit, which was filled by Christmas. (For an end-of-May climb?!?!?)

But with just a couple of weeks to go, two people broke extremities and had to drop out, and a third person vanished from the continent. Everyone on the wait-list had made other plans. Bad omens? A call to the ranger station disclosed the fact that the West Side Road was still closed due to heavy snows and flood damage. Great. Worse yet: 7 days before our attempt, Rainier shivered with a magnitude 4.1 earthquake which was felt all around the mountain. Half of 1995 was gone now, how much longer would Rainier hold together? Had I dawdled too long? Was this The End?

A last minute call determined that the West Side Road had finally been opened for 3.5 miles, so in rising spirits, we (DG, JH, GG and I) left the island on the first ferry on Saturday, picking up DM at Tsawassen. I met AM just outside the park entrance at 13:30, where the snafus continued: turns out every climber in a party has to sign in individually, not just the leader. Everybody else eventually had to be retrieved from the trailhead back down to the entrance.

But AM had more bad news: the Tahoma Creek trail was gone. Gone? Hadn't we used it 9 years earlier? AM explained: Tahoma Creek is subject to jökulhlaups<sup>1</sup> in the spring, and

"hoips" (as the ranger called them) had, over the past (obviously 9) years, reamed out the valley, taking with them most of the old banks, including the trail.

One could *still* approach up the Tahoma creekbed, but it seemed like a dangerous option: outbursts can occur without notice at any time, day or night, during the late spring on the west side of Rainier. Witnesses to a previous outburst at the Tahoma Creek bridge (which was suspended 30m over the creek) had reported a flood so violent that it tossed boulders *over* the bridge. Another outburst had left muddy splashmarks on the bridge's superstructure, 2 - 3 metres above the deck level. (The bridge no longer exists, having been torn out by subsequent outbursts.)

So, since we were exactly in the middle of jökulhlaup season, we opted for less objective danger and decided to hike up the West Side Road another 4 miles to access the Puyallup River Trail (in a valley not prone to outbursts.) We reached low camp at the upper end of Emerald Ridge (about 1860m) at 20:00 and settled down to watch the sunset light play across the vast white route above.

We were away Sunday morning by 06:00 in order to take advantage of the cool westside shadows. The sky was perfectly clear and the air still. We scrambled up a knob and immediately merged onto the glacier, where we roped up. At that point, we could spot the faint dots of climbers on the steep upper slopes of the Tahoma: multiple rope-teams, working their way upwards. They seemed to have some difficulty at a crevasse-like feature high on the route, possibly belaying it, and AM and I wondered if that was the same place we had had to turn back 9 years earlier.

The ascent up the lower Tahoma was long and straightforward, the seasonal snowpack still providing thick bridges. In the afternoon, the sunlight became very intense and conditions very hot, with the snow softening up considerably. We conserved a lot of energy by following the footsteps of the groups that had ascended the day before. By mid-afternoon we reached the Sunset Amphitheatre cirque, and we made high camp at about 3300m at 16:00, sharing the campsite with two climbers who were doing a carry-over.

Camp was directly at the point where the Tahoma steepened up to the summit. We were well right of the mouth of the Sickle (an avalanche chute for seracs calving off the summit cap) but much closer to the precipitous Tahoma cleaver. Directly above us, the cleaver wall had torn a huge hole in the flank of the glacier where it squeezed down past the rock. We were well left of the icefall debris from that hole, but far enough? There was a TV-sized block of blue ice just a few metres from our tent....

Shortly after we stopped, the two parties of Tacoma Mountaineers returned from the summit and gave us some beta on the route above. They warned us about tricky route finding in the crux icefall, suggesting we wand our tracks through the area. Icefall? AM and I looked at each other again. We were expecting a dastardly chasm, maybe even a bergschrund, but an icefall?!?!?

We were not nearly as affected with altitude at high camp as I anticipated, with the exception of JH, who had a debilitating bout of AMS (acute mountain sickness). GG shot some video footage inside a nearby crevasse. We attempted to rehydrate as much as

possible and went to bed about 21:00, listening to sporadic rock and ice fall on the cleaver wall above.

Suddenly, at about 22:00, just as the last light was fading away, there came a tremendous roar. DM leaped out of his bivvy sac to observe an expanding white cloud of air-borne debris racing downslope directly towards our camp. He danced around for a second, debating whether he should try to roust us all out of our tents to evacuate the site. But the cloud was approaching too rapidly, so he jumped behind JH's tent for cover.(?) The blast came and shook the tents, but the cloud proved only to be spindrift that left a fine white dust all over our tents, gear and DM himself.

It wasn't clear until morning how close the ice debris itself had come (the debris track halted about a hundred metres away), but DM and JH still took the precaution of immediately moving their accommodations below ours. (I wasn't aware that North Face tents can deflect bounding 100 kg blocks of ice!)

We got up at 02:30 to a brilliant starry night. On the steep slope above we could see the headlamps of the two climbers who had shared our campsite. JH had substantially recovered from her AMS, and DM made the determination that we would not have to evacuate her to a lower elevation. Nevertheless, we all decided it was unwise for her to continue. The rest of us divided into 2 rope teams and started up under headlamps at 04:30. The snow had frozen up, affording good cramponing.

The upper Tahoma was never too steep, attaining an angle of perhaps 35 - 38. There was just the gentlest hint of a katabatic wind subsiding down the slope, but we got steadily colder as we gained altitude. GG had trouble keeping his fingers warm inside his mittens, and AM's water bottle started freezing inside his pack. We worked around some ice pinnacles jutting out from the surface and came to grips with the crevasse-like feature that had slowed the parties the day before. Icefall? The feature turned out to be perhaps 10 metres of bare ice sloping at a measly angle of maybe 35! I never did see any "icefall", so this supposed crux move was somewhat anti-climactic.

Above, the angle relented a bit for the final 400m to the summit. Everybody felt the altitude, and we moved like pensioners, one step and one full breath every 5-8 seconds. I became severely hypoxic at about 4100m, nearly falling asleep in my tracks whenever we stopped for more than a few seconds, but the hypoxia went away higher up. At one point, AM spotted plumes of steam rising from unseen vents nearby.

We crested out and summited at about 09:30, finally catching sight of the snow-filled crater with its black perimeter of bare rock. There were about 20 people at the summit, with about 20 more either arriving or departing via the trenched pathways to the Emmons or Ingraham routes. The wind was quite strong on the summit, so we retreated to the shelter of some nearby bare rocky ground for a snack.

While we were eating and drinking, DG absently picked up a summit pebble by his feet. It was quite warm. No, it was --- yikes! Too hot! He dropped it like it had bit him. Then he noticed that steam was rising from the hole where the pebble had been. We quickly realized why this area was snow-free: active geothermal heating from below! DG put the pebble back into its hole, lest he disrupt the summit's delicate geostructural balance and release the dreaded eruption.....

We started descent at 10:00. By noon, the sun had come fully around and the heat was rapidly building. Darkness and quarters

came off. We regained high camp at 12:30 and immediately decided to sleep for about an hour. It was no simple task to stay out of the heat: we retreated into our tents to avoid direct sunlight, but it was still hot inside. Several people pushed sleeping bags and foam pads out of the way and laid on the bare tent floors, directly on top of the snow (this turned out to be the crux move of the climb) and were somewhat revived. No such luck for me: an hour later, I was much dizzier and weaker, even after polishing off 500ml of soup and another 500ml of Gatorade. DM was also not feeling too well.

Some debate ensued. Some of us were either suffering from AMS (in which case the group should descend) or overheating (in which case the group should wait out the heat for a few more hours before exertion.) In the end, we decided to descend. Things immediately started disappearing from my pack: soon it had just the embarrassing weight of a daypack.

We left high camp at 15:30, postholing easily up to our knees in the soft snow. Snowbridges which had carried other parties earlier in the day were quite suspect now, entailing some detours. Some nearby slopes had already released a few late-afternoon avalanches, so we again detoured the steeper slopes enroute which had not. By 18:00, we had descended to 2400m and midday temperatures were fading. I was feeling a bit stronger now (Was it AMS? Overheating? Who knows?) but others were quite tired, so we swapped loads: I took all of my gear back, and then some of theirs. On the lower Tahoma, we encountered frequent narrow crevasses, most of which were just barely "jumpable". Each 50m rope team typically intersected several of these crevasses simultaneously, requiring careful attention both forwards and backwards to see who was doing what on the rope. We also secured some of the more dicey jumps with boot-ax belays.

We reached our previous low camp on Emerald Ridge at about 22:00. The next morning (no alpine start this time!) we again pondered the probability of getting "hoiped" in the Tahoma Creek valley, and again opted to return down the Puyallup River Trail. We also took a pleasant short-cut near the trailhead that shaved off a loop of the West Side Road. (This trail was closed due to collapsed and "vertical puncheons", but Islanders, who are uncomfortable on maintained trails anyway, had no problems bushwhacking the major difficulty -- a sagging boardwalk.) We reached the cars at about noon. And the mountain didn't blow.

Many thanks to those who accompanied AM and I on this adventure, thus enabling me (in particular) to finally close this chapter in my climbing career.

*Participants: Rex Andrew, Doug Goodman, Greg Gordon, Judy Holm, Doug McGhee and Alan Murphy.*

<sup>1</sup>: According to W.S.B. Patterson in *The Physics of Glaciers*, Pergamon Press, 1981, (a nifty little book), *jökulhlaups* are outbursts caused by the sudden drainage of meltwater accumulated either in englacial cavities or in supra- or subglacial lakes. It is an Icelandic word, first used by an Icelandic glaciologist to describe local phenomena. Referring to the *Concise Icelandic/English Dictionary* by Hólmarsson, Sanders and Tucker (IDUNN, Reykjavik, 1989), the roots of the word are (predictably enough) *jökull*, meaning glacier, and *hlaup*, meaning (here) a flood.

## Crevasse Workshop

June 17 - 18

The shortest access I know to sure-fire crevasses is on Mt. Baker's north side. Baker is also attractive because the summit is a much-sought-after objective for Islanders who look across at it every day. Unfortunately, the number of participants in this workshop usually exceeds the Baker party size limit of 12. Not to be put off, though, I concocted a plan of horrendous logistical complexity: split the participants into 2 groups and hold one workshop on Saturday and a second on Sunday.

A week and a half earlier, Peter Mason graciously let us use the Cage for prussiking practice. 11 people took advantage of the facility to cut and size prussiks, zip up, and then find that descending is much more difficult.

The weather for the Baker segment was quite unstable, which I understand is *de rigueur* for this workshop. Nevertheless, I made the short 1.5 hour hike in on Friday with WS, SD and MP, camping in a pleasantly sheltered stand of trees at the Coleman glacier overlook at about 1200m. Saturday we left camp at 07:30 in the fog and started up the moraine, hunting for access down onto the Coleman. Along the way we picked up GT and LG, who had camped much higher up and had nearly been blown back to Vancouver during the night.

There was much less snow than I expected, and the lower Coleman was all bare ice. Nevertheless, about 300m above camp, there was still adequate snow cover and plenty of "holes" even at the edge of the glacier. In about an hour we found a decent "crevasse" about 3m deep with a bedrock bottom. Everyone had a turn at each position on a 3-person rope, hauling victims out of the hole with a Z pulley. We finished about 14:30 in a steady rain and returned towards camp.

Meanwhile, down at the Glacier ranger station, KC-D and DM had stopped in and made the offhand comment that they were with a group of 16 - 20 people. This comment electrified the ranger, who shot to the SW radio and sent out an APB<sup>1</sup> for an illegal party size.

Back at camp (now in a driving rain), I was approached by a Park Ranger who asked if I had seen a party of 16 to 20 from Vancouver Island. This was an odd conversational opener, but I clarified the situation to his satisfaction. He even reluctantly

Rex Andrew

admitted that my horribly complex plan was probably the *only* legal way for a large group (larger than 12) to use the north side of the mountain (i.e., split into smaller independent groups.)

Later, still in the rain, TP, JO, KC-D, DM and SR arrived, pitched tents, and jumped inside to await the morning.

Sunday a.m., we left camp at 06:30 in fog and found that the afternoon/evening rain had been snow just a hundred metres above camp, leaving all the bare ice seracs with a fresh white dusting. Again everyone had a chance at each position on the rope. Sunday proved different, though, as the rope trenched so deeply during hauling that every victim was getting stuck at the lip. This situation complicates the rescue and required demonstrations of advanced techniques for freeing the rope. This bit of realism is, of course, the kind of snafu that happens all the time in the mountains, and I feel the Saturday group were slightly short-changed because they didn't see how to deal with Z-pulley complications. We finished right at 14:00.

The flip side of the weekend plan was for the Saturday group to climb Baker on Sunday (and the Sunday group on Monday) but participants wisely chose to return when the weather was less miserable.

Aside from the complicated logistics, the Coleman glacier offers unparalleled ease of access and plenty of crevasses, probably from late May onward. Logistics could be *uncomplicated* if the party size could be kept below 12 (an unworkable idea given the growth rate of the club) or if each day had a separate coordinator who, preferably, would lead any associated summit attempt.

*Participants: Rex Andrew: Saturday: Mark Pierog, Walter Speirs, George Tumpach, Laurie Goein (both from Vancouver), Stacy Dewhurst; Sunday: Darren McNeil, Tony Pugh, John Owen, Scott Robards, Ken Coley-Donohue*

<sup>1</sup>U.S. police lingo for an "all points bulletin" -- haven't you seen *Cops in Bellingham* on those international stations yet?

## Mt. Baker (again)

July 1 - 2

Rex Andrew

With an unfinished ice-climbing agenda and a tiny window of availability, I hastily called around and ultimately talked DM and VF into attempting Baker's North Ridge with me. We packed ourselves into VF's car, zipped onto the 19:00 ferry to Tsawassen and shot south. Down in Bellingham, it was a hot summer Friday night at Sunset Square, and all the fringies were out. With plenty of time to spare after dinner at Taco Bell (with laudable *esprit de corps*, DM had had a Volcano burrito: this guy IS brave, I thought to myself), we wandered over to pick up some groceries at the Fair. Along the way, an automatic door slid shut on VF, bounced off and got stuck. (This guy IS strong, I thought to myself!)

After picking up some groceries (including some bizarre supplements not legal in Canada!?!?!), we shot up the Sunset Highway pausing briefly at the Glacier ranger station for volun-

tary climber self-registration. We reached the trailhead at about 01:00, nearly rolling over some other climbers (from Victoria, it turned out) asleep on the ground. We finally bivvied in the pungent lee of the new commode (NOT recommended!) at about 01:30.

With stable weather and plenty of time on our hands, we awoke late and lounged around, sharpening ice tools and sorting ice screws. Between us, we had three axes, three hammers, a handful of pickets, several flukes, and 10 ice screws. We were armed to the teeth with sharp pointy things, and with perfectly clear weather, there was NO WAY we would be denied.

We left the trailhead at about 09:30, overtaking several earlier parties before reaching the top of the Hogsback. There we roned up, and VF led us in one push up onto the Great Plateau and

over to our bivy site. We busily wanded the perimeter, dug foxholes for our bivy sacks, dug out a little privy, and settled down. It was 13:00.

Armed to the teeth with nowhere to go.

Instead, with plenty of time on our hands, we set to work munching, snoozing, melting water, snoozing, sorting gear, snoozing, applying sunscreen, and snoozing. The afternoon was like the rotisserie barbecue at Thrifty's deli: lay for an hour looking west, then flip ends and look east, watching the mountain. West, east, west, east. Climbing is hard work. We studied the profile of the ridge and the much-vaunted ice cliff by binoculars, rehearsing every move. The route was as good as done! All day long, parties trickled up the Plateau: one sweating, grunting group cut right through our camp (*how gauche!*), relaying the latest forecast for deteriorating conditions and thunderstorms the next afternoon. Sure. I flipped and watched a late party descending the Roman Wall in the alpinglow.

At 01:30, I poked my head out of my bivy sack, only to be reassured by a sky full of stars.

At 02:30 VF was already up, illuminated by the glow of the stove as he cooked in his foxhole. With some alarm, I noticed that the stars were all gone: a great gout of India ink was hemorrhaging across the horizon from the west. We hurriedly packed. At 03:00 I noticed that Baker itself was gone, obscured by a dark ceiling which had suddenly formed out of nothing. We roped up and I led off: on my second step out of camp, I felt the first raindrops. An hour later we were somewhere in a crevasse field in a steady rain and thickening fog. VF suggested we turn back because there was too much rain on his glasses to see. Sounded good to me, so we turned back. We reached our bivy site at 05:30, quickly repacked, reroped, and fled down the Plateau. All around us, other parties were doing the same: the entire north side of Baker was disgorging climbers and backpackers. We reached the parking lot in a driving rain at 09:30 and headed home.

And so commenced eight weeks of rain that drowned out another ice-climbing season in a flood of frustration.

*Participants: Rex Andrew, Valerio Faraoni, Darren McNeil*

## **Royal Basin, Olympic National Park**

July 22-23

*Chris Peppler*

Three vehicles transported a party of ten onto the Coho for the 6:20 a.m. sailing to Port Angeles, Washington, on a fine summer's day, destination: Royal Basin in the Dungeness-Graywolf sector of Olympic National Park

Arrival in Port Angeles was marred by a temporary separation of the party - distracted by road construction at the ferry terminal and apparently unnerved by the probing questions of U.S. immigration, the lead driver exited Port Angeles hoping to catch up to the others, who were, in fact, waiting patiently for route instructions back in town.

Fortunately all were in good spirits when the group finally reunited at the Dungeness/Royal Basin Trailhead parking lot in Olympic National Forest, where Royal Creek empties into the Dungeness River.

Around 11am the group set off on a well-maintained trail that soon worked its way into Olympic National Park and over the next 10km climbed steadily to beautiful Royal Lake at 1,564m. Although Royal Basin is a popular camping destination for hikers, we had no trouble finding suitable places to camp when we arrived mid-afternoon. Good campsites, by the lake or along the meadows were readily available. After setting up, we headed higher, across marshy Arrowhead Meadow, to the main basin. There we found marmots, plenty of snow and splendid views of sharply rising peaks - Mount Deception to the south and The Needles in the west.

Sunday morning, again in bright sunshine, we split into two groups, the main group headed for a nearby waterfall and a climb up a side valley in the general direction of The Needles. As we worked our way higher over the snowfields to the base of The Needles, Gerhard and Joanne were already coming back down a snow-covered ridge near Mount Deception. By 1pm all were back in camp, noting a now-threatening sky and thinking about the cruise back down this beautiful valley and home.

We decided to take the last ferry, giving us plenty of time to stop for supper at the excellent Chihuahua Restaurant in Port Angeles. Burned calories were replaced *con gusto*.

*Participants: Greg and Jill Lawrance; Gerhard Lepp and Joanne Draper; Tom Wilson and Bev Fletcher; Yolande Visser; Jennifer Hocking; Chris and Lynne Peppler*

## Our Trip: Olympic National Park

July 28-30

We started our trip by hiking up steep hills. We saw lots of marmots, deer, and pretty flowers. It was hard work but we finally made it.

That day was Maya's birthday. We celebrated by Maya opening some presents, and after, ate some delicious cupcakes that she brought along with her. Sometimes the deer would run after our food, but that was okay. The next morning was freezing cold, but Maya, Kate, Yuka, and Katya (we shared a tent) came out of our tents when the sun came out.

Later on we went for a hike to Moose Lake to have lunch (with the mosquitoes) and after some people went to the Grand Pass. We played a game called "Hide the marshmallows in the snow." It was lots of fun! When we arrived at the ridge, we started taking pictures and sliding down on the snow.

Soon it was time to go. We said our farewells to the deer, and started heading up the steep rocky ledge up to the windy ridge. Then we headed back down the trails, stopping sometimes to play in the snow. Then (finally), we were back where we started at the very beginning, the parking lot! After all of that hiking we were

Yuka Kurokawa and Katya Scandrett

very tired, so we stopped at a lake to have a snack, then we went to the hot springs! We relaxed in the springs for a while, then we went to a Mexican restaurant. We were all tired, hot, and hungry by then. But the spicy food made us even hotter! We hadn't forgotten Maya's birthday by then so Kate told the waiter that it was her birthday so she got her picture taken, she got to wear a sombrero, and she got sung Happy Birthday in Spanish!

Our ferry trip home wasn't that exciting (we got a little seasick). When we FINALLY! got home we were all glad to see toilets that flushed, electronic washing machines, and most of all, NO MOSQUITOES!!!

*Participants: Yuka and Maya Kurokawa, Katya Scandrett, Claire Ebendinger (Sherpa of Group 1), Mark and Kate Goodman, Ruth Goodman (Grandma of Group 2), Doug Goodman (leader and Sherpa of Group 2), Joseph and Madeleine Turner, Barbara Price, Heather (cousin from England), and Charles Turner*

## Summer Classics

"Work," said Reverend Spooner, "is the curse of the drinking man." If not true for the drinking man, it certainly is for one who likes to go climbing. So it was, as I headed north during the height of the climbing season in 1994 for about the 6th year in a row, that I made a promise to play hooky for the summer of '95. The winter was spent plotting a nice circuit of climbing objectives and so Julie and I found ourselves on the I5 on August 21 jammed bumper to bumper while the police tried to deal with an overturned liquid-oxygen truck. Things improved. After a quick training ascent of the Beckey route on Liberty Bell, we continued on down to Wyoming.

We hiked around the Tetons for a day or two to get in shape, and after obtaining the coveted back-country permit by stalking the rangers at 6 a.m., we headed up into moraine camp (euphemism for boulder field) below Grand Teton. The next day was spent climbing Bill Exum's ridge in perfect, if a bit windy, weather. The route lived up to its reputation for elegance, both in line and climbing; it was a delight to wander on Wall Street, execute Exum's leap, and flounder up the Friction Pitch. However, we were quite short of breath by the time we reached the summit at 13,800' where we looked down to the desert 7000' below on both sides. The exit route was interesting - there was one 60' free rappel followed by another down an obscure gully - but we enjoyed it all and left this beautiful region with a notion to return.

Onward to an area that has one of my favourite names - the Wind River Range. We timed it to be going into the Cirque of the Towers just as everyone was leaving after Labor Day. Weather was a bit unkind, giving us a thunderstorm or two each day, but we got our opportunities. First we tried Wolf's Head where the "classic" arete gives exposed but clean and well-protected climbing. In particular, the "one-foot" slab delivers. The exit, however, offered the real excitement. We did a 700' face rappel

Rob Macdonald

off bolts to get down - a rappel I'll never forget. At the first bolt station, as I pulled the rope down, I looked up to see the end of the rope 20' above me still had the knot in it. Here we are in the middle of an 80 degree face, standing on a 3" ledge, tied off with two bolts; let me tell you this was way nasty. I found out that I can actually lead a 5-whatever face with 500' of exposure -- the moment I got my hand on that knot was one of the greatest pleasures I've ever had.

Weather beat on us some more, and finally in a cold dank fog we clambered up onto Pingora where we cowered for an hour with little improvement either in our temperament or the weather. Time was slipping away so we ventured up the south buttress on greasy, cold cracks with threatening clouds. I guess the weather gave up first, so we were in sun for the top pitch and enjoyed sun for the rest of the trip out. One of the really pleasant surprises about this area is the beauty and ease of the trail in. I'm going back, no doubt about it.

Edith Cavell - the East Ridge - was now highest on the list. Weather had not promised much for the Rockies which is why we initially headed south to Wyoming, but we thought we would give it a try on the way home. We arrived in Jasper on Sept. 12th to learn that the peak had just come into shape - although the drive past it on Banff-Jasper highway showed a lot of snow higher up. We camped in the Edith Cavell campground, along with a lot of boogie-woogie bugle elks, and then set off at 3 am. It was a full moon, so we were able to wander up the moraine without using headlamp - rather magical, I thought - and first light found us at the bottom of the E ridge. Easy scrambling gets you up to the snow couloir just below the shoulder and here we pulled out the rope as it is steep and a slip would have been consequential. We continued up the ridge, belaying about 3 pitches (using chocks and occasional fixed pins) and throwing in running belays for the rest. The route is definitely a classic, and having been climbing at over

11,000' for the past weeks we felt great on it. We arrived at the summit about 1:30 p.m. with splendid views in all directions - absolutely bomber weather. The traverse across the summit is long, and we needed to use crampons to get across the snowfield on the SW flank. We followed the very good advice "to drop to the lowest part of the ridge" and from there it was "the boulder field from hell" before we got to the trail in the meadows below.

We got back to the car by 8 p.m. so it can be done from the parking lot as a respectable day trip. All good things must end and it was time to go home - but this trip was a bit like Chinese Food - after a couple of hours on the road, I was hungry to go again. ground and suggested Kangaroo Temple. It lies on the beautiful granodiorite Kangaroo Ridge, adjacent to the Early Winter Spires. We agreed on the north face, a mildly technical 4 pitch route. Supposedly mostly 4th class with a single pitch of 5.6.

## To Mazama and Back

September 29-October 1

Michael Kuzyk

Every year it seems to be the same. The summer has come and gone without warning and I am left trying to convince myself that I had started the climbing season with the best of intentions. My season looks respectable on paper, but inexplicably I feel I still have something left to prove to myself. This is why I found myself in the passenger seat of Alex's '69 VW bus droning uphill in the darkness getting ever closer to Washington Pass. The plan was simple. Alex had gotten back into Bellingham a week earlier and wanted to climb, something hard. We both wanted to end the season with a bang. Probably this would somehow justify, in our own minds, the inactivity of our winters. We were also both on the same wavelength. We wanted a challenging alpine rock route. Four Sheets to the Wind (5.8 V) looked to be it, a two day traverse of Molar Tooth, North Peak, Cutthroat and Whistler. We both knew that conditions needed to be perfect to get this climb this late in the season. The fact that the previous weekend had been beautiful and the last five days had been nothing but rain was not comforting at all. The road was dry as we pulled into the Blue Lake Trail parking lot at Washington Pass, hopes were high and it was time to sleep.

We awoke to mountains on the brink of giving in to winter. The Early Winters group was freshly dusted with snow, the ground was wet and we were pushing the alpine season one week too far. It just simply felt too cold for rock. After admiring jagged Silverstar Mtn. and its Wine Spires, we decided to head further east, to Mazama. Alex assured me that a mere 15 miles east of the pass we would be enjoying sun and dry rock on the Goat Wall. Feeling none too enthusiastic I humored him, but soon enough we driving through forests of ponderosa pines and pulled up to a 'local' crag called Fun Rock. There was a multitude of bolted sport routes in the 5.8-5.11 range. We were content to play on the 5.8-5.10a routes. The day passed quickly as we traded leads and watched system after system blow in from the mountains. After experimenting with aid for a couple of hours, we retired to the Early Winters Creek campground.

Sunny skies greeted us the following morning. We both knew this was our last chance to do something alpine and the weather gods had permitted it. With my hot chocolate in hand I was ready to face the northwest face of Liberty Bell (5.8). But, as the bus lost steam gaining the elevation up to the pass, so too did our hopes of a sustained technical route. Clouds were anchored in the mountains, and the Spires remained wet and snowy. Feeling defeated, we decided to settle for a scramble up Whistler Peak's western flanks to round out the weekend. After failing to find the start of the route and cursing Beckey for having too much detail in his guides, I asked for Bellingham but Alex held his

When we reached Kangaroo pass, Kangaroo Temple came into view and stood tall at 7572 ft., with near vertical on all sides. We traversed the valley wall for the better part of an hour to the notch at the base of the north face. The wind was gusting, ominous clouds rolled overhead and the route was clad with verglass and a dusting of fresh snow. Following the first pitch, it quickly became apparent that the 4th class pitches were behaving more like 5.3. Strange how iced filled cracks and greasy footholds will do that. The exposure on the route was spectacular. It added a twisted thrill to my lead as I angled upward to the right, aiming for a ledge traversing around to the northwest face. I set up belay and Alex followed. The next pitch looked interesting. A narrow, outward slanting, icy ledge traversed around the corner to the 5.6 dihedral. Alex lead around the corner on his knees and was consumed for some time with the 5.6 problem. With him around the corner and out of sight I could only envision his difficulties. Visions of him attempting to lay-back this iced up dihedral with his feet continually slipping out from underneath him plagued my thoughts. I had this sinking feeling that a 5.6 corner was going to turn us back within one pitch of the summit. Finally Alex took in ten feet of rope and called "off belay" a few minutes later. As I seconded around the airy ledge, I saw what had been demanding his time. He had aided up through the dihedral on a cleverly placed cam. Even on aid, this move was awkward in boots and with gloves on. A few minutes later we simul-climbed the final pitch onto the sandy summit slopes and onward to the summit block. Rewarded with views of unclimbed buttresses and walls all around, we celebrated our success and discussed plans for when we would next return. We could return home satisfied with our season and already with plans for next year's distant season.

*Participants: Alex Krawarik & Michael Kuzyk*

## Three Fingers Peak

Sept. 30 - Oct. 1

Kate Darling

*Lord, this is an huge rayn!  
This were weder for to slepen  
inne!*

- Chaucer

Cruising down the I5, windshield wipers working hard to keep up with the rain. Daunted? - nay, never. Quick stop for hot drink and apple pie at an American diner and off to find the trail head. Upstream, or rather up trail, we waded, was that a salmon going by? The rain eased and we set a leisurely pace up through misty forests to Goat Flats, our home for the night. A hint of sunset to the west, lights twinkling far below.

We awoke to a cool, foggy morn with teasing patches of blue sky; "sucker holes" Tony assures us. Lovely meandering trail up towards Three Fingers. Light snow on gray rocks, the dull red of frost kissed blueberry patches, and thin, misty fog weaving in and out of rocky outcrops. A beautiful day. Farther along the

snowy trail, old telegraph cables lie marking the way to our destined digit. Three ladders, iced but stable, lead up to the tiny forestry cabin perched on the south finger.

Up we go, one by one, wary of slipping to the knuckle of rock below. Great little cabin, circa 1920's, with panoramic windows looking out toward Vancouver Island, Mt. Rainier, and yes, there's a glimpse of Mt. Baker's dome, golden in the sunlight. The cabin's equipped with an armchair, a table, a single bed, and a few candles for that romantic evening. Attempt at cloud busting while lunching atop our tiny aerie. Weather cleared during our descent. So it goes. Broke camp and toasted a very fine day with a stop of Stone's ginger wine. Cheers to Catrin, our Intrepid leader, may we return again to revel in the view.

*Participants: Catrin Brown, Judy and Viggo Holm, Mike Hubbard,  
Tony Push, Kate Darling*

## Smith Rocks

November 2 - 8

Rex Andrew

Every few years I set sail into the fringes of the climbing community to see what's new. Basically, I'm a mountaineer, and I can't understand anybody who isn't. Bruce Lee, however, advised us to study all styles, pick up the useful techniques and discard the rest. Take sport climbing, for example. I figure all that "rap-boltin, slipper-wearin, knee-droppin, pink-pointin, no-fearin, hang-doggin, plastic-pullin" jive is just the eccentricity of a low-lander subculture. Maybe, but my occasional studies on hard steep rock have paid back endless dividends in the mountains in terms of balance, movement, body position and flexibility.

VF, on the other hand, is a card-carrying fringe member. When the rains of October drove him indoors, he sought refuge at Crag X, where he climbed until he torqued out his finger-tendons. Then, in a leap of logic that escapes even me, he decided the best way to recuperate would be to take an extended road trip to Smith Rocks. He invited me and I figured it was in fact, time for another foray into the fringe to polish up old skills. So I agreed.

My crux move came almost immediately -- my last foray into sport climbing was ... ahem ... last decade, and my only boots were a pair of quintuply resoled version 1.0 Cro-Magnons. I quickly shot down to Sports Rent where they outfitted me in these exquisitely painful Asolos. Radical, man! Compared to my old boots, they felt like Ferraris on my feet.

It took us about 11 hours from Tsawwassen to Terrebonne, so plan essentially a full day. There is a small campground right at Smith Rocks State Park, known as the "bivouac site": the fee apparently varies throughout the year, but was \$4/person in November. You have to stay in tents at sites about 200m from the parking lot (i.e., no car-camping.) The site has a bathroom with running water and showers. (There is also a new single-day parking fee of \$3 at the main parking lot.)

We stayed at an alternative site in the Crooked River

National Grasslands (known informally as the "Grasslands".) This is a free campground, recently upgraded with pit toilets and a gravelled road, but there is no running water. To get there, turn left (going south) in Terrebonne at the Redpoint Climbing Shop (as if going to the park) but keep following the road (don't take the next turn to the park.) The road winds for about 5 miles, past a cemetery (spooky!) and deadends at a T junction. Turn left and follow that road, which takes you into the next county. About 5 or 6 miles from the junction you'll see a huge open-walled barn on the left: the campground is about a half mile further, on the left, not well marked. Inside the turn-in however, there is a sign advising you to make sure your campfires are "dead out". Some good soul has nailed a single silver reflector onto a fencepost opposite the entrance. Turning left off the main road, cross a cattle bar, go about 100 m on a dirt track, and hang another left.

VF claimed we would have pleasantly balmy weather, and in fact, the lowest temperature during our trip was 12 degrees. Too bad it was on the Fahrenheit scale! The wind would also pick up, so we wore a lot of winter gear. Very alpine!

I've always said everyone (climbers or otherwise) should visit Smith Rocks at least once in their lifetime. Smith has some of the most amazing rock formations I've ever seen. The main venue has the usual assortment of faces and dihedrals, but the eye is inexorably drawn toward Smith Rock itself. This formation rises in soaring buttresses and flying aretes to "Vulture Ridge", a summit ridge with weird, Tolkienesque spires. The walls are composed of vertical mud and shattered rhyolite dikes, so there are essentially no routes up there: the pinnacles have become a bird sanctuary. Sunrises are quite spectacular at Smith: the dawn draws magical hues of orange, red, green and white out of the rock. But the most stirring image, in my mind, came at dusk when

the hunched-back spires along Vulture Ridge stood silhouetted against a purple sky.

Makes you want to climb right up there. Fortunately, there is an abundance of high-quality climbs involving far less lunacy. In our 5 days, we stayed busy all day every day, sampling routes from 5.6 to 5.11. Most of these climbs were well-bolted half-rope-length affairs requiring only quickdraws. Many of these climbs continue on as multipitch routes, but a rack is invariably required for protection on the upper pitches. We did one to the top (our sole allowance to mountaineering!) and the scenery was well worth it. VF was way-honed and led nearly everything. I tried to follow and clean---but, having never climbed above 5.9 before, I left a fair amount of blood on those 10a - d things. Sorta begs the definition of "cleaning", doesn't it?

The most pleasant surprise? The atmosphere wasn't nearly as fringie as I expected. On the weekend, whole families appeared,

complete with coolers, and even the rug-rats went up on top-ropes. I also counted on several days more women than men. There was no sense of one-upsmanship, but rather one of respect for pushing your limits. People were generally supportive, even occasionally shouting encouragement to strangers who were shaking, whimpering and about to come off. Everybody understood. It was okay to try and fail because everybody was trying and failing. You could even tap into that energy to motivate yourself to push to the next skill level.

Overall, it was a valuable training lesson for me and a good recuperation for VF. Everybody should go, at least once.

*Participants: Rex Andrew & Valerio Faraoni*

## **Busted on Pico Bolivar**

*February 16-21, 1994*

*Lindsay Elms*

Simon Bolivar or "Boli" as we referred to him while we were traveling in Venezuela is the most revered character in the country's history. Every city, town and village has a Plaza Bolivar where a bust of "Boli" is the focal point, the country's currency is called Bolivars, one of the main cities is called Ciudad Bolivar. There is the Simon Bolivar Airport as well as a Simon Bolivar University so it is not surprising that the highest mountain should be called Pico Bolivar. Who is Simon Bolivar? Ask, anybody from Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, or Colombia they could tell you that he was the person who liberated them from the Spanish in 1821.

Pico Bolivar at 5,007 metres is located in Parque Nacional Sierra Nevada De Merida immediately to the south and above the city of Merida. In a cluster to the east are Pico La Concha (the shell), 4,922 m; and Pico Humboldt and Bonpland, 4,942 m and 4,883 m, which honours a pair of 19th Century naturalists who never actually saw the Sierra Nevada. Further east lies the massif of Pico Mucunuque which reaches 4,672 m. Directly west of Pico Bolivar is Pico Espejo (the mirror), 4,765 m, served by the world's highest cablecar system. To the west of Espejo is Pico El Toro (the bull), 4,755 m and Pico El Leon (the lion), 4,740 m.

Our climb began with a ride up to the Imparque (National Parks) office at La Mucuy by John Pena of Guamanchi Expeditions. John is the manager of the trekking agency as well as one of the country's top mountaineers and was instrumental in getting us our permit to climb in the National Park without a guide. It has become essential to hire a guide when visiting the park on anything more than a day trip. This came about due to the easy access to the peaks by the cablecar or teleferico which carried its passengers up the 3,000 m in one and a half hours. Many people would ride the teleferico up to the top station on Pico Espejo and then knowing that the top of Pico Bolivar was only another 250 m higher, would decide to attempt a quick climb of the mountain. Being unaware of the effects of the altitude and the way the clouds rapidly build up after lunch, numerous rescues had to be performed. Thus it became necessary to hire a guide. It has been two years since the teleferico last worked and there is no sign of it

beginning operation again in the next couple of years. The country has made more tourist dollars from guiding than from the cablecar.

The trail began at 2,200 m in the dense cloud forest and moved up through the various vegetation zones until our first camp under a bivvy rock at Laguna Coromoto at 3,300 m. The next day we started moving early to try and avoid hiking in the hot afternoon sun. Nearing Laguna Verde, the combined effects of the altitude, the weight of our packs and the heat of the sun began slowing us down. It was time for an early lunch. A couple of slices of sweet guayaba bread with cheese and orange juice, normally what we would have as an entre before the main course, was enough at this altitude. Now of course we couldn't continue on full stomachs so we laid down and snoozed for an hour.

We were determined to get up to Laguna El Suero so we shook the lethargy from our legs and shouldered our packs. The sun was really beating down on us so we were moved from boulder to boulder, the only source of shade up to the Laguna. This was the middle of summer (dry season) so temperatures were climbing close to 35 degrees C. At last a short scree slope brought us up to the refugio (hut) at the laguna at 4,200 m. We were able to get out of the sun and relax for awhile. After a couple of hours two guides and their clients arrived who wanted to use the hut as they hadn't brought tents. So much for having the place to ourselves.

The next morning, we awoke to find seventeen people, some sleeping while others were feeling the nauseating effects of altitude for the first time, surrounding us. We had slept well that night! By 9 a.m. we were skirting Laguna El Suero for the base of Pico Humboldt. The initial rock wall from a distance looked steep and hard but once at its base we found it very easy. Angling to our left we arrived at scree slopes that we scrambled up and across to the glacier. The summit was very close now and we were both feeling good. We decided to move over some low fifth class rock for the final forty metres instead of the easy rock before arriving on the summit. We had climbed the 740 m in two and a quarter hours so we thought we deserved a half hour rest on top before heading across to Pico Bonpland.

The weather was fine and we were able to see our route for the next day across the traverse to the base camp on Pico Bolivar. Everything was very dry and there was a lot less snow than we expected. The Sierra del Norte or La Culata (the butt) to the north of Merida which rises to 4,700 m plus, was naked, there was not a single patch of snow left on the range.

We descended the South Ridge off Humboldt and got back onto the glacier which led towards the West Ridge on Bonpland. The route was more demanding but nothing that required the use of rope. An hour later we were sitting next to the summit plaque on Pico Bonpland. Just as we were leaving the summit we saw some of the others arriving on the summit of Pico Humboldt - they were obviously very joyous about gaining the summit as none of them, except the guides, were climbers and they had never been to this altitude before.

All we wanted now was to get back down. We traversed across the glacier and gained our ascent route. By 3 p.m. we were back in camp supping on a hot brew and dismissing the thought of solid food - at least me any way. I have found that it takes me a few days to adjust to the altitude but Elaine had no problem and was always hungry, it was just the heat that got to her.

The traverse the next day across to the base camp on Pico Bolivar was a hot, dry hike and the only shade available to us was behind the fraukehibs of grey friars. These plants range from ground-hugging velvety browns to centuries-old trunks with

tufted tops whose silhouettes reminded the Spanish of a procession of friars or frailes. We arrived at the base camp located at Laguna Timoncitos by mid afternoon and spent the rest of the day relaxing and taking on badly needed fluids.

Headaches due to the altitude prevented a good sleep. The weather was clear and cold in the morning as we began the ascent to the summit. The rope remained in my pack until the last pitch. Up til now there really weren't too many places to put in anchors or runners as the rock was like old weet-bix (a breakfast cereal back in New Zealand that very easily crumbles in your hand). The summit block was nice, solid rock with a lot of exposure so I pulled the rope out and belayed Elaine up. On top was the highest memorial to Simon Bolivar in the country - a bust four times life size of the liberator. Next to it we placed our modest craniums and took our photographs with him.

Our descent to camp was quick as we wanted to get off the mountain before the other party started to knock rocks upon us. We packed up camp and continued onto Pico Espejo and the disused Teleferico station. Then began the long winding descent to Merida. Late in the afternoon it began RAINING so we spent a night in a finca (small farm) at La Aguada. The next day we arrived in Merida in time to catch a midday siesta before going out to celebrate.

*Participants: Elaine Kerr and Lindsay Elms*

## **Mt. Roraima**

*March 4-9, 1994*

The second mountain trip for Elaine and I in Venezuela was to the fabled Mt. Roraima (2810 m). This mountain had become famous after Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle wrote his 1912 novel entitled *The Lost World*. It described the ascent of this plateau by Professor Challenger and his party to where prehistoric plants and dinosaurs had lived isolated and unchanged for millions of years. Doyle was inspired by the British botanist Everard Im Thurn who on December 18, 1884, was the first to reach the summit of Mt. Roraima. Im Thurn returned to Europe to lecture on his expedition.

To the Pemon, the indians of the Gran Sabana region of Venezuela, Roraima and the more than one hundred other flat-topped sandstone mesas are called Tepuis. Most of them are remote and for days even months at a time they are hidden by dense cloud cover. Geologists have conducted chronological-dating tests on motel rock which had thrust its way up between layers of sandstone after the ancient plateaus were formed. The dates they came up with were astonishing: The sandstone is at least 1.8 billion years old.

The first I had ever heard of Roraima was in Hamish MacInnes's book *Climb to the Lost World* when the 'prow,' which is at the northern end of the plateau that juts into Guyana, was climbed. Our plan was to go in via the normal route or the Im Thurn route which is from the west.

From the border town (with Brazil) of Santa Elena de Uaiaren we caught the bus back the 50 km to San Francisco de Yuruani and organized a jeep to take us in the 25 km to the trailhead village of Paraitepuy. We were a party of three as a Dutch guy joined us to cut down the expenses. The jeep cost \$50:

it was either pay or walk 6-7 hours on the hot, dusty road - we paid. In Paraitepuy we had to go through the Imparque office. Although we could see the mountain and the trail leading to it we were required to hire a guide at \$25/day. We had to state how long we wanted to go in for and then pay half of the guide's fee up front to the park ranger (he would later give the money to the guide) and then pay the rest to the guide at the end of the trip. We planned on 5 days. Arrangements were made for the guide to meet us at 7 a.m. the next morning about 2 hours along the trail.

At 5:20 a.m. we were awoken by the sound of footsteps approaching our tent. It was our guide who had decided to get to us early as he was concerned we would take off without him. Epifanio Ayuso Sucre had been guiding for 20 years and was one of the original guides, having been born at the base of Roraima. His family moved to Paraitepuy when electricity came to the village. A half hour later we were walking in the cool of the morning to again avoid the heat of the afternoon. The trail followed a rolling ridge crest and we were able to make good time to the Rio Kukenan, the last major river.

Most parties stop here for the night but for us it would have meant a long day in camp so we continued on. Our plan was to get up to Campamento Abajo (base camp) at the bottom of the mountain's imposing wall. Things were beginning to get warm and as it was midday we decided to stop for lunch about an hour further up the trail. We snoozed in the shade of a large boulder for a couple of hours until we decided that we might as well get the last two hours over and done with. Our guide showed us the site of where the house that he had been born in once stood and told us it used to be surrounded by jungle. There was no sign of

*Lindsay Elms*

any jungle so we asked what had happened to it. His nonchalant reply was: "My father and grandfather over the years have burnt it all down." It appears that when the population was much smaller, fires were a way of indicating to other families of events such as births and deaths in the family. Although this area is in Canaima National Park, the Pemon still light fires. He didn't explain why but it is a problem as their population has grown considerably. There are virtually no jungles to be seen now, just grasslands with occasional stands of trees.

Base camp was at around 2,000 m and was high enough to see over the surrounding savannah and the many grass fires burning in the distance. At dusk we were also given a free show by the fire flies or 'insectos de bomberos' (firemen insects) as Epifanio called them. His first language was Pemon and his Spanish was as limited as ours.

The climb up to the summit plateau passed through the only section of jungle on the whole trip. It was a hot, steamy spot rich in flora and fauna located at the base of the rock wall. We followed a ramp up through the wall that offered the only easy route. To our right the rock wall loomed up sheer for 500 m while the trail in places was less than a metre wide. Half way up the trail descended for 50 m or so to get round a rock buttress. Finally we came to a point where we had to pass under a cascading waterfall (a nasty cold shower, but no avoiding it), then scramble up a rocky gully that eventually brought us out on the summit.

Just before reaching the summit I remembered what Im Thurn wrote concerning the summit: "Up to this part of the slope our ascent had been fairly easy. We have now reached a spot where one long climb will take us to the level of the summit, and we shall behold that which has never been observed since the beginning of the world. Although we cannot say that the entire world has been waiting to see what our eyes will now behold, at least quite a few people had been anxious to know. We shall see that which the few white or copper-coloured people who have viewed the mountain declared would remain unknown as long as the world existed. We shall know what is Roraima."

The summit was shrouded in mist and this is where it was worth having Epifanio with us. He was able to guide us through the bizarre rock formations to our campsite located under the overhang of a rock wall about fifteen minutes from the edge of the mountain. There was one other site known as El Hotel a few minutes away where several tents could be erected providing shelter from the prevailing winds. The only problem there was the amount of rubbish lying about, left behind by ignorant tourists and guides who didn't care. Other areas which looked flat enough to

camp on usually turned out to be waterlogged or became so once the inevitable daily downpour started. The mist continued to envelop the summit so we didn't go too far away from camp. We felt that we were in an alien environment. At every turn we half expected to meet some prehistoric creature but all we met were the carnivores *Heliamphora nutans* or giant pitcher plants. These plants capture insects to obtain nitrogen and other nutrients that are absent on this sandstone mountain.

The next morning dawned clear but we still had the wind that had been blowing all night. Today Epifanio was to guide us to various places of interest on the summit. About 4 hours (8 kms) to the northeast is Punto Tres, a geographic landmark that indicates the point where Venezuela, Guyana and Brazil meet. The route finding was intricate and we were certainly glad we had our guide to show us the way. An hour and a half before the boundary marker we entered a small valley where the Arabopop River flowed through. The next point of interest was El Fosco or 'the pit,' a dark pit sunk among the rocks with a small stream flowing into it. This stream disappeared underground and reappeared emerging as a cascade from Roraima's outer wall. We lunched at Punto Tres and then moved off to see the Valley of Crystals. Here a tributary of the Arabopo River forces a passage between the rocky spectators. The water runs over a bed sparkling with white and red quartz crystals. Large fragments of crystals lie scattered around, obviously removed from the stream bed by crystal hounds looking for souvenirs. Many of the crystals have been crushed by people walking over them and in time there will be very little left unless some form of protection is implemented. We wandered slowly back to camp trying to give names to some of the rock formations we passed: monkey rock, the dolphin, trifids (from The day of the Trifids); if you let your imagination run wild you could see what ever you wanted to. That night we watched a beautiful sunset over Mt. Kukenan and then we were fascinated by a lightening display over the Amazon jungle to the south.

It was time to head down the mountain and back to Paraitipuy and onto further places of interest in Venezuela. We were not disappointed with Roraima, we had stepped back into time to a place where the earth had begun. A place where time had stood still and remained unchanged for millions of years. We left wanting more, to see what was on the summit of the text Tepui and the one after that; we had caught Tepui fever.

*Participants: Elaine Kerr, Lindsay Elms, and Wytze Visser*

# Humour

## Climbing Dictionaries

Valerio Faraoni

In a desperate effort to climb without leaving my armchair, and looking for possible uses of ice alternative to the conventional one in margaritas, I came across a few climbing dictionaries. To my dismay, I soon realized the intolerable gap present in the mountaineering literature on this (rather wide) subject, and the idea of writing a new, richly illustrated climbing dictionary arose in my mind. In this ultimate encyclopedia of climbing there should be a photograph (or more) for each entry. So, I started collecting definitions from various dictionaries, and pictures. Due to the high cost of printing thousands of photographs, the dictionary is likely to be expensive. This is not going to stop me, since I was already aware that climbing can be expensive, as all of us who purchase climbing gear know well (cf. "Mountaineering: the freedom of the bills"). After all, it's one of the hazards of the sport. A more serious problem is the production of a pocket-sized edition of the full encyclopedia to be carried on the climbs, but I'll leave this problem for the future.

I anticipate that the compilation of the dictionary will take a long (geological) time. In the meanwhile, I decided to share a few entries with the readers of *The Bushwalker*.

**Altitude Sickness:** see *Sky-hook*.

**Alpine-climbing:** Al doing what is demonstrated in fig. 1. Al was not available to demonstrate pine-climbing for *The Bushwalker*, and we had to send up his pet Porku, instead.

**Approach:** see *bushwalking*.

**Backing Up, Straddling, Back and Knee, Back and Foot, Foot and Mouth:** various postures adopted in chimneys (derivation: Kama Sutra). In fig. 2, Dennis kindly demonstrating for *The Bushwalker* on Mt. Pain.

**Bushwalker:** the only magazine specializing in bushwalking (and the only one that would accept this article). You don't need a picture for that.

**Bushwalking:** also called "approach" on Sandy's trips.

**Extreme bushwalking** (also sustained, steep, continuous b.): approach on a joint Sandy Briggs/John Pratt/Don Berryman trip.

(We took pictures for these two entries of the dictionary, but they are not very clear with all those branches in the way...)

**Dogging (a route):** ask Mojo.

**Expedition:** effect created by nests of wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, etc. located on the trails during dry summers. They deeply

affect climbers, who expedite their pace. This year, to avoid expeditions, the ACC will disseminate a large number of spiders called **Bugabees**, especially trained to hunt wasps, hornets, etc. (fig. 3).

**Greenpeace:** see *green rappel*.

**Green Rappel:** rappelling maneuver done without a rope, using only cedar branches and roots, plus the occasional devil's club. Historical research shows that it may have originated on Vancouver Island. Local archeological findings (skeletons at the bottom of bushy crags) support this hypothesis. If improperly executed, a g.r. can lead to a **Greenpeace**. (Pictures not available - I dropped my camera on a g.r.)

**Mt. Everest:** if you waste your time reading this dictionary, forget about it.

**Sky-hook:** strong hook for high altitude (HA) fishing. Fish abounds in the mountains, particularly on glaciers (that's why you often see frozen fish in the supermarkets). Really big fishes are found there - that's why strong lines (diameter 9 to 11 mm) are used, and three or four mountaineers are needed to pull up the fish. HA fishing may be dangerous: HA fishes are known to sometimes pull HA fishermen inside crevasses, instead of being pulled up. Not catching anything for a prolonged period of time at HA may cause acute boredom known as altitude sickness (fig. 4).

**Snow Bridge:** card game played on a glacier. As in other alpine endeavors, tricks are common, and there is always a dummy (fig. 5).

**Sun Balls:** painful affliction common to male climbers who climb nude.

(We had pictures taken on Clown Mtn. and Mt. Idy Hott, but there were censored.)

Fig. 1: *Al pine - climbing. Mt. Nonsense, Valley of the Ten  
Pieps, Karakorum.*



Fig. 2: *Mt. Pain sky area, Vancouver Island.*



Fig. 3: *A Bugabee in the author's garden.*



Fig. 4: *High-altitude fishing on Mt. Baker.*



Fig. 5: *A snow bridge on Mt. Tolmie. Where have the players gone?*





*Face of Chair Peak, N. Cascades*

**Mike Kuzyk**