



THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION

BUSHWHACKER

1996

The Bushwhacker is an annual publication of the
Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club of Canada.

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Front Cover: Don Berryman attempting 5040 Peak in February, 1996.
Photograph by Sandy Briggs.

Back Cover: Climbers approach the summit of Wedge Mountain via the
north arete. Read the trip write-up on page 33. Photograph by Gerta
Smythe.



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GUEST EDITORIAL

(In their desperation for copy, the editors of this journal cornered me in a smoky bistro late one night and said, "You have many of the qualities we're looking for in a guest editor: English speaking, carbon-based life form, high blackmail potential, THEREFORE, we think. . ." and so on. The eventual result was this guest editorial, the topic being: "What is our club?")

"WHAT IS OUR CLUB?"

Well that's an easy one. We're all the same old gang, with some newer ones, lots of people in the scientific/technical/teaching end of things, lots of different nationalities, some weekend poets, even the odd mathematician. We're a fairly liberal bunch. And we hike, climb mountains, get lost, get wet, get to the top, get back, eat pizza, have slide shows, drink beer, tell tall tales, write bloody articles for the Bushwhacker, and a myriad other things.

At this point I should like to illustrate these comments with a brief, witty anecdote about a trip I was on last summer, but unfortunately I don't have one. You get this one instead.

There are many reports in these pages of scheduled club trips. This will be, as far as I know, the first non-report of a non-scheduled, non-club trip. Non-club, because no one on it would admit to being a member of the club, non-report because I suppressed or altered details to protect the identities of the participants (please keep that fact in mind), and non-trip for reasons which will become apparent, if you, dear reader, care to continue.

The plan was to climb Tantalus, or something like it. We were having breakfast in Nanaimo when we experienced the following: "Good morning, this is Bob Sharples with the B.C. weather forecast. The Squamish River will experience periods of flooding and high wave activity, with extremely fast currents. Lake Lovelywater will undergo periods of rain

and intermittent heavy showers, low clouds, fog and mud. Mounts Tantalus, Dione, Pelops, Ionia, Alpha, and Serratus will receive high winds, heavy rain, sleet snow and ice. Vancouver, Victoria, the Lower Mainland, Howe Sound, and Whistler will be sunny and warm."

This gave rise to plan B: Septimus. Our car couldn't get up the logging road, so we parked at the bottom and started hiking. After a time we came across a little bear. Well, I know how to deal with situations like that, because I'm an experienced hiker. You shout at the bear and it runs away. So we shouted at the bear, but it didn't run away. In fact I don't even think its feelings were hurt (it clearly wasn't an experienced bear). It was time for a break anyway, so we stopped and had a desultory conversation about the delicate balance of nature and man's place in the food chain, etcetera, and after a brief attack of democracy, it was decided, by a vote of 2 to 1, with no abstentions, that, in order not to jeopardize our aforementioned place in the food chain, we had best leave that place. We were resentful, after all, we had a Master's degree and two Ph.D.'s, and there was that little bear, not much higher education at all really; in any sort of debate we'd have had it all over him, but it really was a question of bench strength, which we couldn't gauge. His mother, for instance might be an intellectual giant, able to think very quickly on her feet, etcetera. So we left. This gave rise to plan C: Marble Peak.

We still had our canoe, so we loaded up and set across the lake, mid afternoon, a brisk, bracing, breezy day, great for sail-boarders. Not for canoes. Less than 100 yd from the shore we started to take green water over the gunwale, which led to another, much briefer executive meeting, a single agenda meeting, during which it was moved, seconded and carried unanimously (again with no abstentions) that we get the hell back to shore. This gave rise to plan D: pitch the tent, blather and grouse. Now, with blather and grouse we seemed to have hit our stride. We grouched all evening, then blathered all night, and grouched some more the next morning, when we saw that Buttle Lake still had whitecaps on it and that Marble Peak was still obscured by low wet scudding clouds.

Now lemme tell you all a bit about blather. Grouse is easy. Anyone stuck in a tent for a day or two is a serious student of grouse, but blather is more recondite, esoteric, arcane, in fact deranged. The main topic of blather that night was this: moving at a typical velocity, what would the diameter of a meteorite have to be in order to wipe out all higher life forms on the planet? (answer: much smaller than you think). Having solved that, we returned home the next morning. Pathetic.

You know, there's nothing like a nice outing with the club, which is what this was - nothing like a nice outing with the club.

VANCOUVER ISLAND

REDWALL

Rex Andrew

September 13 - 15

Forecasts for inclement weather convinced me to abandon the original plan of climbing in the Olympics: Gerta suggested Redwall, in the MacKenzie range, a peak long on her hit list, as an alternative objective. I have been interested in the MacKenzie range, so I agreed.

Meanwhile, British Columbia was under siege by the intrepid teenage German adventurer Rainer, who was on a madcap do-everything hitchhike-everywhere trip to explore everything. He had met Albert Hestler in Europe the year before, and was staging some of his B.C. walkabouts out of Albert's home. Albert had handed Rainer a copy of the ACC schedule, and, although he only had limited climbing experience, Rainer was eager to join several trips, including mine.

Gerta arranged for us to meet with Rudy Brugger in Port Alberni for some Redwall beta. I had a Bushwhacker write-up from 1993 by John Pratt. He and Rick Johnson had attempted the SW ridge, but had abandoned the effort because it had looked too unpleasant. Instead, they had climbed the NW ridge, which they rated at 5.6. So why had they abandoned the SW ridge? More than 5.6? Yuck!

Gerta had a picture, taken from MacKenzie Pk., of the SW ridge, which we showed to Rudy. Ah yes, his eyes narrowed, the route goes about here... He traced a vague line with a crooked finger up the SW arete. It was, apparently, not hard. (The guidebook, I found out later, says the route is 4th class.)

We crested Sutton Pass near midnight in a driving rain so fierce we had to halve our speed. Part of way down the far side, we pulled off onto a sheltered gravel

road: between squalls, Rainer and I erected the tent and jumped inside.

Saturday morning, the weather was still unstable, so we decided to wait a bit to see if it would get better. In the meantime, Gerta took us to Long Beach to show Rainer the ocean. Gerta even snuck in a little dip in the crashing waves. The weather was still marginal, so we

by... er... more rain. Gerta's stove failed to work, but she and Rainer stayed warm sharing German and Austrian folk songs.

Dawn brought marginally stable weather, so we launched upwards in bits of fog and clearing. At the base of Redwall, the SW ridge did not look so bad. The NW ridge, however, was rated at 5.6. We didn't have time to attempt

two routes, so I agonized over the decision. Who should I trust? Pratt? Brugger? I couldn't find the escalator. At that moment I uttered possibly the sagest phrase in mountaineering: "I think I'll go a little higher and take a look..."

We scrambled some loose ledges up left under the face, then back right towards the Redwall/MacKenzie col. The rocks we kicked loose cannonaded down the face, raising horrific echoes off the surrounding peaks, a noise that sent Rainer pale. I led a single pitch up a short, oozing corner, through some heinous high-angle claw-and-swim bush, to the col. Maybe Pratt was right. The rock above, though, looked solid: Brugger's finger went up somewhere around here. The sky started

to clear and the warm sunlight made me bolder. Maybe straight up?

Yeah right. This pitch started with a groin-splitting stem onto the rock, followed by a mantle over an overhang, which is where I zipped my pro. Unable to climb back down, I balanced my way up, sometimes using holds on the west side, sometimes on the south side of the precariously steep arete. Protection was, surprisingly, quite poor (I had expected better in this range). I had worked my way up onto a slim sloper ledge that dwindled away to nothing on the blank



Photo: Gerta Smythe

Redwall from MacKenzie, MacKenzie Range. The route went directly up the shadow line from the notch and then veered left into the inverted V-shaped nook.

went on to Tofino to show Rainer... well, Tofino. We wandered around like tourists. More rain. At mid afternoon, we chose to head back to a campsite to wait out until Sunday morning, and maybe squeeze in a day hike. But at the MacKenzie Range trailhead we saw patches of blue overhead, so we elected to "chance it" and charge upwards. A lovely trail, mesmerizing in its own steep-sided, root-pulling, log-hopping way. After a handful of hours we stumbled into a wee clearing and barely got the tents up before a hail storm, followed

south face when Gerta called out, "Two metres to the centre mark!" Grand, nothing to lower off from. The summit plateau was just above me, but the edge sloped the wrong way, inviting only a barn door. I tried three times, but I just wasn't long enough from right toe to left pinkie, terribly awkward. Then, a bit further left, I found a three-finger in-cut for the left hand that allowed me to layback, swing up, and mantle onto the easy-angled summit plateau: there I spied, several metres away, a couple of manky pitons and some well-weathered rap slings. 4th class my foot. I clambered up to a horn and set up a belay.

I had made the pitch look so desperate that Gerta elected to untie: but Rainer

was game to try. He made good speed up to the last move below the plateau, but this stumped him. Finally, unwilling to back off only a metre from success, he scratched and clawed and fought his way over the edge, blowing like a steam locomotive.

It was only a short scramble to the summit. Rainer was giddy with success but the wind was picking up and he was starting to shiver uncontrollably, so we hustled back down. A blast of hail swept across us. He had no rappelling experience, so I lowered him from the horn belay, whereupon Gerta tied him back in down below, threw a poncho over him, and fed him.

We took several more rappels to get

back down from the col-notch, including an awkward duck-your-shoulder-and-roll manoeuvre down over the steep bush section. We belayed Rainer from below on the rappels but (in typical Aussie style) after a little *in situ* instruction, he did famously.

The sun came out again as we descended, allowing us a chance to dry out. I couldn't have imagined shoe-horning an adventure more tightly in between rain-squalls. An hour's difference at any of several points would have provoked us to turn back. As it was, the sky turned black and cut loose

THE GOLDEN HINDE

Chris Joseph

April 19 - 24

What Does A Bear, Kamikaze bush-skiing, Both Horrendous and Beautiful Weather, and the Golden Hinde have in Common?

They were components of Doug Goodman's ski trip into a fantastic mountain at the end of April. The trip membership got whittled down to our fearless and crazy leader, Doug McGhee, and myself. We were off on good footing, with a fine alpine start of 6pm. We hiked up to the snowline just below Phillips Ridge on Friday. We had lost the trail in darkness, and so I was relieved to get this damn heavy pack off my back. We settled down, as we did every night thereafter, to a fine meal. My first crux was figuring out what to call these two guys. I finally decided on Doug and Doug, and I would just say no to a Doug if it was not the Doug which I was referring to. At ten the next morning, we were off, ascending and traversing the Phillips Ridge, bearing north. You see, McGhee and I were in this together. I had already seen how Goodman flies, and so I was relieved to hear that I had been successful at talking McGhee into coming on this trip. The sun was up, filtered through periodic clouding, giv-

ing me my first view of Mt. Myra (finally, after two trips attempting to get up that peak!) and a tonne of other peaks I did not know. However, the gargantuan beast clinging to my back quickly reminded me of its presence. I would go on to realize that the only negative feelings coming out of me came out this day, as we slogged along - "Doug (McGhee), I could be in Squamish right now. Why aren't I?"

But, soon enough, we had descended a nasty gully, and were setting up camp on a lake, with the Golden Hinde towering beyond. The sun was out, and mouths were smiling all around. It *was* worth it. Another alpine start saw us heading off at ten AM. We, in our infinite wisdom, had cached food and fuel for the trip out, and so lightened our packs appreciably. We got up onto a ridge north of Mt. Burman after some somewhat nerve-racking skinning up a gully where gigantic pinwheels were sailing down. McGhee and I had settled into our regular pattern for the trip: far behind Goodman, dropping things, learning about snow crystal structure when our skis decided to turn the opposite direction, and just generally en-

joying the view. It was up on this ridge that Dr. McGhee spotted one of the "epic-factors" of the trip - a bear down on a lake. "Hmmm... its direction seems to be in the direction of our food cache..."

Uncertainty....

We skied down the ridge, and to our camp, just below the Hinde. It was 3 PM, the sun was shining, and we were lovin' it! "We'll just climb the peak tomorrow, no probs, boys..." (avalanches were coming down that afternoon)

At around 8 PM, a certain Doug, along with a certain other Doug, began to speculate about the weather. Some clouds had come in. I listened to their so-called theories for an hour, and then had enough ...zzzz.

Morning... rain, snow, clouds, fog, sleep, talk, farting, laughing, more farting spawned by the laughing, more laughing spawned by the farting, cards, a little food (we were now rationing due to the observed bear), more weather theories, and the official dubbing of the accommodations: the fart chamber. We went to sleep having decided either to climb the darn mountain (we could've the day before but we were too lazy

and afraid of getting a little wet) or start cruisin' out'a here.

6 AM: skiing up to the base, skinning the south bowl, climbing over onto the SE face, cramponing up the gullies to the summit- perfect conditions (except we couldn't see anything, but that's okay). We ate our special summit food on top, and then went for a ride down. Goodman skied from high up the route. We all got turns in on the final slopes.

We were back at the tent, taking down camp, and then on our way. We wanted at least to make the (now potential) food cache. At this point in the trip, McGhee and I really got to experience what skiing is all about. Goodman had tried to show us the excitement of backcountry skiing with his attempt at free fall (he whimped out and came back up the slope with axe in hand), but we were

unaware of what he had in store. P-tex also works well on wood, rocks, green vegetation, and in streams. After a soaker of a day skiing through this stuff and the rain, we arrived at the food cache. The bear had located the goods, but generally only ate Goodman's food (we had plenty). Those package sealers do a fine job at keeping the smells inside. Now I have a bite mark in my stuffsack! We skied a little further, and then I persuaded Goodman that the wet snow was not fun to ski in. Soon, we were eating and warming up the place with two stoves.

We awoke at 3:30 the next morning, and soon we were breaking tracks in knee-deep snow. The gully we had to go back up was horrendous: icy crust and skinny (much turning). Then we were at the first real slope back up onto

the Phillips Ridge. After 3 falls down the crusty thing, we emerged ready to tackle the next with ice axes in hand - with or without skis. Ker-razy! We were apprehensive about conditions and our abilities to surmount them, to say the least. We only had to climb up one bad (lee-ward) slope. McGhee was quite vocal with his concern (avalanche). Goodman kept it inside. I suppose I just swallowed it, knowing that it had to be done, and with speed.

Shivers, blizzards, and finally some sun, we had made it through it. A final bush-ski (with plenty of falls!) and hike back down into big trees and the noise of the mine. We had made it!! E-P-I-C.

Participants: Doug McGhee, Chris Joseph, Doug Goodman (leader)

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Greg Gordon

July 6 - 12

I was just about to call GERHARDT to plan a trip, when the phone rang. It was GERHARDT calling to plan a trip. "HOW'D you like to spend a week this summer and knock off a few qualifiers?" he asked. Great minds think alike. Word of our very ambitious and unrealistic plan to climb Colonel Foster, Elkhorn, Victoria and Rugged in just nine days got around quickly. Soon our team grew to four, but one member dropped out and we were three with Doug along.

Our first objective was Colonel Foster. Gerhardt had already climbed the Colonel a few years ago and was kind enough to repeat it for Doug and I who were now on our second attempt.

Our approach hike brought us to the gravel flats one hour below Landslide Lake. We chose to bivvy on the mountain and climb during a 2 day period instead of the standard 16-20 hour push from the high shoulder on the north ridge. And so on the second day we left the gravel flats and began our ascent with lighter yet still heavyish packs.

The weather was perfect and so was the forecast. We hiked past the shoulder, which is often the base of many climbs, and continued up the steep snowfilled gully below the north tower. We were concerned about the condition of the gully because of the stories we'd heard about the difficulty of crossing a 'schrund that develops each year here. However the 'schrund was still nearly bridged and was easily crossed.

We left the gully a little too low on the mountain and found ourselves climbing on easy and surprisingly solid rock. But around a few corners things got worse and the mountain became a loose heap of crumbling rubble. We crossed a very loose and steep gully unroped and thoughts of falling 800 m began to fill my



Summit pitch on Rugged Mtn.

Photo: Greg Gordon

head. I was feeling uneasy (perhaps a little psyched from all the horror stories about this mountain).

"ROPE Please," I yelled, and my partners obliged. We continued onward with a running belay and became so used to the rope that it remained on for the remainder of the climb. It slowed things down a bit, but eased the anxiety.

We set up our bivvy site on a sloping platform above a large chockstone. It was a warm night and we slept well. The next morning I felt GREAT! Through my dreams my subconscious convinced me that this was not a difficult mountain. It was right.

We carried on with more synchronized movement by now getting used to the routine. At one point we found ourselves on an exposed face looking more than 1000 m nearly straight down to Iceberg Lake stirring in us a sense of euphoria. We reached the summit before noon and celebrated our victory and Doug's completion of his qualifiers. Yeah

Doug!

On our return we depleted our supply of rappel slings, cleaning the route of old ones along the way. That night we bivvied on the shoulder, short of food but full of satisfaction.

On the fourth day we returned to our camp below Landslide Lake and relaxed for the afternoon. It was clear we wouldn't have time or energy to complete all the mountains in our plan. So we decided to narrow it down to Rugged Mt. and maybe Victoria Peak afterward.

We arrived at the foot of Rugged Mt. in the late afternoon of the fifth day and hiked up onto a ridge as the light faded. Doug had been here before and this time he was kind enough to show us the way. We weren't sure if there would be water up on the ridge but just as we were about to call it a day, we stumbled onto the perfect camp site at 1300 m with plenty of water, wind, shelter and views of our peak. We slept under the stars

again and enjoyed the clearest view of the Milky Way I have ever seen.

The next morning we got off to a slow lazy start. We picked our way up to the Rugged Glacier (Haite?) where we roped up for our climb. Except for a 'schrund crossing we had few obstacles in our way. The snow was loose and rotten in places, and frozen hard in others depending on its angle to the sun. The climb up the final summit ridge was steep enough to make it interesting but acrophobia was far from paying a visit. We scrambled up the narrow ridge to find the summit basking under a warm sun.

That was only the second peak completed on our original list of four. We mulled over the idea of going home. Seven days of climbing had satisfied our appetites, except for Doug who could have kept going for another 800 years.

Participants: Doug Goodman, Greg Gordon, and Gerhardt Lepp

LIMESTONE MOUNTAIN

Tony Pugh
April 27

It was one of those ideas that come to you when the sky is blue and the sun is shining, sort of out of the blue, as they say. So let's go and climb something that no one else has climbed. At least, no one that I know has climbed, but I'm sure this is not a first ascent.

So after a quick review of what's close enough to do in a day, we settle on Limestone Mountain. A look at the topo map reveals a logging road to 2500 ft. then a short hike across to a ridge that will take us up to the summit at 4900 ft. Great! It looks like a nice easy day out.

Limestone Mountain is located SW of Mt. McQuillan and is best approached from the south via Museum Creek and Panther Main logging roads.

Fresh snow on the logging road re-

quired us to leave the vehicle lower down the mountain than anticipated, but the weather was perfect so who cares. After a short hike along a decommissioned logging road, we headed up through recent logging slash which was brutal, as the snow wasn't deep enough at this elevation to have buried all the stumps, roots and general logging debris. Eventually after an hour, which seemed like three, we reached the trees and the ridge we were looking for, which took us through thigh-deep soft spring snow up to the summit, which we reached after four hours from leaving the vehicle.

Limestone doesn't have a spectacular summit, being only just above tree line,

but on a day like this the views were spectacular, looking down the Alberni Inlet and out to Barkley Sound with its dinky size ships heading in from the Pacific.

Following a pleasant and lazy lunch on the summit, we wallowed on through the snow back down the mountain, slipping and sliding in the rapidly softening snow to the truck and headed back to Victoria. We were feeling tired but contented, having succeeded in completing what we had set out to do, nothing stupendous, just another minor summit in the bag.

Participants: Karen LeGrand and Tony Pugh

SHAW CREEK

T-Bird

November 17, 1996

It has been a long boring summer. Here I was, hanging up in the shop while my owner played with all the garden and electrical tools. At one time I (a 1978 MSR T-Bird Ice Axe), was King of the equipment rack. Years of hard use had worn away my blue paint to expose my shiny metal strength. But that was then. Now I'm sure jealous of that crow bar.

This morning I awoke to find myself with what felt like a bag of potting soil on top of me. It was dark and you can see how far I'd slipped into retirement. When I woke up a bit more, I realized that rubbing up against me was a freshly greased leather boot. I was also being jostled about, which meant I was in a car, hopefully heading for some snow. Or maybe a Garage Sale, heaven forbid! Judging by the weight, the potting soil was probably just day packs. Too bad! An over night trip would have been more fun, I could have seen the stars for a change, but this is good enough.

My worries of Garage Sales vanished when I was taken out of the car and dumped into an inch of fresh snow and three inches of logging road mud. Not exactly an auspicious start but I'd seen worse. After he'd put his greasy boots on and Gortex, I was strapped onto the back of the new purple day pack. I must admit I really do appreciate the new 2 inch Velcro retainer over the thin strap

on the other pack, which tends to strangle rather than support. The other advantage of the purple pack is that it is smaller and I can see ahead for a change. The view this morning was not as inspiring as I'd have liked. The low clouds and snow were all right but what I didn't like was the clear cut. Not so much because they're ugly, or an environmental disaster; but because it meant I was too low to get into some good glacial ice today. Well, at least it was snowing and there was already several inches on the ground.

The hike up the logging road was pretty much a snooze; except for the alders that I kept getting caught on. I keep yelling at him to bend lower and get under the branches; but does he listen? Mind you I do get a chuckle when I can pull a branch way back and let it go in someone's face. As we went further up the valley the snow got quite a bit deeper. When we left the road I was finally taken off the pack and could get to work. Immediately I knew I was in trouble, there was no base to dig my shaft into. Just loose powder over rocks. The worse combination since you can't even see the rocks you're about to be pounded into.

We worked our way up to the old growth and then traversed into the forest. This was much better since I'd rather

get a muddy shaft than blunt my point on rocks. After crossing a small creek, below a pretty waterfall, we got into some really nice old growth. As we headed up a small ridge I had some fun thrashing snow off the blueberry bushes. Generally things were going pretty easy, then WHAM I get a mouth full of cellulose. It's not that I have anything against trees, they just get caught in your teeth. Luckily the steep section was short so the amount of fibre in my diet was kept low. From there on we had a nice walk in the deep snow, covering a wet meadow to Balmer Lake. Finally there was a base under the loose fluffy snow, something you could really sink your shaft into.

At the lake the people decided to turn back, muttering something about gate closures. I was pretty disappointed. The snow was finally getting good and we have to go home. Mind you there would have been the typical Wet Coast, 'could have been Beacon Hill Park', view from the summit. The main thing is that I finally got out!

Participants: Sandy Briggs, Echo Haelstromme, Don Berryman (T-Bird), Kayla Stevenson, Richard Keltie, Larry Borgerson, John Clouston, Gerta Smythe, Doug Goodman, Catrin Brown

WARDEN PEAK

Doug Goodman

February 9 - 11

The qualifier quest continued (though I'm not quite sure what I was qualifying for). Tony, Mark Pierog and I left Victoria PM, and were joined by Lindsay and Tak up-Island. After a moments confusion in Sayward, we found the right road up the White River. 'Twas a crisp frosty night under a dark starry sky. Without event the big trucks found the exact spot to start bushwhacking. Thanks, Jack F., for your excellent directions. Still under a clear sky, the next

morning we moved up the steep-ish slope, crossing a shallow gully, dodging left under bluffs, and joining a flagged route with a larger creek to the left. Unfortunately Tony turned back after a half hour, feeling weak and with an upset tummy. By noon we were glad of a rest after trying to match Lindsay's pace. We basked in the sunshine just out of the woods, in the large bowl at the bottom of the major gully that runs directly (westwards) from the Victoria-Warden

col. Here I had a brief advantage over the others as I was the only one crazy enough to carry up skis. The gully was in good shape, the previous weeks' avalanche debris frozen solid, with a foot or two of soft snow in the upper parts. Skiing was about as quick as walking, and slower than Lindsay. By 3 or 4 PM we were admiring the white north face of Victoria, and the brown south face of Warden, and shovelling a tent platform in the col. Sunday was again clear or

mostly so, dawning bright orange over the Coast Range.

Up through snow to knee deep, and a patch below the south face that was blown clear, where the crampons went on. After less than an hour we were at the top of a gully looking at the north side of the peak. Here Mark decided to wait, on account of the exposure, which was lucky for us as one of the ropes had been left at the trucks. Tak and Lindsay were kind enough to suggest I lead, first through the 40 cm of soft snow, then onto icy crust, solid, but soft enough to accept full front points and

picks, letting us feel secure despite the 50-60 degree slope that becomes near vertical for several thousand feet below. Pickets provided anchors, and two and a half rope lengths got us on the summit platform.

We left a new register in the cairn, toasted the view in an icy wind, and retraced our steps, with Lindsay and Tak simul-climbing as on the ascent. The soft snow made for a quick and fun descent to camp. At last I would get to ski, and did at least try. Half way down a ski came loose. I watched it gain speed heading straight at Mark. I yelled, just before the

ski stopped, impaled in some soft snow and before Mark fully realized the danger (yes, I always use straps now). The skiing was a combination of trying to turn and undignified general body glissades, due to a combination of incompetence and questionable snow conditions. A quick descent had us back on the road before dark, pleased with our luck.

Participants: Lindsay Elms, Tak Ogasawara, Tony Pugh, Mark Pierog, Doug Goodman (instigator)

ELKHORN

Rex Andrew

January 3 - 6

So Doug calls me, eleven months after the climb, and asks me to write a trip report. *Eleven months!* Whoa, Doug, I guess you're on belay¹/₄

Like any good Island climb, this one has 4 distinct acts.

ACT I: THE APPROACH

I knew instantly when Doug called that conditions were optimal. A week of warm rainy weather followed by cooler weather must certainly have yielded a low, well-consolidated snow pack. And so Doug, Sandy and I made the ritual mind-numbing 5½ hour drive up-island from Victoria to Strathcona Park on a Wednesday night. We camped after midnight at the Buttle Lake campground—the sole inhabitants—and a cold wind was blowing from the north across the lake. A good sign.

Thursday morning we nipped over to the trailhead, sorted gear, and headed up the Elk River trail at 0845. After about 2 km, we reached the ford where the river broadens and shallows, and we crossed by hopping gravel bars and crawling across the “access” log. Then the long grunt began, straight up the well-flagged “waytrail” in deep timber. Fortunately, the slope and its cover of broken boughs were frozen solid, affording excellent traction. The flags led us into a gully filled with fresh frozen snow that completely muffled the stream

underneath. After topping out of the gully, we kicked steps on diamond-white snow up through the sub-alpine region to the open crest of the NW ridge at 1550 m. It was 1600 and a nippy -12°C when we arrived, so we piled into Sandy's TNF tent. There was no wind and a brilliant full moon.

ACT II: THE ASCENT

Not an alpine start Friday, but we were still away by dawn. The temperature was -9°C and the snow solid. We worked up to the base of the broad gully system splitting the west face. This is nominally a 3rd class gully but winter conditions, a meat grinder run-out, and rumours of a “short awkward chimney” persuaded us to rope up here. Doug shouldered a clanking rack of aluminum gizmos and led upwards. We simul-climbed to the first obstacle, a bottleneck choked with a couple of icy boulders. Sandy anchored into the gully wall with a stopper (walls are a lot more welcome in winter!) and belayed Doug. Above, Doug tied off to two smaller boulders and belayed us up.

The next challenge was another bottleneck with a gleaming blue-gray water ice smear about 3 m high. By now, the sky had clouded over and the wind was kicking up. Powder snow blown from the summit rocks was streaming endlessly down the gully system, hissing quietly past us in a thin layer about

a fingerwidth deep. An occasional spin-drift avalanche funnelled down over the smear, launching into a tumbling white blossom that quickly dissipated.

(Doug requested that his exploits figure prominently in this write-up, so Doug, this next passage is for you) Doug took the lead again, dancing gingerly (stamping) upwards on nearly (half) vertical mixed (up) terrain involving mostly thin ice (over gravel). He found scant pro (fessionals) but steadily gained ground until all we could see was ¹/₄ his back. At the base of the smear, he stretched full-out and sunk (at chest height) a screw (at mid-smear). The screw bottomed, so he tied it off, and then immediately swung out onto the (not very) vertical smear, reached (above his head) to locate (bash) a delicate (bomber) placement at the top, and then glided (hauled himself) up and over.

Above, Doug belayed us up from equalized snow pickets. When I reached him and Sandy, we held the usual council-of-war. The weather was turning foul fast, we were behind schedule, and we were climbing too slowly. We chose to “do another pitch”. Fortunately, the remainder was a simul-plod, and we reached the summit at 1345 in zero-visibility conditions.

INTERMISSION

Somewhere down below, the weather



Doug launches up towards the crux ice smear, Elkhorn Mt.

guessers re-evaluated their forecasts and posted gale force wind and heavy snow-fall warnings for Friday evening and Saturday. Ooops.

ACT III: THE DESCENT

It was snowing and blowing now, with faster and thicker powder avalanches. We plodded back into the upper gully, where the perspective downward, into a grim chasm of boiling spindrift, made us hesitate. Sandy sank a piton for a rappel. This took us to the top of the ice smear. To avoid leaving a picket as a rappel anchor, I volunteered to belay the others down and then downclimb the ice—a gratuitous and unnecessarily risky display, but I was determined to squeeze as much enjoyment out of those 3 m as possible. Sure enough, stemming out on front-points, bashing away with tools in both hands, deflecting ice pellets with my helmet, swallowed in a micro-maelstrom of spindrift, I was howling with glee! This

is as good as it gets. Sandy probably thought I was falling and locked off the belay. When I arrived, he eyed me like I was some kind of lunatic.

The streaming spindrift layer was as thick as our winter sleeping bags now, and quickly formed white wedges against our post-holed legs. Down-climbing the boulder bottleneck was a bit too much, so Sandy hammered in another piton and we rappelled again. We reached the base of the face at sunset (rather, at “murk”), unroped, and staggered back down the ridge. We finally reached the tent (in “full murk”) at about 1730.

ACT IV: THE ESCAPE

First came the machine-gun patter of snow clots pelting the tent. Then, around midnight, howling wind gusts that reached under the tent floor and nudged us around. Then commenced the splatter of wind-driven rain. Dawn was an ugly sight on Saturday: 1°C, strong wind,

hard rain. Moments out of the tent and we were each soaked. With heavy, water-logged packs, we staggered down through the sub-alpine zone, where the snow had become a snotty, bottomless mess. Into the creek-gully, where the shrinking snowpack had left a minefield of sucking holes and sagging bridges over roaring, sewer-coloured water. In the forest, several inches of white slush hid the “waytrail” and concealed every ankle-wrenching hole. The freezing rain had coated every branch and twig with a sheath of ice, converting them into launch rails for our boots.

But the *coup de grace* was reserved for last: the Elk River had risen over half a metre. The crossing log was now scarcely a hand’s-breadth above the thundering torrent and completely mantled with soggy snow. We had to put on crampons for traction. Tightrope walking in crampons — without a net. The gravel bars, however, were nearly submerged. Since the trailhead was less than 2 km away, Sandy and Doug gave me a couple of thoroughly daft grins and simply waded across. Now I too was soaked to the skin, and had fought off hypothermia earlier in the day, but my feet were still warm and dry. I took a last look up the Elk River valley. Perhaps, at that moment, the curtains of rain would draw back, a shaft of sunlight would knife through, and these pounding mocha-coloured waves would quiet down so I could cross and keep my feet dry. Perhaps.

Perhaps? *Pleeeeeeze!!!!*

Perhaps not.

So into the river I ran, leaping across in giant strides. Through 1, 2, 3 steps my feet remained dry — Perhaps through 4 steps? Perhaps I could walk on water? Perhaps? Perhaps not. On the fifth step the icy water flooded in, eagerly gobbling up every last cubic micron of warm dry air around my feet.

And thus I too was equipped with water-cooled hydraulic-cushioned plastic boots on the trail out.

EPILOGUE

It took at least a week to dry everything out, but the pictures reminded me of the fun parts.

Participants: Rex Andrew, Sandy Briggs and Doug Goodman.

ARROWSMITH - WITH THE JUDGE

Judith Holm

October 20

The Vancouver Island Section of the ACC is alive and well. Sunday's hike up the Judge's route reflected this.

The 21 participants included climbers who have been members nearly 'forever' through to new and prospective members and a British climbing family here for a year. The ages ranged from the twenties to three times that number. We are hearing that several Alpine Club sections are having trouble attracting new members and young members. In typical renegade Islander fashion we are bucking the trend with both new and young members consistently on our climbs. It is very special that our wide range of ages can have fun together because we all love to climb mountains.

This was a large group. Although a very straightforward hike, it was nevertheless good to see how naturally the more experienced members were quietly keeping an eye out for the whole

group. It was a supportive group. A good example was the encouragement given to some climbers to get to the top, even though others were coming down. When I hear words to the effect of "you've nearly made it and there is still enough time, it would be a shame to stop now when you are so close, I'll come with you," coming from a very capable mountaineer makes me very happy to belong to our Vancouver Island Section.

I like the way it is usually possible for a small, viable group to also do something different or extra. Those who headed down the gully in perfect snow conditions, with rock walls high on either side, had a great trip out. The snow on the ridge was about two feet deep. They made it down the col and back to the cars at #32 before the last hikers came off the Judge's route.

We left Victoria at 8 AM and most

submitted by 2 PM. The weather cooperated well with no precip, mixed mist and views. The cliffs looked spectacular - all wild and rugged - because of the fresh snow blown onto them. We were in snow most of the way. Walking conditions were good with the trail broken the day before by Rick, Claire, Gerta, and the Outdoor Club of Victoria. The summit was wintry and white in every direction.

P.S. Rick, you were a very welcome surprise. People didn't realize you were with us until the start of the climb when you were standing quietly in the middle of the crowd!

Participants: Wendy Croft, Jasmin Dobson, Greg Gordon, Catrin Brown, Doug Goodman, Jo-Ann Draper, Gerhardt Lepp, Sylvia Moser, Lynn and Chris Peppler, Pat and Cathy Slade,

O' CLAIRE DE LA LUNE

O' Claire de la lune
we all know that name:
always happy, smiling -
even in the rain!

Claire will lead us uphill,
any time of year:
hiking, climbing, skiing:
safely and with cheer!

On so many outings,
Claire has left her mark.
Some of us may falter,
stumble in the dark;
Claire will blaze before us,
shining in her light,
when we tremble, shiver,
she'll "Juchhe" her delight.

We have come to thank her,
for all that she has done:
planning, leading, helping,
a friend to everyone.
She is our "Clubrep"
and so has spread our fame;
since she has been with us,
we'll never be the same!

MOUNT KLITSA

Chris Odgers

Early July

We went up via the lake. Just past the lake, the fixed rope section can be avoided on the right by a little judicious bushwhacking. We camped on an obvious plateau among some small ponds. Very little snow, very warm evening and lots of evidence of recent visits by bears.

Bearing this in mind, with my extensive knowledge of knots, I quickly rigged a system for hanging up our food bag. Less than two hours, using three trees, 80 feet of line and nine knots, I had our food swinging securely five feet off the ground, safe from the tallest squirrel ever born.

That night we were subjected to some biology. Two frogs, both of whom were about six inches, acoustically, from our tent, started to converse. For those of you with time on your hands, we are reporting their dialogue in full, together

with a computer aided, most probable translation.

"riggit" (my pond's bigger than yours)
"RIGGIT" (MY pond's bigger than YOURS)

"riggitt RIGGIT" (you've got water on the brain)

"RIGGITT, riggit, RIGGIT" (you don't even HAVE a brain)

"RRIGGITT" (toad-face)

Silence. The serene mists of sleep were drifting.

"riggit" (my pond's bigger than yours)

"RIGGIT" (MY pond's bigger than YOUR pond) and so forth.

Frogs have a short attention span, but good endurance. These particular frogs, I think, were male; they were in the same pond.

The next morning we left fairly early for the summit, which is easy and short. We roped the last ten feet on a crest of

snow; Mojo's sixth C.I.Q. It was hot on the summit, and noisy; there was a heli-logging operation going on several thousand feet below us. The question naturally arose, could you hit that copter from the summit with a potato gun, and if you did, posing you hit the rotor blades, would you get home fries? Even though we may never know the answers to questions like these, the very art of asking them is, I feel, sufficient justification for the pursuit of mountaineering.

Eventually we ran out of jujubes, so we had to go home. But you know what those frogs told me on the way down the mountain? Time's fun when your having flies.

Participants: John Damaschke (Leader), Simon Norris, Lisa McBain, Chris Odgers, Tracy Harrington, Mojo, Zhul.

THE STONE TROLLS

Lindsay Elms

June 29 - 30

Canada Day weekend and what better way to celebrate than by climbing a mountain. I listened to the weather forecast, and then after hearing it, wondered why I did that. I don't usually listen to them. Being an optimist, I assume that the weather is always going to be good when I go out.

Disregarding the forecast, I phoned Steve to see if he was interested in trying his new pack out on a mountain. He was fairly excited about this as he had never climbed a mountain before, that is unless you can call hiking up a ski-run to the top of Mt. Washington a climb.

Our first (and only) choice was Pinder Peak to the south of Atluck Lake off the Zeballos Road. We drove up Friday night and looked for the logging road that went up the Apollo Creek to the south of the mountain. With the misty conditions and a report that was 15 years old, we couldn't find it. So we drove up the East Artlish Road to about 600 m and camped.

Next morning we could see down into Apollo Creek, observed that the logging road was fairly overgrown, and realized we wouldn't have made it very far up. We decided to climb the Southwest Ridge of The Stone Trolls, descend north to a col between The Trolls and Pinder, and from there climb Pinder Peak. Sounded good!

The logging slash and then the undergrowth in the forest was wet from the dewy mist; we were soon "damp". The terrain was steep and there were lots of bluffs to zig-zag around, but it was pleasant climbing.

At about 1100 m we came to a headwall that curved around the mountain in both directions. Scouting around, we found a steep narrow gully splitting the wall. Gaining the top of the wall, we were in the alpine and followed the ridge up to just below the first Troll. Visibility was down to less than 20 m so we set up the tent and climbed the last 90 m to the summit.

According to the map there should have been another summit 200 m away but we couldn't see it and there didn't appear to be any ridge running across to it. As there was an old cairn on top where we were, we concluded that the map must be



Photo: Tony Pugh

Mount Klitsa in the winter.

wrong.

We hurried back to camp to get out of the mist and have a brew. Around 9:30 that evening the mist lifted and we were able at last to get a good view around. Sure enough there was another summit 200 m away from the first. We saw that the easiest route to it was by going around the snowfield to the north and then up to a saddle between the two peaks. From there it looked like an easy climb to the summit. Tomorrow's plans were complete.

Next morning we were up early and on the main summit by 7:30 am. Under the cairn we found a film canister. Inside it were the names of the Kellarhals, who climbed it on August 2, 1981. It was misty again so we didn't see anything. We scamp-ered back down to our packs, hiked down a big gully to the north, and arrived at a beautiful little tarn.

Steve's knee was beginning to act-up and he didn't think he'd be up to climbing Pinder. So with this situation, and the continuing misty weather, we decided to shorten the trip and head back to the truck.

From the col I quickly scouted the route down and found a game trail on the north side of the creek. But after descending about 150 m we got bluffed out. I knew that the Kellarhals had ascended Apollo Creek to the col, so I knew there must be a route down somewhere. Scouting around again, I found a narrow trail leading into the creek itself so I followed it thinking the creek bed looked feasible. I'm usually very wary of getting into creeks because of bluffs and waterfall sections.

Down climbing the narrow creek for another 150 m, I discovered it widened and became easier to follow.

I felt more at ease now knowing that the route would go. We followed it down to the old-growth forest where we had a late lunch. From there we followed the creek for a while longer until we were able to climb through thick new-growth to gain the old logging road. The

road was heavily overgrown for a couple of kilometres but eventually thinned out. Once we were lower down we cut through the slash to the creek, climbed up the other side to gain the East Artlish Road and then walked back up to the truck.

Steve was glad to get the pack off his back and to at last rest his knee after the

pounding it had taken. Although we didn't climb Pinder Peak, we did climb the rarely visited Stone Trolls and now have a better idea of the terrain in the area and the route up Pinder for a future climb.

Participants: Steve Thompson and Lindsay Elms

THE GERMAN CONNECTION

Albert Hestler

Many of the members of the club met Rainer Glassner from Germany who, through a strange set of circumstances, became enmeshed in the activities of the club and certain of its members during last summer. It all started with one of those chance meetings which happen now and then, and when they do happen, they change the course of one's plans in a decidedly different direction.

Viggo & Judy Holm and I were on a two week trip through the Cariboo Region, which also included hiking sorties in Tweedsmuir Park and the Tchaikazan Valley near Chilko Lake. Because of late snow we changed our initial plan of a four day trip to the Rainbow Range (lying north of highway 20 in Tweedsmuir Park) and instead opted for a trail hike to the southern parts of the park, leading to Hunlen Falls and Turner Lake in the vicinity of Lonesome Lake (made famous by the pioneering efforts of the Edwards family and their quest to save the trumpeter swans). At the crossing over the Atnarko River, about one hour's walk from the trailhead, we met two young men camping in an area marked as being distinctly dangerous because of bears. They were having a late breakfast (it was then about noon). Rainer, 19, was taking three months off between his high school finals and the start of his compulsory military/civ service, and his friend Michael had to be back in Germany after a short (?) four week vacation. After a nice chat we gave them our telephone numbers and invited them to call us up if they should happen to come to Victoria during their travels. (We met them later that same day again when they

changed their minds and also made their way to the Turner Lake camp.)

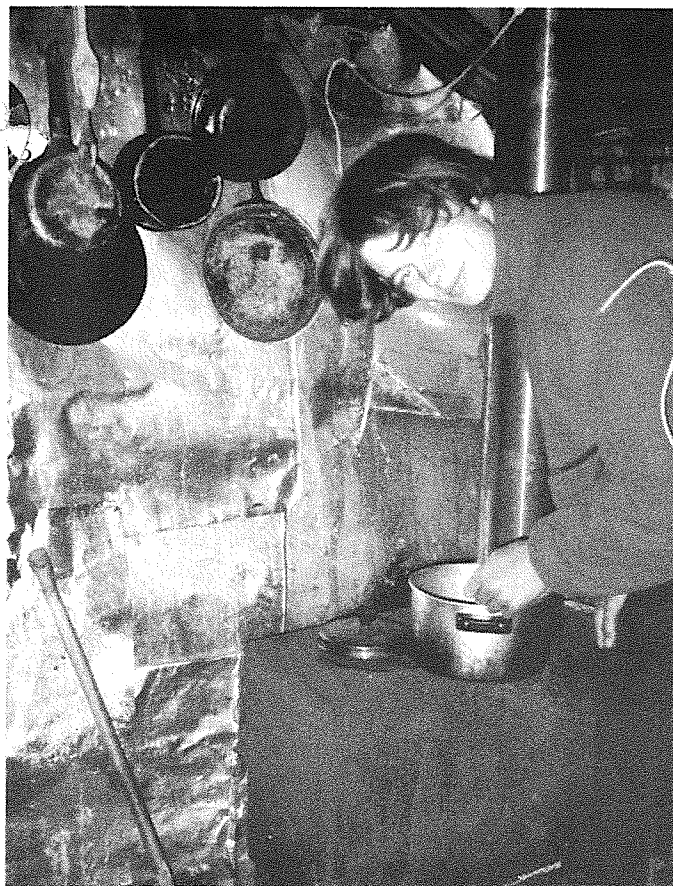
About one week later, while I was away at the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Rainer arrived in Victoria, after having dropped off Michael at the airport in Vancouver. The following day he went off to hike the Juan de Fuca Trail and followed this up with a blitz trip along the West Coast Trail (I believe in two days!). He then returned to Victoria and stayed with the Hestlers for a few days. This time was highlighted by the return of son Andreas from the Olympic Games and a homecoming party for family and friends. Other local outings with Rainer included Mount Finlayson (of course), the 'Splash' symphony concert in the Inner Harbour, and the Canadian National Cycling Championships at the velodrome in Metchosin.

There followed plenty of deliberations concerning what other things Rainer could do. This led to the conclusion that the Stein Traverse planned by Viggo & Judy for the first week in August would be an exciting venture. As it turned out, the traverse didn't take place, but was changed to an ascent of Cloudraker in the Lizzie Creek area. The participants were seven women, no men. They graciously agreed to take Rainer along for the climb; Rainer then planned to complete the traverse solo. It happened to be his first mountain ascent and, from what I can tell, he is now properly hooked on the beauty of mountain climbing (as opposed to rock climbing, which he had done previously in Germany). It was also his first introduction to the use of an ice axe, in this case facilitated by my trusty Stubai compan-

ion of many years. It came in very handy on his descent down to Tundra Lake which was still under snow.

The trip down the Stein Valley was memorable in several aspects. First, there was a forest fire which was supposedly extinct, but had left a large area with charred trees all over the trail. He ran into some firefighters who were mightily surprised to see this young man from Germany wandering around by himself. They gave him a helicopter lift across the worst section of the trail, thus saving him about one day's hiking. Next he encountered a black bear who figured out how to rip open his pack, although it had been stored properly on a bear cache. This bear ate most of his food as well as his toothpaste, but inexplicably left the honey untouched. (Obviously, this bear didn't know what bears are supposed to like, according to stories of his famous cousin Winnie the Pooh). Lastly, he encountered a mother bear with two cubs. Walking up prudently and noisily Rainer managed to avoid any confrontation - luckily.

In the meantime, Rainer's father had made arrangements to come to Canada, rent a van and spend four weeks travelling with his son. (It turned out that father Glassner had spent his honeymoon in Canada some 20 years ago). Again, I was away when he arrived, this time on a kayak trip around Lasqueti Island with Mike Hubbard and Jack Fisher. The Glassners spent the night at the Holms, then took off on the classic scenic loop through B.C. and Alberta, i.e. Banff and Jasper. They also included hiking trips in the Rockies and a canoeing trip in Wells Grey Park. When they returned to



Rainer admiring the modern conveniences in Sid's Cabin, Forbidden Plateau.

Victoria we all had a get-together at Viggo & Judy's, which was also attended by Katie and Chris, Claire Ebendinger and Leslie Gordon. After that it was back to Germany for the father, while the son looked for further things to do during the remaining three weeks.

Rainer was intrigued by the possibilities of doing some rock climbing and made plans to join Rex Andrew on his club trip to the Needles in the Olympic Mountains. We then thought that he could remain in the Olympics for the following week and do some trail hiking on his own. In the end, the remaining time was spent on three different trips. First, he and I went to the Forbidden Plateau area of Strathcona Park (which Rainer badly wanted to see) and climbed Albert Edward. Fortunately, the views were excellent. Secondly, he went with Rex and Gerta Smythe and climbed the Red Wall in the Mackenzie Range near Tofino. I understand that this was only the second ascent on that particular route. And finally, he and I went to the Olympic Mountains and hiked along the North Fork of the Quinault River to the Low Divide and back over the Skyline Trail. The wet weather was in part compensated by the sighting of many bear and elk. Then, alas, it was time for Rainer to return to Germany.

And why am I telling all this? Well, during his stay in Canada, Rainer met many members of the Club and thus became at least a temporary member himself. I also found it fascinating how he managed in 3 months to see so many areas and do so many things, some of which I haven't managed to do during my 27 years in B.C. Jealous? Maybe a little bit, but then I too have had my days of adventure. From my perspective it does bring home the truth of the old saying that it is a pity, indeed, that youth is usually wasted on the young. May they learn to treasure it!

KLUDAHK TRAIL

Linda McKay

March 16

After a great weekend spent on the Kludahk Trail (a trail system maintained by The Kludahk Trail Outdoors Club, located north of The Jordan River), our gracious leader Gerhardt turned to me and said, "Well, it is club policy that the newest member write a detailed account of the trip to submit to the newsletter." Presented in that dictatorial manner, I had no choice but to agree to this assignment. It would have been wise to have mentioned that detail of club policy earlier in the trip, and then I would have listened with eager ears to the exact route of our weekend adventure. Unfortunately, unknown to the rest of my comrades, I have no sense of direction, and seem to have amnesia for trip details!

Shortly after heading up the logging road (and I have no idea which direction we were heading) we had an un-

expected bang, and were presented with our first opportunity to pull out the cameras. A tire had blown and our gracious male comrades were on the deck to repair the damage. We drove as far as possible and then wedged the vehicles into a snow bank - no sense in walking unnecessary distances when you can drive as far as possible with a four wheel drive.

Now here the lack of recall plays havoc with my memory; it seems to me that we reached our final destination, the cabin at Jordan Meadows, after 5 hours of hiking. I may have neglected to mention that this was my first tip with the ACC. For the past 10 years I have procrastinated joining this club after I had heard tales that the ACC is a very serious club. In addition (I was told), if you did not keep pace with the pack, you would be left behind to perish in a

snowdrift!

Fortunately that myth was dispelled shortly after we started to break trail. No sooner had we begun, then Gerhardt stopped the procession to break for "snackies." Out came the proverbial yellow video camera, and the first scene of AMS was staged; that is, Alpine Meadow Sickness.

Lunch was staged at the cabin (geez, Alzheimers seems to have gripped me again!) Then onward, but not for long before we once again huddled again for AMS. This time we were struck with Acute Mountain Sickness.

Arrival at the second cabin was a pleasant site. It was fully equipped, including propane lights, stove and oven, utensils, and a wood-burning stove. Better still, we were each equipped with an offering for our communal supper. When 3 bottles of wine emerged, the

second myth of the ACC - that it is a very, very serious club - was totally dispelled.

Still the day was not over. A few people insisted on doing some more hiking that eve despite the arrival of snow, or was it rain?! Anyhow, despite the chilly temperatures one member decided to plunge into the very chilly waters of a nearby stream (we won't mention any names, Kate).

Meanwhile, back at the warm, cozy

cabin with the 3 bottles of red wine, a lesson on the finer points of Gum Boot Dancing had commenced. Thump thump schwack, thump thump schwack. Maybe it would be best to stick with the fox-trot, Richard!

The next day we hiked out warmed by spring sunshine. Although we retraced our steps, the route was by no means repetitious... no sirree, not with the ACC! Overcome with the sense of adventure and AMS again (this time

Acute Moron Sickness) a canoe was hauled from its quiet winter moorings and thrust upon the frozen waters of an adjacent pond. Really, who could possibly claim that the ACC is a serious club?

Finally back to the vehicles. But, before we could depart, the real reason for AMS was revealed... every man needs his attention?! (sounds corny, you bet!)

Thanks, fellow hikers for a great trip and for making my premiere trip with the ACC one to remember!

MT. PALMERSTON, TSITIKA (ALMOST), AND THE 'BABE'

Lindsay Elms

August 28 - 29

This was my second time in the Palmerston Creek after last year climbing Mt. Russell in a white-out, so this year I was hoping for better weather on the neighbouring Mt. Palmerston. From the end of the logging road, Nicky and I followed a creek to a saddle to the north of the mountain and then we climbed up onto a beautiful bench with lots of little tarns, soft moss and heather patches to have lunch on.

The weather was beginning to look darker, with rain clouds moving towards us so we thought we had better get a move-on. About five minutes before we got to the top it began to drizzle making the rock rather slippery. On top there was a large cairn and a survey marker but no views of the surrounding mountains or Johnstone Strait. We turned around and scooted back down. We managed to outrun the heavier rain which struck us as we were driving up to Woss. After visiting the ex-Mug Up Cafe (I forget what it's now called) we drove down into the Tsitika Valley for the night.

Thursday morning as we parked on the side of the Catherine Creek Main, a logger pulled up next to us and before he said good morning, he puffed his

chest up, pulled his ball cap back and said, "Lost are ya? Need some help?" "Yeah," we said, "we're looking for Telegraph Cove and the whale watching." No that's not what we said but we sure felt like saying it just to see his reaction. Once he knew we weren't lost he drove off.

Two minutes later, three more vehicles pulled up. Friendlier folk - a road building supervisor, two explosive engineers and a logger 'babe. Well that is what Nicky called her. Later Nicky informed me that if there were two or more together they'd be logger 'women' but since there was just one, the singular adjective is 'babe.' She was the loggers equivalent of a biker 'babe.' No Harley Davidson (that we could see) for her but a GMC truck with a steering wheel almost as big as her.

They were interested in knowing where we were going so we pulled out the map and showed them. They were road building a few kilometres up the valley and just wanted to make sure we weren't anywhere nearby. With a chuckle they told us if we hear three loud whistles, hide behind the nearest big rock or tree and pray our skulls are as thick as a sasquatch's, and then they

drove off. It's interesting to note the difference in attitude between the forest workers in this northern part of Vancouver Island to the ones around Cowichan Lake where they act like there is a war going on with anyone not involved with logging.

Nicky and I packed up what we needed for the day and dropped down to Catherine Creek, then got into a creek that swung around from the north of Tsitika Mountain. After a short while we got out of the creek and onto a spur that eventually became the west/north-west ridge. In places the bush was fairly thick but as we got higher it thinned out just as we had hoped.

Ahead the summit block looked steep and daunting. But the closer we got, the more we were sure it would be okay. We never got that far, though; once again the dark clouds moved in and it was threatening to rain. We decided to come back another day. It was just as well we turned around. A couple hours later it began to pour and I think, but some people might argue, that it rained for the rest of the summer.

Participants: Nicola Marion and Lindsay Elms

MT. MCQUILLAN

Doug Goodman

February 18

Thanks,
to Russ
for inviting me to
lead this trip in his
lieu.

Mt. McQuillan, 1595 m,
up from the end of the log-
ging road at 600 m. With me as
leader, we missed the trail, and did
of bushwhacking through some thick
dar, and lots of devil's club, but they all
followed (and oh yes, salmonberry and slide alder.)

A group of 9. Five hours to the summit, a fairly easy snow
climb, max. slope 45 degrees in one spot only, not serious exposure,
some good glissading, 2 hours down to cars, and yes, very very very
wet — pouring rain for hours, but with enough visibility to see where we
were going, and a bit of falling snow on top.

Stopped often but never for long in the cold dampness. The fun lasted right to
the end, crossing the creek with the help of a rope to slide the packs over, and for
people to hold on to. Only one man went in, half way. A beautiful place even in the rain
and fog. Will revisit on skis.

Participants: Tony Pugh, Karen LeGrand, John Damaschke, Chris Joseph, Steve Wickham, Stacey Dewhurst, Bob Jones, Doug Goodman (acting leader)

A STRATHCONA RIDGE LOOP

Rich Pawlowicz.

August 21 - 25

Introduction, in which an objective is modestly
revealed.

It sometimes comes to pass that long expeditions into remote
wilderness degenerate into squabbling, bickering groups of starv-
ing travellers, who covertly eye each other's gaunt and fever-racked
limbs while fingering sharpened knives as supplies run low and the
elements conspire against them, while being overlooked by brood-
ing majestic peaks of awesome menace... but this is no such story.
Instead, our (more limited) objective was a loop into the eastern
part of Strathcona. Ralph Ridge to Rees Ridge to Shepherd Ridge
and back to Buttle Lake over 5 days, while circling the Shepherd
Creek watershed and trying for Mt. Harmston and possibly Argus
along the way. Significantly, our group also numbered 5, a sure
omen had we recognized it.

The first day, in which we wander through the brush.

After stops in Cumberland to pick up Barb Brooks (aka "plastic
boot step-kicker woman") and meet Lisa McBain and PT we pulled
over at the Ralph River campsite. We set off in high spirits for the top
of Ralph Ridge (some 1400 m above us) just after 2 pm, only to
return to the cars 10 minutes later after discovering we should have
started on the NORTH side of the river. A flagged route led us a little
way into the bush along Shepherd Creek, but it soon petered out,



Photo: Reinhard Illner

leaving us to struggle for 4 hours in the thickest most hellish brush I've ever (not) wanted to see, at a net cost of 8 stings distributed rather unevenly between me ("wasp bait") and Barb. Finally we stumbled northwards onto a broad network of good game trails going up the western slope of the ridge. Steady climbing for the next 2 hours brought us nowhere near the top, so in the drizzle and gathering gloom after sunset we set up a campsite between deadfalls on the closest thing to flat ground we had seen for quite a while and rationed our remaining water. Was cannibalism next?

The second day, in which the skies clear and the true alpine is attained.

Another 3 hours of steep forest, bush, and bluffs brought us onto the ridge, finding water at 11 am (time for breakfast!) in a deep gully opening onto a magnificent vista of Tom Taylor to the SW. It would have been a little faster if... errrrmm... someone... hadn't forgotten a lingerie item hung out to dry. Sunny, cloudless, heather, flowers, views in all directions. Claire ("cowabunga") demonstrated her (rather esoteric) skill at jumping off tiny ledges at the bottom of bare faces over deep moats onto steep snow while wearing a full pack, an example we were all too chicken to

follow. But by 8 pm we had traversed Ralph Ridge and most of Rees Ridge (snow, angular red rocks, scrambling up and down), and were setting up camp at the ridge crest of the Aureole Icefield. As we cooked dinner the sun set near the Hinde far to the west, lighting up Harmston, Argus, and the Red Pillar in a ruddy glow.

The third day, in which a mountain is eventually climbed.

It seemed simple on the surface - descend some 500 m into a valley, and then climb up the other side to within striking distance of Mt. Harmston. By noon we were only halfway down: steep cliffs, gullies, difficult route-finding ("don't follow me here, it's CERTAIN

DEATH!") and down-climbing with full packs slowed us. A restful lunch looking over the iceflows in Milla Lake was followed by more sweaty descending in its steep rubble-strewn outflow. Finally, up over snow, to cliffs near the top of the col on Harmston's west side. It took quite a while to find a way past them (although Hiking Trails III shows a route on the east side of this valley you should follow the text and stay right, climbing along a tiny rivulet to a point overlooking the col). We reached a feasible campsite around 5:00, scared away an elk, emptied heavy things out of our packs and headed off to Harmston. We soon discovered that the only feasible route skirted the northern edge of the Cliffe



Rich and the Colonel.

Photo: Reinhard Illner

Glacier from close to its snout far below us. Not everyone was completely happy with this and I scrambled up a long scree slope to a buttress from which he could descend to the upper snowfield; everyone else carefully walked the edge of the glacier. Rejoining at the narrow col south of the peak at 7:15 we dropped the rest of our loads and scrambled up, with Claire, Barb, and me summitting just before 8 pm, and then heading back down as dusk fell. Navigating by headlamps and the amazing memory of Lisa ("I remember this tree") we retraced our route back to camp, arriving at 10:15. Everyone was too tired to set up tents, so we just cooked dinner and bivvied on the ground.

The fourth day, in which the plan is altered and an alternative explored.

Unwilling to face another extensive bushwhack coming off Shepherd Ridge, we decided to go further south to meet up with the Flower Ridge Trail. After contouring around north of Tzela Lake and arguing over whether the described route ("open flower slopes that angle to the NW") had a typo in it (it doesn't), we descended to lunch in spectacular flower-strewn meadows, and then climbed up again onto another ridge which we finally reached at 4 pm. The ridge-top here was most decidedly not flat and for the next 4 hours we scrambled up and down over wonderful gritty granite with beautifully solid hand and

footholds with great friction. Each bump on this ridge seemed to have a steep northern ascent and more gentle southern slopes, and at 8 pm we topped out over another snowfield and descended to an unnamed lake (a pond really) surrounded by bare rounded rock in the col at the head of Henshaw creek. Another evening bivvying under the stars and looking at the moon.

The final day, in which our merry band returns to civilization.

After an early start, 2 hours of effort brought us onto Flower Ridge. Wonderful views of

Septimus allowed me to confirm that in spite of the thick cloud we had in fact reached the true summit several weeks before (see Rex Andrew's report) up something that looked pretty impressive in full visibility. After playing around in snow patches and traversing the most exposed part of the route yet, we reached the end of the "trail" and saw both our first human and bear since Day 1. A rapid descent through beautiful open woods brought us to the trailhead just after 5 pm, completely ready and willing to dive into the freezing waters of Henshaw creek.

Afterward, in which some subsidiary remarks are noted.

The route overlays in Map 4D of the

7th edition of Hiking Trails III are offset about 100 m to the east, which makes more of a difference than you might think. An altimeter would be useful (especially in bad weather), although in clear weather you can get by using an inclinometer and a map if necessary. There is probably a route onto Ralph Ridge that avoids at least some of the bushiness (perhaps by staying well north of Shepherd Creek?). It is surprising how much the tree line and snowfields change in the various vintages of topo maps that people use. Water is a bit of a problem, since at this time of year much of the alpine is dry, and pools lower down are stagnant. It would have been nice to have an extra day near Harmston, to explore Argus and the Red Pillar. In some ways it seems like doing this loop in the reverse direction might be easier. Peppermint schnapps goes very well with hot chocolate.

Participants: Claire Ebendinger (leader), Barb Brooks, Lisa McBain, Rich Pawlowicz, Mike Tenta

MOUNT MYRA

Don Morton
February 3 - 4

The advertised trip to Mt. Myra seemed not too much beyond my long neglected skiing skills and my 30 year museum quality skis. Consequently I joined the others for the drive to the mine site at the southern end of Buttle Lake. The road to the powerhouse had just enough snow cover for us to use our skis, but as we started up the trail we realized how little snow had accumulated this season. Many rocks on the trail were bare, and deadfall blocked the route in places. We had to carry our skis almost to Tennant Lake Dam. By now, after a week of clear cold weather, snow was falling heavily and the temperature was only few degrees below freezing. We pitched camp near the lake and enjoyed a hot meal.

During the night snow, sleet and rain fell, but as we ate breakfast the sky

showed signs of clearing. We headed towards Mt. Myra, sometimes on skis, and sometimes carrying them, until we reached a ridge about 140 m above the lake, where we had a view of the steep gully leading to the summit ridge. The lower gully had avalanched and the upper part appeared as if it could go any time. With much regret we decided to retreat. We found some skiing on the way back to camp and just below the lake, but we walked down most of the trail beside the pen stock.

Participants: Chris Joseph, Theo Vuleveld, Steve Wickham, Jodi Preto, Gerg Gordon (leader), Gerhardt Lepp, Catrin Brown, Charles Turner, and Don Morton

SEPTIMUS

Rex Andrew
August 10 - 11

The rumour mill had become a rumour riot. First, there was the recently aired issue of exactly *which* peak in the massif is the real Septimus. General consensus now seems to suggest that it is the peak at the top of the south face route recently climbed — not once, but twice — by Doug Goodman (a route hereafter referred to as *voie Goodman*). But again the rumours persisted: I heard the route was 4th class, no, 5th class, no, 5.5.

For clarification, I went to Rob MacDonald. Leading a party of 9 ("to the *real* Septimus") in 1995, he had tried to climb directly up from the col. Now, Richard and I had tried a similar line in 1995, but were also defeated by steep 5th class rock after the first pitch. Rob had then taken his party across the S face to Rousseau, along the way eyeballing another possible route (*voie Goodman!*) but rejecting it because it looked too loose for a big party. Then

Rob fanned the flames further: there was apparently a good route up the North side, originally described some years ago in a Bushwhacker article, by Rick Eppler (a route hereafter referred to as *voie Eppler*.) Rob & Co. had rejected *that* route because the access gully had looked too nasty.

Then I talked to Reinhard Illner, who had reconnoitred *voie Goodman* a few weeks earlier, and reported (a) a bad melt-out in the snow at the bottom, (b) an easy detour, and (c) numerous cairns leading upwards. They had, however, been stormed off.

The Riot meter pegged, however, when we arrived at Cream Lake and met Lindsay Elms. Lindsay confirmed our suspicions that the route directly up from the col is about 5.4: it leads to the top of the W peak, but does not go on to the (*real*) summit due to a steep and impassable notch. Furthermore, Lindsay has *only* climbed Septimus by *voie Eppler*,

which he rated at 3rd-4th class: he knew nothing about *voie Goodman*, and thought the south side rock might be too loose to provide a good route.

So what would it be? Should I choose the route behind Door Number One? Or the route behind Door Number Two? Argh, decision paralysis! So I did what I always do when confronted by two equally confusing choices.

I chose BOTH! Why not go UP *voie Eppler* and DOWN *voie Goodman*?

So we left Cream Lake at 0430 Sunday morning and stumbled up through the boulder field by headlamp to the NW glacier. Access to the hanging NE glacier is via a thin, unlikely looking rock seam that cuts up left from the main snowfield to a notch in the long N ridge left of the W peak. There was a slender snow finger up most of this seam, hereafter referred to as gully X because it is bisected by a second, much steeper gully about halfway up, forming an X. This

steeper segment had melted out completely, so the route of choice was directly up the entire snow finger of gully X, a route laying almost line-of-site from Cream Lake up to the notch in the N ridge.

We gathered in the grey light at the base of gully X to put on crampons. The lower half of the gully was not too steep, but the upper portion was reportedly 40° to 45° and exposed: the run-out was not back down the snow finger, but sideways off the finger and immediately over sheer rock faces. With essentially zero margin for error, we roped up and I placed a snow anchor every rope length for a running belay.

Even though the snow was not crunchy, the snow finger, never more than a couple metres wide, had frozen up quite well and provided an exhilarating and delightfully exposed route. We had scrambled around two easy melt-outs in the lower half of the gully when Graham let out a shout. I looked back. He was pointing west, where the dawnlight had kindled the clouds of an approaching front into a wall of glowing scarlet and purple. Overhead, an advancing flock of bright pink fractocumulus "sheep" were tumbling and spinning across a powder blue sky. A gorgeous red sky at dawn which, of course, at 0600, heralded the end of our good weather.

High up in gully X we reached a gully-wide melt-out with a short rock step. I belayed everybody up into the moat below the step and then led the fun part: about 6 low-fifth-class moves in crampons (screak screek screek!) to establish a second belay to bring everyone else up. Gerta was heard to exclaim "Good holds! Great rock!" From there, another pitch of steep snow took us to the melted-out notch and great views of the hanging NE glacier beyond.

From the notch, Graham led down about 10 metres along an 8 cm ledge (still in crampons — THIS is alpine climbing!) to the snow where he belayed the rest of us down onto the glacier. Then we traversed between a couple of school-bus-sized crevasses to the base of a low-angled buttress. By now the mist was pouring over the summits

above, so I wasn't sure this was the right buttress. After all, there WAS some confusion. . . .

Undaunted, Gerta led the way, scampering up the buttress which was never really more than 3rd class but may have developed some considerable exposure to either side. (Hard to say in the fog.) We summited at 0915, where we found two cairns, but no register. Actually, we had expected to find a small register, so I became worried that we had reached the wrong summit, possibly the W peak.



Septimus (W. peak) from Cream Lake. NW glacier center and right, gully X on the left.

I snooped around though and found more cairns leading down into the boiling fog on the south side — certainly the top of *voie Goodman*! So we were off, gingerly descending from cairn to cairn over considerably steeper terrain. In a while we reached the top of a pitch which was definitely 4th class, and since it was now raining intermittently and the rock was wet, we opted to rappel this pitch. More twisting route finding, then another stiff stretch of exposed 4th class. Here I set up a belay on a small ledge to belay everyone down, and then followed on rappel.

Shortly thereafter, in bits of rain, wind and fog, we reached the bottom, traversed back over to the main couloir, and took a screamer butt-glissade back down. We arrived back at camp at about

1400.

We chose to hike out, which brought us back to Victoria at about 0300 Monday morning. This was definitely not the most enjoyable way to end a splendidly technical climb like this, so I would have to second Rob's advice, given in last year's *Bushwhacker*, that two days is one day too short for this climb.

P.S. A notable highlight occurred as we limped in to Patti-Jo's 24-hour diner in Campbell River: there was none other than Fred Becky, who with two others

had attempted Colonel Foster!

P.S.S. Many thanks to Gerta, Graham and Rich for cheerfully following me into unusual terrain. It was perhaps more technical than the usual climb, but I suspect they secretly enjoyed it.

P.S.S.S. To my chagrin, I later saw that Phil Stone's Septimus route card provides an unmistakable picture of gully X and *voie Eppler* (not so named though) up to the summit, so I am indebted to him for some of the feature names used in this report. *Voie Goodman* is not shown. It might have paid to do my homework, but, then again, it was more fun this way.

Participants: Rex Andrew, Graham Bennet, Richard Pawlowicz, Gerta Smythe

Photo: Rex Andrew

MOUNT MORIARTY

Alan Danesh

July 14

One of the more beautiful mountains on the island is Moriarty. The fact that this is not generally known and it has not received its share of visitors may have something to do with its proximity with Mt. Arrowsmith which, at 1819 m, is higher than Moriarty (1610 m) and well known.

My first attempt to reach the summit of this mountain took place on August 6, 1995 when Tony Pugh and I braved heavy rain at lower altitudes near Labour Day Lake and hiked up the steep slope to reach the ridge leading to the mountain. Soon we had to fight our way through blizzard and howling winds. Then we were engulfed in heavy fog. Unable to see the summit and not knowing its whereabouts, we climbed every rocky outcrop which seemed higher than the one we were standing on until there was nothing higher left to climb. So we assumed that we must have reached the summit and headed down, scouting our way back on the ridge through continuing blizzard, fog, and wind. On the way down, with the generosity of a true mountaineer, Tony loaned me his only pair of gloves, since my heavy ski gloves were already soaked wet and my hands were going numb.

It was on our second, and successful, attempt at Moriarty on April 20, 1996 that we realized we had not reached the summit on the previous occasion. From the highest point of the last trip we had to hike down to and across a deep and wide saddle and then begin the ascent to the summit. It was through sheer luck that while we were standing there hoping for an opening in the wall of fog, for a brief few seconds a "window" did open in the direction of the summit. But that was all we needed in order to pinpoint the route to the summit. The four of us on this second trip—Stacey Dewhurst,

Mark Pierog, Tony Pugh, and myself—made a dash for it. Thirty minutes later we were standing on the summit and admiring the view as the fog was now lifting and distant mountains were beginning to show.

The official club trip took place on July 14th, Bastille Day. But we were not storming the Fortress of Bastille, only the summit of Moriarty—though our legion was large enough to do both. On the April trip we had to hike through one to two feet of crusted snow at higher elevations and it took us four hours to reach the summit from the lake. By July 14 the snow had largely disappeared, except for occasional patches in depressions over the ridge, and we had magnificent weather—sunny and clear. It is the long hike over the extended and gentle ridge of Moriarty in such a beautiful weather which must convince the nonbeliever that this is a truly magnificent hike, not to mention the prospect of a swim in Labour Day Lake upon return. The ascent from the lake to the summit took two and a half hours; the return one hour and forty-five minutes.

Participants in the trip were: Alan Danesh (leader), Randy Aitkin, Wendy Croft, Bev Fletcher, Jim Harper, Barbara Hubbard, Mike Hubbard, Tony Pugh (by now a veteran of Moriarty), Chris Schreiber, John Schreiber, Larry Talarico, and Tom Wilson.

To reach Moriarty, drive along Port Alberni highway, past MacMillan Park & Cathedral Grove, and turn left onto Summit Main. This entrance is well marked on the highway as it leads to Mt. Arrowsmith ski area. Summit Main curves to the left and joins Cameron Main. Stay on Cameron Main and continue beyond

Pass Main which you see to your left leading to Arrowsmith. Later on the road reaches a cleared area and forks. Take the left fork going uphill. Then two other cleared areas and another fork at the end of the latter clearing. Take the left fork again. This is Lake Road. There is a bit of rough road ahead, and you should see the river to your right along the road. Then the first water bar and then others; six in all. They are so far quite shallow and I have been able to get through them with my VW Rabbit, emptied of passengers and driving diagonally along the bars. Somewhere along the way there are two more forks. At the first one take the right fork along the level road; at the next take the left fork uphill. Stay right on the main road until you reach a parking area beyond which the road turns sharply to the left and uphill about a hundred metres ahead of you. Park at the parking area and walk to where the road turns to the left. There you should see the lake trail taking off to the right. Follow the trail for 10 minutes until you reach an area along the lake where your archaeological instinct should tell you the area has been, and may still be, occupied by Homo Sapiens. On the morning of August 6, 1995 we saw a large number of them inhabiting the area, but all except the inhabitants of one "hamlet" had fled due to heavy rain by the time we returned from our summit attempt. From the campground find the flagged route up the steep slope ultimately turning left and leading to the ridge. Travel distance from highway turn-off to Labour Day Lake parking area is 24 km. Along Cameron Main and Lake Road there are numerous subsidiary turn-offs. Be sure to stay on the main road except when at the forks described above.

IN SEARCH OF WILDERNESS AND INNER PEACE

Claire Ebendinger

It's been a grey and wet winter, with glimpses of gold
It doesn't matter where we go, as long as it's wild
It doesn't matter about the weather, it's always wild!
Be it on Mt. Rohr with warm sun and dripping wetness from the trees above
Or Mt. Work in a wind storm, watching the ravens dance in the sky
On the way up to Whympet, soggy and mild, spying on cougar and wolf,
Up the ridge of Arrowsmith, cold and misty, then down the Judge where spring changes to summer
Lounging in Cayoosh Basin, watching the avalanche show after a warm and wet night
Or strolling on Jocelyn Hill, singing Christmas carols in the fog or smelling shooting stars and chocolate lilies
It doesn't matter where I go, the feeling is the warm inside
A mix of excitement and calmness, a deeply felt connection with a place I come from
A feeling of respect and admiration for what God and our Mother have given us
An appreciation of life, beauty and friendship.

1996 SKI OPENER

Greg Gordon

November 17

Ski season opener in November! Surely we would be going to the mainland in search of early season snow. As it turned out there was enough snow on the island, so we set our sights on Mt. Cokely.

On the morning of the ski trip it was actually snowing right down to sea level. This had us all dreaming of knee-deep powder on Cokely, but as we drove north, the highway became choked with snow. Enough snow that we were not sure if we could even reach our destination. So we changed our course and headed to the Reinhart Lake area.

A foot of fresh fluff covered Chemainus River Road and my car was labouring in the stuff. Just as I was about to give up, Viggo offered to hook up his snow plow. It worked very well, but I think Doug's knees were a little sore from keeping his skis in the snow-plow position while he clung to Viggo's front bumper.

As the snow stopped falling and the sky cleared, spreading sunshine on the sparkling fresh snow, we skied our way up a bump next to Reinhart Lake. Could this really be only November?

We climbed and climbed, gaining great altitude and as we broke through the tree line (into a clear-cut) the clouds

rolled slowly back in. It started to snow lightly as we reached our high summit, where we ate lunch and celebrated Julie's birthday, complete with candles and cake. Too bad Julie wasn't there to enjoy it.

The snow began falling heavily so we strapped on our skis and headed down. The silent snow fall was pierced by the occasional muffled shriek of joy. Doug accidentally aimed himself directly at me at high speed and accidentally forgot to avoid crashing into me and breaking several thousand bones in both of us. Luckily I'm well insured so I didn't mind.

We reached the bottom of our run early and carried on around Reinhart Lake and up another hill

on the opposite shore. Doug did not try to accidentally mutilate anyone this time. It was a good day and it was especially nice to see Judy out once again.



Photo: Claire Ebendinger

"You are missing a good trip! We found the snow," above Reinhart Lake.

Participants: Claire Ebendinger (leader and snow finder), Doug Goodman, Greg Gordon, Judy Holm, Viggo Holm, Dave Lemon

MOUNT HARMSTON

Doug Goodman

June 7 - 10

We found some stone but came to little harm.

Mt. Harmston is a good day's hike from any road. A brutal trip for me, and I think the others also got their money's worth—over 5000 ft of elevation gain, half bushwhack and half in wet snow and on slippery rock. Actually we climbed another 1000 feet going over the typical Strathcona bumps.

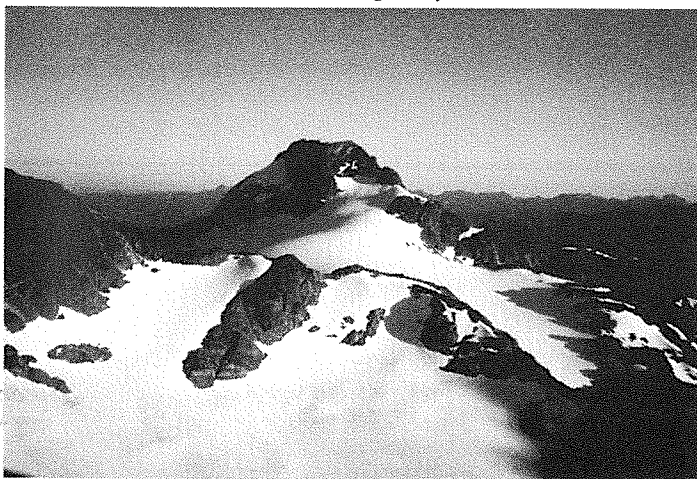
The first 4000 was mild bushwhacking, not too thick or steep, among quite lovely vanilla leaf, yellow violets, dogwoods, mosses, blowdown and root rot. Then snow, wet June-ish snow. When we reached it Saturday noon, it started to get deeper due to transfer from sky to ground, and continued to blow and fall virtually unabated for the next two days. But it was firm enough to walk on/in, and we had three of the group of five who gladly provided footsteps.

Some steep bits on the ridge, mostly not. I lead Fleming on a steep side hill; we were roped, he fell, and by good luck stopped just short of a small bluff, then he followed the rope over a rocky bit and did it without falling. These two young guys were very quiet.

Saturday night we slept on a small snow/icefield at the head of Shepherd Creek, about 30 minutes from the divide leading down to Tzela Lake. Fleming and Gerhardt dug little beds in a large snow bank for their bivvy sacs. Sheldon, Jacqueline and I squeezed into a small two-person tent.

In view of the weather and lack of reliable raincoat, Jacquie opted to stay sheltered the next morning, leaving four of us to make the summit bid. Sheldon was a blessing; he had lots of energy and did great stuff kicking steps up steep snow. For extra interest, I suggested that we try a more direct route up the south ridge, which on the 1:50,000 map looked similar in steepness to the tourist route east ridge.

It went ok, with a short bit of rock where Fleming requested the rope. Then I thought it would be a walk to the top as the map showed a long smooth ridge. Instead we came to a sharp gap, looking much more than the 100 ft contour deep. Afterwards I vowed not to go anywhere without a 1:20K



Sunset on Red Pillar from Harmston.

Photo: Claire Ebendinger



Moving Glacier and Milla Lake.

Photo: Claire Ebendinger

map. A photo would have helped too. We backed off and rappelled down the rock bit. Then I discovered a delightful steep gully leading down to the glacier from where we could access the tourist route to the main summit.

I scampered down and back up to make sure it went. Gerhardt, our leader, agreed to go down it, and we headed down. We came to a patch of hard snow with slush on top. I waited on a rock ledge at the bottom of it and watched the three guys work their way down. Sheldon lost his footing and slid, bumped into Gerhardt, sending him sliding too. I chose to grab Sheldon as he came by, leaving Gerhardt to my left to stop himself. Both men were in self arrest position and were slowing their falls. Sheldon stopped just short of me. Gerhardt went by and landed on a rocky ledge, cursing and saying "Get me out of this place".

Sheldon and Gerhardt moved down a step or two. I moved over directly under Fleming, hoping that he would learn from the others experience. Unsure, he slipped. He came bouncing down the snow at me, sideways to the slope, airborne part of the way. I caught him like a babe in arms. My feet slid back and down, and we moved down from one rock ledge a few feet to the next.

Amazingly neither of us had more than bruises, despite the ice axes in hand. I said "you must have been scared". He replied "not really, I didn't have time to be scared". I wasn't so much scared as disappointed that we hadn't taken precautions. I helped him down the rest of the way, staying close behind him, and reassuring him that a certain technique would be safe.

Once on the glacier, the others had had enough of climbing and declined to join me on the tourist route, which was now visible below the mist. They headed for camp. I dropped my pack and was on top 45 min. later, and down in 15 minutes with the help of a long bum glissade. I thought just maybe I could catch them. I followed their tracks until they headed lower than necessary, then I contoured about the base of

some bluffs till I found our tracks from the hike in the morning.

To my surprise and disappointment they hadn't been there, they were behind me, somewhere too low I guessed. Weary, I plodded up the valley punching a new step between each old one we'd made on the way down. It continued to snow. I looked back down the valley frequently hoping to see them coming up. No sign. They'd be ok, I

thought, and I need to get back to camp myself.

Eleven hours after leaving, I got back to camp at 7 pm. Jacqueline kindly made me some soup while I relaxed in the tent, too small to cook in. The others finally arrived at 9, having broken a new trail from low to high, and approaching camp from the south rather than the north. Gerhardt said "We were navigationally challenged." Sheldon said

"We took the scenic route."

Monday was a slog out, with blowing cold snow, horizontal sleet, then beautiful big-flakes snowfall, rain in the woods, and sunshine among the dogwoods, on the little deer trails that follow the edge of Henshaw canyon.

Participants: Gerhardt Lepp (leader), Jacqueline Cameron, Fleming Servin, Sheldon Zakreski, Doug Goodman

THE APPROACH AND ASCENT OF MT. TOM TAYLOR AS PERFORMED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION OF THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MARQUIS DE SADE.

John Pratt

August 30 - September 1

If Doug Goodman and I had followed the directions of this infamous French nobleman (1740-1814), then things would have gone something like this: firstly, since the Bedwell Lake trail is pleasant, of excellent quality and well-suited to a relaxing approach, we would have begun the hike in the gloomy rain at 6:15 PM and so been deprived of the pleasure of the scenery, having instead to concentrate on keeping our footing on the slippery, muddy trail and to hike in at maximum pace in order to arrive at the campsite before dark, but only just. We would then have had to set up the tent and cook supper in the dark and rain.

The next morning, we would have to bushwhack through dense, wet blueberry bushes (making us thoroughly damp only 15 minutes after leaving camp) and cross the outlet of the lake to pick up a sketchy trail around a bluff, jungled bump which side-hilled on the right to give us (eventually) access to the ridge leading down from the first summit. Now, because the true peak is actually quite easy to climb (but doesn't look it), we would have to sit atop the first summit and agree that the true summit (the steeper, pointed peak, the second major one as you go along the ridge) was best approached from the other side, by dropping right on to the glacier and



Summit of Mount Tom Taylor.

Photo: John Pratt

climbing it from the rear. Then, we would have to overshoot it and climb, in a mouth-drying, bowel-loosening pitch, up the far side of a third peak (there seem to be about four or five along the ridge).

Discovering that we were still not on the true summit, we would then have to double-rappel back on to the glacier and go back to the second (true) summit which - it turns out - can be directly and easily climbed from the glacier. Finally,

we would discover that the rope was totally unnecessary as, despite appearances, the true peak is easily gained directly along the ridge-top from the first.

Finally, since we'd probably have had some energy left, we'd have hiked over to Cream Lake and climbed Mt. Septimus.

But we deny it.

Participants: John Pratt and Doug Goodman

SURFING THE MACKENZIE RANGE

Lindsay Elms

August 22 - 23

Mt. Palmerston (hmmmm), Nahmint Peak (maybe), Tsitika Mountain (that would be nice), MacKenzie Range, Mt. Titus — ohhhh! Sometimes I wish I could just throw all the options into the computer, push random, and see what mountain it would suggest climbing this time.

So how do you make the decision about where and which mountain to climb when you have the time? Do you look at the Club's Trip Schedule and highlight the trips you want to do, or do you take a regular twelve month calendar, look at it and say "On this weekend I'm going to such and such, and then on this weekend I'll go there... so that you've got the year planned out. It doesn't matter what the weather is doing as this is what you've planned for this weekend and your just going to go for it. Perhaps you just let somebody else make the decision for you! Makes things easier. I have heard of people doing climbs alphabetically from A-Z.

As for me I usually wait until the day or night before and see what the weather is doing and then make my decision on where to go. This time I chose to go to the MacKenzie Summits. I've been wanting to go up there for a long time (I can probably say that about every peak) and the weather was looking good. I did some research and phoning around the night before, then left on Thursday morning. I started up the trail at 10:30 AM and arrived at the camp just below the summit by 2 PM, after sweating my

way up profusely. The views from here were fantastic - Hidden Peak, Kennedy Lake and the West Coast, Toquart Bay and the Broken Islands. One almost doesn't need to go to the top of a mountain. (Who am I kidding?).

After setting up camp and resting awhile, I took a rope, some slings and hardware, and climbed to the top of MacKenzie Summit. It was just as well I decided to go to the top because the views were even better. From there I could see across to Canoe Peak, Triple Peak, The Cat's Ears, Mt. Hall, etc. I sat up there planning future trips and looking at access and routes, all of which is now safely stored away in my 1.09 gigabyte cranium hard drive. I down climbed into the south basin below the Witch's Hat, Flat-top and The Centaur and looked at the routes up them. There was some pretty nice rock up there to climb tomorrow. Back to camp for a brew and dinner.

Later that evening, after surfing the Internet (topo-map), I realized that Canoe Peak might be a better objective. It was 3 km away with what looked like a relatively easy route across to it. I could come back up any time to climb the other MacKenzie Towers. I set the alarm for 6 AM.

Next morning I was away by 6:30 AM. Traversing under the NW ridge of Redwall Peak, I dropped down to the little lake below the north faces (not marked on the map). This is the place

to get the best views of the MacKenzie Towers. I scrambled across the talus slopes, staying high to avoid bluffs lower down. At the far end I dropped down a scree slope and traversed into the saddle to the south of Canoe Peak.

It was good to get off the loose moving talus slopes and onto some soft-on-the-feet heather. From the saddle there was a steep climb up a gully that dissected a rather forbidding feature blocking the way. After that more heather and then more talus which brought me up to a ridge west of Canoe Peak. This looked down on the saddle between Canoe and Cat's Ears Peak. There was a steep ridge going to the summit of the Cat's Ears. Contemplating this, I decided not to climb it this day. Ten minutes later I was on top of Canoe Peak.

Usually at 8:30 AM it is a nice cool time to be on the top, but the sun was already scorching hot. I spent half an hour on top and then headed back to camp hoping to get down off the mountain at a reasonable time. Leaving camp around midday, I was at the trailhead 2 hours later and ready for a dip in the Kennedy River.

Information for anyone doing the trip in August: there was not much water around. The trail was dry and the first drinkable pond was about 150 m below the summit at the high camp. This water was drying up fast. The only other option was to melt snow or drop down to the lake on the north side.

RIDERS OF THE STORM

Lindsay Elms

October 10 - 20

There was not supposed to be any thing unusual about this trip for me; it was a COLT Mountain Journey that was going from Mt. Washington down to Flower Ridge over nine days. We were a party of 12 and the outcome of this trip is that we will all have good yarn to spin and an experience that none of us

will ever forget.

The first day it just poured rain. We had lunch under the Rangers Cabin and then continued on to Sid's Cabin near Circlet Lake where we managed to dry our gear out around the wood stove. The next day there was fresh snow up on Mt. Albert Edward and Jutland and

the weather still didn't look good, so we did a day trip up to Mt. Jutland. We had several contingency options if we didn't get to go all the way to Flower Ridge so we thought it best to observe the weather and see what would happen.

Day three started out so-so. The group

decided to go around towards Moat Lake and then up Castlecrag Mountain to Mt. Frink and then make another decision about the trip. Well we only got as far as Moat Lake before the skies chose to open up again. A quick call to get tents up and into them before we got too wet. A good call I thought, a sign of maturity by the group.

Day four didn't greet us initially with nice drying weather. It was a damp, misty morning but okay for travelling, so we packed up and went around the ridge of Castlecrag. By 2 PM it was gorgeous out so we set up camp to dry tents and while that was happening strolled up Castlecrag. That night the temperature dropped way down.

Day five was just like the afternoon before and everybody was in good spirits. We were ready to go up Mt. Frink and from there head south, but instead of exiting Flower Ridge we changed our plans to come out Ralph Ridge. We had lunch on top of Mt. Frink and from there had a good view of the conditions along the ridge and the on coming weather. Another discussion on the options available. This time the group decided not to commit themselves to move everyday by going towards Ralph Ridge, but now to come out via Augerpoint to Buttle Lake. This was a shorter route and gave us a couple of days leeway if we had to sit out some weather again. We moved up and over Mt. Albert Edward and found a campsite about 300 metres down the ridge by 5 PM. All day we had been travelling in the snow as there was about eight to ten inches of fresh stuff that had fallen several days previous.

That night it began snowing and then it began blowing, and blowing, and blowing, reminiscent of the big bad wolf and the three little pigs. When we awoke on Thursday morning (for those who

slept) we found the tents keeling over like yachts in a stiff breeze. The tops of the aluminum poles were trying to touch the ground. We weren't moving this day! The five tents, although only meters apart, might as well have not been there as we couldn't communicate with each other because of the howling wind. At 8 AM I got out and crawled around to the tents to see how the occupants had fared during the night. They all appeared to be holding out okay.

As the morning proceeded the winds got stronger. At just after 10 AM my tent door opened and a head poked in and said their tent had just ripped to pieces. A pole had snapped and as soon as it broke through the fly, the wind got inside and just tore it to shreds. They had managed to secure their gear and so the three of them then had to divide themselves out amongst the other tents. We were beginning to get crowded, but at least we were dry, warm and cosy. There was no room for cooking in the vestibule or it might be better to say it wasn't safe enough to do any cooking, but we decided not to eat much as this would mean at some point later we would have to go outside and this we didn't want to do.

The winds just didn't seem to be abating and we were all concerned about the tents holding out. A guy line holding my tent soon ripped a grommet off and we became apprehensive about the rip getting larger and shredding the tent. At midday again the tent door opened and another head popped in. Their tent was getting loaded with snow and they were having to get out and clear the snow away every 15 minutes. They were concerned about falling asleep and then becoming suffocated. They couldn't move the tent and thought the best thing to do was to abandon it and get into

someone else's tent. We were now 12 people in 3 tents, 5 in a 3 person tent, 4 in a 2 person tent and another 3 also in a 2 person tent. Cosy!

Well that's the way we sat out the rest of the day, that night and half of Friday until the winds finally dropped. These last 3 tents held out, but we don't know how much longer they would have lasted. At midday we decided to pack up and get out of there and make our way back to Sid's Cabin. The tent that had been abandoned was under 6 feet of snow ripped and broken. Gear couldn't be found because of all the snow or else it had blown away. It took us 9 hours to get to the cabin. From the ridge between Albert Edward and Jutland to the cabin we were floundering through waist- to chest-deep dry powder snow and even with the 12 of us taking turns at breaking trail, it still took us 4.5 hours.

Saturday the weather was gorgeous. It was hard to believe that it could change so fast, from being in a life threatening survival situation to a beautiful fall day. It still took us 5 hours from the cabin to Helen MacKenzie Lake and another 2 hours to the car park but at least we all came out with smiles on our faces.

As for me, I found a real irony with this trip. In May on Mt. Logan I was expecting this sort of weather and would prepare our campsite accordingly by building huge snow walls and securing everything down. This sort of weather we didn't get up there but then here on Vancouver Island with the lower elevated mountains and what we consider a friendlier climate we go and get hurricane force winds — not what we were really expecting. It just goes to show that you really have to be prepared wherever you go for the unexpected. This storm we later read was the worst in the

TRIPLE PEAK, MAIN SUMMIT

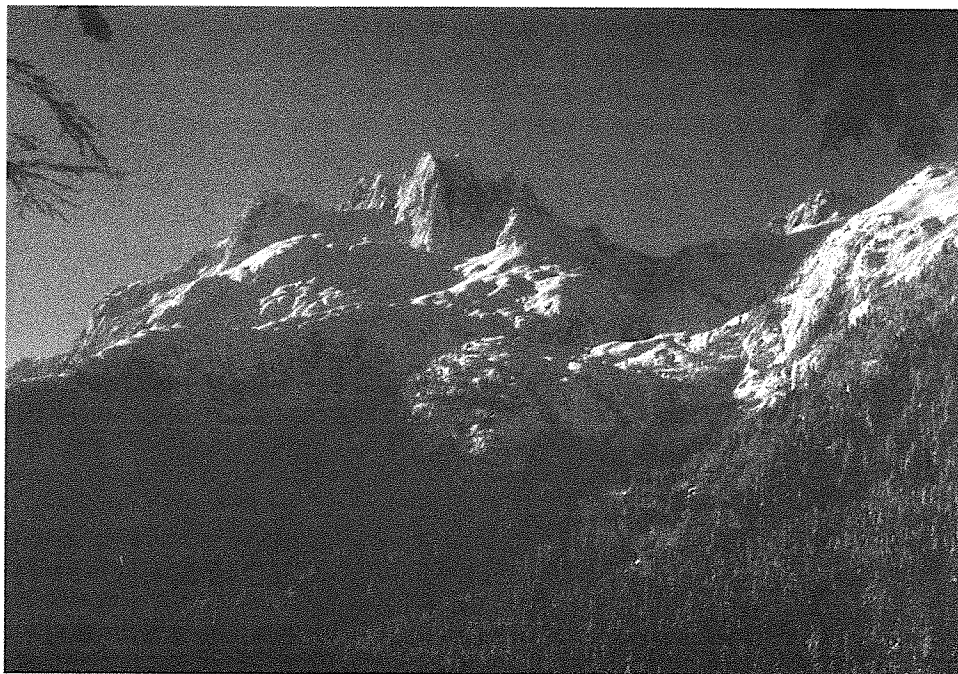
Doug Goodman

September 20 - 23

After a good deal of humming and hawing, we decided to leave early Saturday morning, in spite of the rain forecast. Selena was the only one game enough to join me, and game she was, experiencing on her first ACC trip -some of the toughest bushwacking, krumholz swimming, alpine rock climbing and vege-rappelling that one is likely to encounter on section trips. The pre-trip delays were portentous. Our weekend became a long weekend due to difficulty with route finding and slower than expected travel. We eventually camped near a large tarn on the ridge to the west of the lake we had been looking for. We had climbed 600 m higher than necessary, and our position lengthened the next day's approach by several hours. What was expected to be a 2 hour hike to camp turned into 7 hours. Mercifully the day's downpour had stopped and the clouds blew away to reveal the jagged beckoning teeth of Triple Pk.

After drying some gear in the morning sun, we set out at 10 AM Sunday morning, hoping to gain the peak and be home that evening. 12 hours later we were slowly making our way along the ridge top towards camp, admiring the moon shadows. We had reached the summit at 16:30, via the east ridge and two pitches of rock, with a few 5.7 to 5.8 moves. Having misread the map, I thought the south side was the gentlest, and attempted to reach it via the notch

to the east. But the south face is steep and dissected with grotty gullies. The east ridge took 2 hours! Perhaps some practice is in order? Earlier in the day we'd almost climbed a little spire while trying to bypass the west peak via a high route, an unplanned diversion that added another hour or two even though the rope didn't come out. What a wonderland of steep rock on a small scale! We rapped off the summit, then Selena received a short but very realistic lesson in self-arrest on the snowfield, before the evening's amble back to camp. Not to be outdone, Monday brought us first rate bush down-climbing, via a direct route I'd gone up and down last year. Many mushrooms were to be enjoyed in Bear Shit Pass, a splendid starting point now that Marion Main goes to the top of Cat's Ears Creek.



Triple Peak in the winter.

Photo: Sandy Briggs

THE SCOTTISH CONNECTION

Sandy Briggs

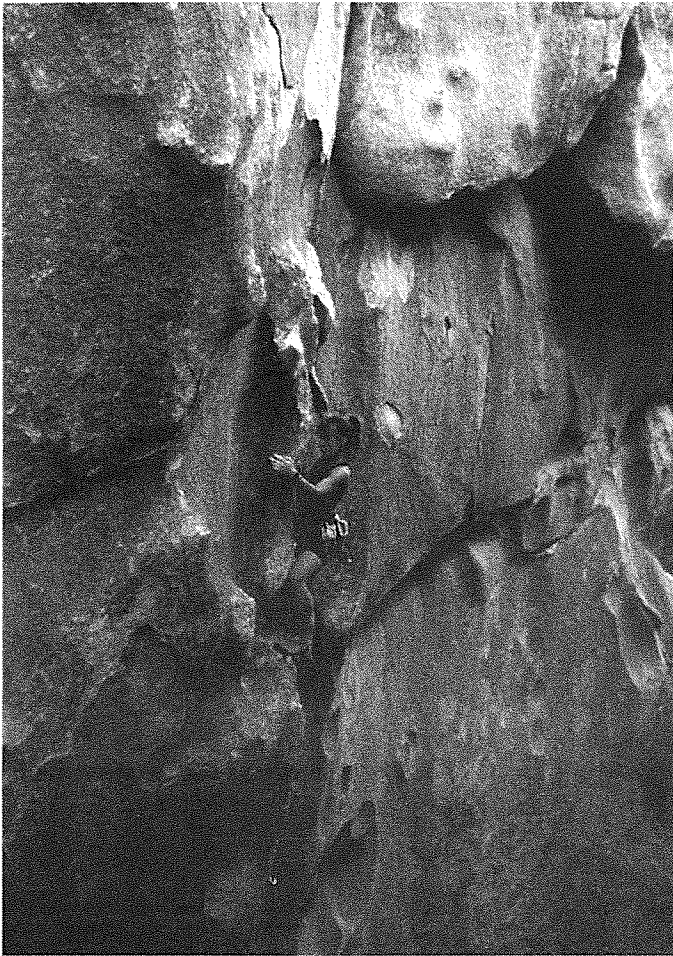
The year 1996 has been special and important to me for several reasons, not all of which will have been apparent to the casual observer. Echo and I had several PFA's* visit us in the summer: my parents, good friends of Echo's from east of the Rockies, and an old friend of mine from my time as a graduate student in Scotland.

I arrived in St. Andrews, that gentle North Sea city of rainbows, in the early autumn of 1975 to face, somewhat trepidaciously, new frontiers of chemis-

try and of culture. I had hardly even heard of mountaineering or rock climbing, but tentatively exposed myself to the activities of the St. Andrews University Mountaineering Club. I was won over immediately!

This piece will be far too long unless I come immediately to the point, which is that my discovery in those Scottish days was at least as much a discovery of mountaineers as it was a discovery of mountaineering, and when I think back upon those times it is the people I re-

member more vividly than anything we ever did. I had done quite a lot of hiking, snowshoeing and camping, as well as a little canoeing, but something was different in Scotland, and it wasn't just the accent. It had to do with long drives and singing in a crowded minibus, with long dark hikes to some remote shelter, with a spirit of doing something in all but the worst weather, with sharing laughter and song and accordion music in a chilly bothy, with the social scene of village pubs, and with the sheer vo-

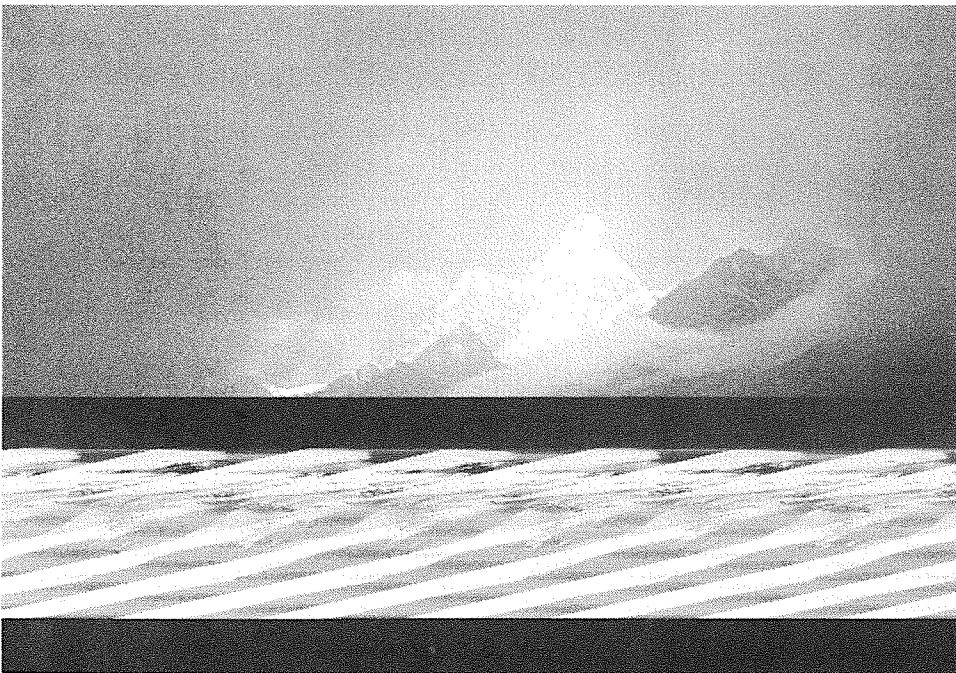


People in the Mountains - Joshua Tree by Kris Holm.

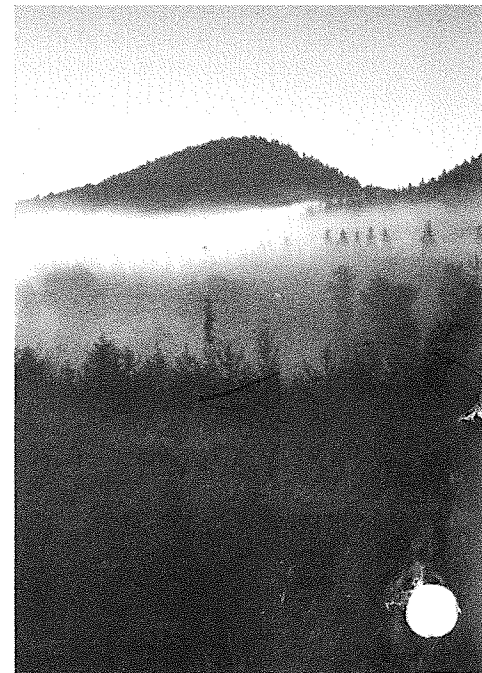


Mountain Scenery - High sunset from Aconcagua by

1996 PHOTO C



Best Print - Ama Dablam, Khumbu region Nepal by Jeremy Dolan.



Nature - Purcell morning by Gil Parker.



Randy Aitken.



Humour - Ian Brown "butt-sliding" by Margaret Brown.

CONTEST WINNERS



Humour - Catrin Brown by Claire Ebendinger

racious enthusiasm that powered the legs and was sustained by the feast of the senses.

Phil Gribbon is one of the special people from that time. He was a little more than twice my age, with the consequence that, though I recognize now that he was actually young, I thought of him as the wise Elder. We chanced to be on a number of club hill walking trips together. In 1977 I was able to go along on the St.A.U.M.C. West Greenland Expedition, of which Phil was the leader (his seventh such trip, I believe).

Those two months in Greenland changed my life! The people we met there touched our lives, and we were privileged to touch the land that is their life. So many memories flood back from

that endless sunny summer day that they must eventually overflow onto paper, I suppose. For now it will be enough to say that the greatest treasure I found on those arctic islands was the sure knowledge that happiness has not much to do with how much one owns, that many of us in this society are pretty darned spoiled, and that each of our days is likely to go much better for us and for our neighbours if we acknowledge that simple fact upon waking.

Phil visited us in Victoria as part of a long visit with his son Peter (and family) who lives in Revelstoke, and who was also along on the Greenland trip. Phil retired recently from the Physics faculty at St. Andrews University (but not from climbing). We took him to Botani-

cal Beach (Scotland, B.C., and Greenland, enjoy the luxury of ocean and mountains side-by-side). Phil and I went to Strathcona Park. A mother bear and cub strolled idly a few meters in front of our tent at Bedwell Lake. We groped our way through clouds and mist to the two eastern summits of Big Interior Mountain with no view. It might have been Scotland. We traded stories and news and plans and banter. There was nothing 'New Age' about it, no beating of drums, but there was a kind of reconnection, and a pause to reflect on shared wonder, and on the wonderful people brought into my life by the habit of hiking up hills.

* People From Away

THE POEM THAT TOOK THE PLACE OF A MOUNTAIN

Wallace Stevens

There it was, word for word,
The poem that took the place of a mountain.
He breathed its oxygen,
Even when the book lay turned in the dust of his table.
It reminded him how he had needed
A place to go to in his own direction,
How he had recomposed the pines,
Shifted the rocks and picked his way among the clouds,
For the outlook that would be right,
Where he would be complete in an unexplained completion:
The exact rock where his inexactnesses
Would discover, at last, the view toward which they had edged,
Where he could lie and, gazing down at the sea,
Recognize his unique and solitary home.

COAST MOUNTAINS & THE ROCKIES

CRISES IN LEADERSHIP - OVERSEER CABIN SKI WEEK

Doug Hurrell

February 25 - March 3

In the fall of 1995 the notorious ACC hard man Ian Brown decided to organize an expedition to conquer Mt. Overseer in the Coastal Ranges of British Columbia. The qualities that he sought in his team members included: (1) exceptional skiing and mountaineering ability, (2) superb mental and physical toughness, (3) superior culinary skills, and (4) the financial resources required to make a deposit of \$370. Unfortunately none of the applicants possessed qualities 1, 2, or 3 so Brown was forced to scramble to gather 8 people who could come up with 370 bucks.

The group spent Saturday night at the exclusive Twin Goats Lodge and on Sunday awoke to a day of brilliant sunshine which would last for the entire week. At the helicopter base the only unhappy incident of the trip occurred when Judy Holm was forced to leave us because of illness.

The helicopter dropped us off on a mountain pass, and we skied down a glacier in fine powder snow over rolling terrain to the tiny cabin which was 2500' below. The cabin sits at tree line and is surrounded on all sides by excellent ski runs. Mt. Overseer lies hidden behind the long ridge of "Frozen Boot" mountain. After unpacking, the group ascended another glacier to a pass at an elevation of about 8000' and descended the gentle slopes to the cabin.

The next day provided what was perhaps the finest skiing of the trip. The party skinned up to one of the summits of a group of peaks called the "Three Stooges" and then skied down a steep glacier in light, bottomless powder snow. The run was very scenic with cliffs to the right and a gaping crevasse on the left. On Tuesday we split up into two

groups to explore the approaches to Mt. Overseer.

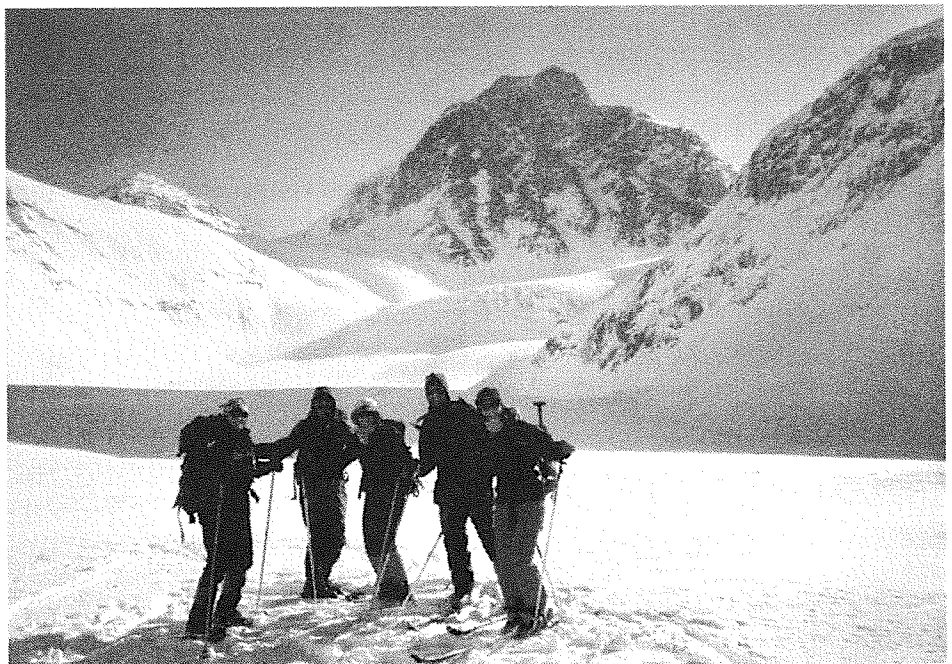
It was about this time in the week that Ian had to deal with a rapidly building crisis. The mound under the out-house had grown to the point that it was threatening the anatomy of the virile male members of the group. The leader met the challenge by asking for volunteers. While the virile males shrank back a young lady attacked the problem with lots of free advice and a large stick, and peace of mind was restored to all.

On Wednesday most of the group assaulted Mt. Overseer. The route crossed the ridge of Frozen Boot Mtn and ascended a glacial valley below our objective. We regrouped at about the 8000' level after we left the glacier. Following this rest break it was too cold to

stop. Ian led the way and the other skiers followed up the crusty wind swept slopes at their own paces. For the final few meters up to the 9000' summit the skis were removed and ice axes were employed.

The sojourn on the summit was a fine one despite the cold and breezy conditions. The happy group enjoyed unlimited views of the snowy Coast Range and a privileged feeling of isolation from the rest of humanity. Most of the ski down to the valley glacier was of the survival variety. We reached the top of the ridge above the cabin just to see the sun set, and skied down to the cabin through the glades in excellent powder snow.

The evenings were spent very pleasantly. Rotating chefs prepared hearty meals on the Coleman stove, and all-ways received many compliments. Tales



Heading for Mount Overseer.

Photo: Ian Brown

of previous exploits in the mountains were recounted. Some enjoyed cards while the intellectuals read books. Some played musical instruments, although applause was infrequent. Others purged the angst from their troubled souls into the ears of the sympathetic but captive audience. As the week wore on, passing out on the bench against the back wall became increasingly popular. At bedtime the nightly snoring contest began. One contestant soon dominated and could not be wakened even with numerous cries of anguish and several Petzl Zoom headlamps shining directly into his eyes.

The strong winds and sunshine were beginning to spoil much of the snow but on the following day the tired skiers managed to find some more fine skiing. It was at this point in the week that the leader faced his second big crisis. His personal supply of toilet paper had run out. Brown met this crisis by gathering

the team members together and begging. This time the canny skiers were wise to his psychological ploys and he was forced to resort to his famous ingenuity. The details are not fit for publication in a journal of this sort.

On Friday the entire group skied up the "Roller Coaster" glacier and over the top of Mount Psychomasochistic at about 8700 ft. Most of us then skinned up to the top of the Three Stooges and skied down the virgin breakable crust to the cabin. It was a very scenic and memorable run despite the tricky snow.

On Saturday it was time to replenish the cabin's wood supply and the morning was spent logging the slopes of Frozen Boot Ridge in an environmentally friendly manner. After this some of the group were homesick for Vancouver Island. This group went suntanning on a mountain top and then bushwhacked back to the cabin, while the powder

snow lovers found a north facing gully which still held outstanding snow.

On the next morning we were up early for packing and house cleaning. To pass the time while waiting for the helicopter, the ladies put on a poetry reading from the works of the obscure 20th century poet S. Briggs. Back in Pemberton we gathered at the town's finest Mexican restaurant for a farewell brunch. The sophisticated women of the party kindly pointed out to the manager that there shouldn't be urinals in the ladies washroom. We then went our separate ways to appreciate all the more the comforts of our luxurious Canadian life styles. Thanks go to Ian and Margaret for organizing such a great trip.

Participants: Ian and Margaret Brown, Viggo Holm, Gerta Smythe, George Smekal, Barbara Brooks, Catrin Brown, Doug Hurrell

CLASSIC PEAKS IN THE ROCKIES

Tony Pugh

August 4 - 10

I left the west coast in pouring rain, with hopes that on reaching Lake Louise the weather would be warm and sunny. Alas it was not to be, though the rain did become intermittent drizzle with a heavy overcast. After a night at the Alpine Centre in Lake Louise where I met the rest of the group, and an early breakfast at Laggans Bakery, we headed off to the Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara. We settled in and then went off to climb the north ridge of Mt. Schaffer (2692m). We ended our busy day with a review of snow skills.

The second day dawned to find a fresh dusting of snow on all the mountains around Lake O'Hara. After packing down a hearty breakfast, we went off to spend the day climbing Wiwaxy Peak (2703m), a pile of loose crumbling rock coated with a layer of wet slippery snow. The guide book refers to Wiwaxy as good quartzite. However, the route we took didn't reveal any; perhaps this only refers to the Grassi Ridge route. After summiting Wiwaxy, it was still fairly early in the afternoon, so we took a long hike



Wiwaxy Peak, Lake O'hara region (can you spot the climbers?).

Photo: Tony Pugh

back to the hut via the Oesa Alpine Route and Lake Oesa. On returning to the hut, we started a roaring fire in the stove and dried out all our gear for the next day. What luxury it was to lounge around in

front of a good fire after a full day's activity!

Day three was our last day at the Elizabeth Parker Hut - the day to climb Mt. Oderay (3159m). Unfortunately the

weather was not good; low cloud obscured the upper half of the mountain and a light rain was falling when we left the hut which soon turned to snow. After several hours climbing up the ridge in heavy wet snow, we decided to go no further and returned to the hut to dry out and prepare for our transfer to the Abbot Pass Hut the next day.

Day four was a beautiful warm sunny day, in direct contrast with our previous few days. This great weather made for a very pleasant hike to Abbot Pass. The steep scree slope leading up to the pass from Lake Oesa was still covered in snow allowing a much easier ascent than if the scree had been exposed.

5:30 the next morning found us at the base of the west face of Mt. Lefroy (3423m). Our plan was to follow the same route that saw the first recorded alpine fatality in Canadian mountaineering (P.S. Abbot in 1896). Here we split into two rope teams of four and three for the climb up the snow slopes leading to the summit ridge. With clear skies overnight the snow had frozen so hard that we had to front point the full 10 pitches to the summit ridge on exposed slopes of 35 deg. steepening to 45 deg. near the top. Climbing on the second rope, our group spent most of the time fending off showers of ice pellets generated by the team ahead of us.

After an early lunch on the summit under beautiful clear blue skies, we started back down. The climb up had taken place in shade, but now the sun had moved round and was warming up the rock bands below the summit, resulting in periodic rock fall. The rocks traveled at frightening speed down the icy slopes, leaping and bouncing first in one direction, then in another.



Crossing the sicle on Mt. Victoria.

Photo: Tony Pugh

We down climbed clear of the fall line of the rocks as far as possible, then cut directly across the slope to the protection of a rock outcrop, climbing through a six-foot deep trough of rockfall. Fortunately, the rocks all stayed in place during this tricky maneuver. From there, we were able to plunge step back to the hut in snow softened considerably under the heat of the sun. We spent the rest of the day lounging around in the sun drinking tea and getting a suntan.

Friday was another 5:30 start for Mount Victoria (3464m). The climb up Victoria's SE ridge starts right from the Abbot Pass Hut. We put on our crampons while sitting on the front step of the hut, walked around the back past the biffy, and started climbing up to what the guide book says is "unarguably one of the best of the classic alpine ridge

routes in the Rockies."

On this day the weather was perfect. It was truly a memorable climb, very airy and exhilarating, and in some spots downright scary. But we made it to the summit and back all in one piece which was more than can be said of my next trip into the Rockies, but that's another story.

Friday night, we drank all the booze and ate all the remaining goodies; on Saturday, we returned to Lake O'Hara and went our separate ways.

Participants: Dave Smith, Nelson, B.C. (Guide); Helen Soudat, Canmore, Alberta (Assistant Guide); Brian Morrissey, Millarville, Alberta; Duncan McMaster, Millarville, Alberta; Tony Pugh, Victoria, B.C.; Rick McKelvey, Coquillam, B.C.; Rupert Merer, Mississauga, Ontario; Marek Mroz, Willamette, Illinois.

WEDGE MOUNTAIN

Russ Moir

May 25 - 26

Our fully-loaded Honda chugged merrily up Highway 99., the Sea-to-Sky, as the evening sun glistened on the North Shore peaks and held on just long enough for us to view Wedge's imposing south face from Green Lake It

almost matched up to its glorified billing. This was almost worth all that Friday evening ferry hassle (plan to avoid the private parking rip-off if you can, \$24 in loonies is not the easiest item to come up with as the ferry builds up

steam without you on board!) We were four Friday wage-slaves, the rearguard of our advance team of Richard, Kayla, Gerta and Wally, who would no doubt by now be happily ensconced in the Wedgemount Hut. We Honda Boys

rolled out our bags at the foot of the Wedgemount Trail ready for an early start to beat the heat of yet another brilliant May weekend.

It wasn't to be. The day dawned gloomily, with the smell of rain about. The slog up the well graded trail was relatively placid until we reached the snow -line, below the steep headwall, short of the hut. There was plenty of evidence of recent slides, so it wasn't a total surprise when we met the others slithering down towards us. They'd spent the night listening to the sounds of snow coming down off Parkhurst and had decided that enough-was-enough. Well, not having had much of a work out, we decided to continue and see what conditions were like for ourselves. Gerta looked her usual exuberant self and quickly decided to return with us, after a descent to pick up her stashed crampons. We plodded on over masses of solid avalanche debris and pondered on the condition of the slopes above us, lost in the mist. By the time we got to the hut the prospects looked dismal-scudding clouds and warm temperatures- not the most inviting conditions to be on a steep alpine ridge.

Sometimes, the idea of an omen sounds faintly simple and pagan-like. Well, no innuendo intended, when about an hour later, having scratched my head for too long thinking of alternative plans, loud, raucous banter invaded the hut and brought in a new mood. It was the unexpected but welcome arrival of Ian and Margaret, who were quickly followed in by Gerta, Rudi and Ben. A celebratory atmosphere seemed to pervade the group as comments flowed back and forth. By evening the threat of rain had receded enough to tempt Neale to explore the lower slopes of Mt. Weart above us, though he did give us a few nervous twitches as he came down, together with a lot of slab snow.

The in-hut and out-hut groups settled in for an early night, perhaps chanting some juju phrases as they took a last look up at the shrouded ridge.

At 3:30 sharp, Doug heralded the day in with a loud claim that the sky was clear and it was FREEZING! A quick sortie confirmed this delightful news, which started up a hectic scramble to get a breakfast cooked in a hut built for fewer than were in it now. When eventually we got under way at 4:30, the eastern sky gave us just enough light for us to skitter up to the glacier, crunching over crusted snow on our crampons. Stopping only for a quick rope -up, we were under the steep headwall slopes beneath the ridge before the sun had shown itself.

I'm certain I heard a few whimpers as I hauled my rope -team up the ice-fall slopes intent on getting on the ridge before it softened up. Wheezing and chuntering, the group reassembled on the ridge crest to face into a truly awesome scene. The rising sun was back-lighting the mountains above Duffy Lake Road, while below us the Weart Glacier stretched out forever with its blanket of pure white. Above us, the summit positively beckoned from across the steep, iced-up cliffs. Off we ploughed, with the snow just a little on the soft side to lose the bouncy, elevating feeling that this ridge can give in the right conditions. Nevertheless it was a joy to be on it as the scene gradually opened around us the higher we got. As well, with four climbers without crampons, the passage would have been decidedly entertaining in a frozen state.

By the early hour of 8:30, we had kicked up the steep connecting buttress to the summit block, gleefully sped over the last few metres of fluted snow and were together revelling in the midst of Wedge's superb panorama. Not for nothing is this top the highest in the park. With good companions, great weather and fine snow conditions, the feelings of the group were effusive to say the least. May is a great time to be on the ridge, especially if the descent is to be via the West ridge. Now it was masked under a canopy of steep but stable snow, instead of being the ankle-wrecking scree -alley of later months. We gladly slid and plunged down to the lip of the bowl overlooking Parkhurst Glacier, and traversed the bowl back to the head of Wedgemount Glacier, our mornings ascent route.

The gang happily chugged across the slopes under a blazing sun, even though by this time we were mushing through soft snow. We felt tired but safe. Nobody minded, we'd had our fill of exhilarating Alpine travel. Coming down to the toe of the glacier however showed up the need to be cautious at all times on mountains, even in seemingly safe terrain. We began the final drop down over the steeper snout of the glacier. The snow had up to now been heavy and yielding, so when Gerta yodelled her delight at the prospect of a bum glissade, her two rope-mates took up the call and with a what the heck set off in a threesome slide. We were happily mindless of the icier surface below us where the sun had not had its full melting force. Acceleration became rapid, I rolled and got a self-arrest in, only to be catapulted forward when the force of the other two tensed the rope. I can vividly remember two magnificent somersaults as I repeated the arrest, before we came to a mangled halt on



Photo: Gerta Smythe

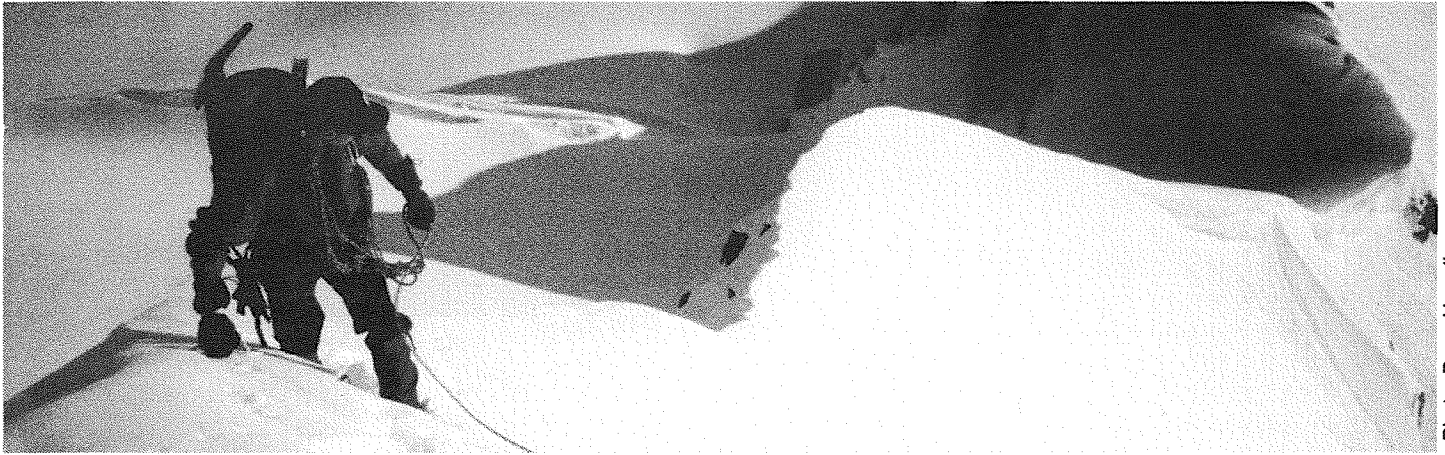


Photo: Doug Herrell

the lower slopes. There were several bits of skin left behind and though the three of us could laugh at our decrepit state, our stinging, bloodied arms and hands told us that we could have come off far worse. The return to the hut and the subsequent descent down to the trailhead were happily uneventful, even under the threat of more slides coming down from the flanks of Mt. Weart.

Moral of the tale:- when descending, roped, over crevasse terrain and the slope exceeds about 25 degrees and the crust is icy, don't rely on being able to self-arrest. The force of a falling body will drag off all but a really solid axe belay or a picket. If you are concerned about the situation put in run-

ning belays, which can be clipped into and out of as you pass. This does need a meeting-up to transfer equipment. Alternatively you may wish to unclip from the rope and allow the leader to trail the rope while the steep part is negotiated. Balance the chances of one person possibly falling into a hidden crevasse against the outcome of one faller pulling the whole group off down the slope.

Participants: Russ Moir (leader), Doug Hurrell, Neale Postma, Darren McNeil, Gerta Smythe, Ian Brown, Margaret Brown, Rudi Brugger, Ben Anderson.

SPEARHEAD TRAVERSE

Tim Eaton

March 20 - 24

Few people were contacting me regarding the trip. I pondered whether the trip had a bad reputation for success, since I had myself previously opted out of a scheduled club trip 2 or 3 years previously. Then one of the party alerted me to the fact that my phone number was incorrect in the trip schedule.

In hindsight this was a blessing as only four of us went out and I like small groups, since they allow more intimacy within the group and the setting. Oh yes and less can go wrong.

Anyway there was lots of enthusiasm. Barb had the traverse high on her list of 'to do,' for 10 years. Doug was easily impressed with the slides I showed him from my 1989 traverse. Graham looked to it as a deserved therapeutic break from his shift work.

So off we departed at 6 AM on the morning of March 20th, after many phone calls, much discussion of the

weather and a 15 hour delay as a result. It was mainly cloudy with a few breaks, however weather was supposed to improve over the next four days.

We met Barb at the ferry in Nanaimo and energized on black forest cake for breakfast during the ferry crossing. Ascending Blackcomb Mtn later in the afternoon, through mist and low cloud, we reached Horstman Hut in time to catch up with my friend Jordan, a pro-patroller, to confirm the avalanche conditions and weather forecast. They had already shut down the upper t-bar on the Horstman Glacier but Jordan had them restart it for us and for his final sweep of the upper mountain. The start on skis was a bit rough wrestling 50+ lb packs on and off the high speed chairs and then skiing a cat-track and groomed ski-run in poor light conditions. Consequently, Barb and Graham took a few spills. Jordan accompanied us to the ski

area boundary and bid us adieu.

We did not ski much more than an hour, traversing the Blackcomb Glacier out of the ski area boundary, ascending the col (7,750 ft) between Blackcomb and Spearhead peaks, followed by a short but steep descent, all in poor light conditions and variable snow. The ground levelled, it was 5 o'clock and we agreed to make camp. Mind you Doug was pretty enthused and was already heading for the Decker Glacier. We called him back and camped about 400 m southeast of Blackcomb Peak. So, it was 2 tents and four people, a compact group. The clouds lifted momentarily before dark to reveal an impressive setting and raise our hopes for tomorrow. Later that evening stars and the moon made appearances.

This trip will not be known for alpine starts. We made every effort to get on our skis no earlier than 10 AM the next

morning. Weather conditions were showing signs of improvement as visibility was one or more kilometres. On occasion depth perception was poor. We descended to the bottom of Decker Glacier on beautiful powder over a firm base. Great to practice those rusty turns. As skiers we were a motley crew which quickly became evident. Struggling under the weight of heavy packs, lack of practice, lack of experience and a wide range in equipment no two skiers were alike. It was fun to watch.

If I can characterize our group's skiing abilities: Doug - gorilla skier on alpine gear (shortest line to the bottom of any slope); Barb - proficient skier with big time heavy pack; Graham - cautious I don't want to break a leg way back here (longest line to the bottom of any slope); and, me - very rusty.

Up the Decker and over the ridge (7,250 ft) northeast of Decker Mtn we manoeuvred a steep drop onto Trorey Glacier. Doug skied (so to speak) while the rest of us walked the top 100 ft until we exited a narrow chute through the rock bands.

We quickly crossed the Trorey, north of Mt. Trorey and gained the narrow ridge at 7,750 ft (a campsite in 89') north of Mt. Pattison. The steeper descent onto Tremor Glacier presented more challenges. Across the Tremor and a long ascent under increasing sun and warmth to the Tremor - Shudder Col at 8600 ft. Until this point we had been engulfed by the scenery north and east of us, long rocky ridges of the Spearhead Range and particularly the massif of Wedge Mtn. (9,527 ft). As we crossed the saddle a new world revealed itself under brilliant skies and streaming clouds. Peaks at the head of the Fitzsimmons drainage include: Shudder, Quiver, The Ripsaw, Macbeth, Fitzsimmons, Benvolio, Overlord, Fissile and others, all within 5 km and along our traverse route.

It was 4:00, we had the opportunity to camp on a west facing glacier to enjoy the setting sun, which we did. A short descent onto Platform Glacier and we set camp. Enthused from the exercise and scenery I dropped my pack and spent the next hour ascending descending Shudder Mtn. (8,800 ft) just above our 2nd camp. In 1989 I did Tremor. For a second night Graham and I cooked

and ate supper well after dark. Graham's shoulder was causing him quite a bit of discomfort from a hard spill he took yesterday in the Blackcomb ski area. However the setting sun and scenery made up for it. The wind increased and blew consistently providing quite a chill to the coming day.

The next morning we set another torrid pace and donned our packs and skis by 11 AM. (Doug insisted on sleeping in.) The wind and cold during the night had created variable wind crust amid otherwise softer snow. This did not matter as the day was mainly clear and our vistas were too astonishing to consider what passed beneath our skis. As we crossed Platform Glacier a billowing snow plume confirmed the persistent wind over Quiver Peak, an impressive narrow ridge from this perspective. Similarly The Ripsaw, aptly named, displayed dramatic relief on its west face beneath monstrous cornices.

We entered Ripsaw - Quiver Col (8,550 ft) carefully, through a narrow steep sided notch in the wind sculptured snow. It reinforced the anticipation absorbed into the next vista across Ripsaw Glacier (location of my favourite ski runs in 89'). From here it was a constant descent to the saddle (8,050 ft) on the ridge east of the Ripsaw (another 89' campsite). Doug took a straight line with little or no turns, Barb and I had some wonderful tele-turns in soft powder while Graham proceeded cautiously with his skins on.

The next glacier we crossed was the Naden. A few tricky steps and the slope eased quickly to the flatter relief of the glacier proper and here we skied past another ski party's abandoned camp, apparently from the previous night. We had seen tracks intermittently prior to this. We gained Macbeth - Couloir Col (7,950 ft) a short time later. Doug well ahead of the group by this time was admiring the view down Macbeth Glacier. As I approached he commented, "I'm really enjoying this trip." Enough said.

A persistent high cloud cover had formed and although the visibility was several kilometres, the light was poor for discerning the lay of the snow. That combined with some very frustrating crust on Macbeth made for a tricky de-

scent.

A decision must be made on the Macbeth whether to continue the high level traverse or short-cut and drop low across the Fitzsimmons Glacier on a more direct line to the Overlord Glacier, still not easy. We opted to stay high without hesitation as conditions had been pretty good.

It soon became tricky as we gained the ridge (7,400 ft) between Macbeth and Iago Glaciers a little too soon. After unskinning I was reluctant to skin up again. I realized we were above the steep snow chutes and rock bands high above the Iago. Barb close behind me opted to follow since I was already committed. Doug prudently returned to the ridge which he and Graham followed further along until a short descent onto the Iago was possible. Meanwhile Barb and I descended about 450 ft on 40+ degree snow chutes on foot. It was quick for us but then we had to climb that same elevation to rejoin the others. The sun was coming out again and we were pretty hot. Consequently we met a little further up Iago. Graham opted to join us by skiing off the ridge on his face. The rest of the climb up Iago was warm in increasing sun to our 3rd campsite at about 7,800 ft.

Stopping around 4 PM, this was perhaps our most enjoyable camp. Barb and Doug set off to climb and ski Mt. Iago while Graham and I took in the scenery and company. Today we had taken in 6 distinct mountain scenery vistas, loads of physical exertion, skiing in perfect powder (crud too), and our senses were saturated.

We didn't want to be too complacent the whole trip and with the incredible weather we were eager to rise early the next morning, within reason of course. For example I figured if Graham could forego his litre of morning Starbuck's coffee and 2 litres of gourmet cereal we could break camp an hour sooner. Graham on the other hand figured if we need to get up early simply get up earlier. Oh no, that seemed too harsh to me.

Anyhow we rose earlier to discover high cloud steadily descending on us. Cloud enveloped us with jabs of sunlight occasionally piercing the mist. The altimeter reading albeit crude indicated

conditions were not deteriorating so we ascribed the condition to morning fog that would burn off shortly.

We set off at a record setting time of 9:00 AM and within a few minutes were atop Iago Glacier in thick cloud, similar to my 89 trip. Oh well. Being steep (40+ degrees) below the col into Diavolo drainage we removed our skis and kicked steps for 200 vertical feet until the slope eased to a comfortable level. From there we skied by compass, hand-rail, timeframe and 'what not' until we rounded the base of Mt. Fitzsimmons to begin the ascent toward the twin peaks of Mt. Benvolio. In reality a few well timed jabs of sunlight illuminated the way for our crew of determined navigators. After that the clouds began to burn off and we bathed in increasing sunlight on the long ascent of Diavolo Glacier.

Another abandoned ski camp appeared below us further down Diavolo which we assumed belonged to the same party we had seen traces of previously. However this party's tracks appeared to originate from due east, Detour Ridge and possibly the interior of Garibaldi Park.

Doug and I crested Benvolio together, dropped our packs and walked the short ridge to the west summit of Benvolio. Barb joined us in a few minutes. The scenery was beyond our expectations. It was better than having a 3D map rolled before our eyes as many landmarks came to recognition in the myriad of peaks and glaciers off to the south and west. I left Doug and Barb with my camera so they could take my picture on the east summit, which was only a few minutes away at the same elevation. Then we joined Graham for lunch in the warm sun.

The day would permit further indulgences so I donned my pack and started for Overlord Mtn across Benvolio Glacier. After the sticky, then powdery snow of Diavolo, Benvolio was wind blown crust. Overlord, at 8,641 ft, was only 30 minutes away and we had the luxury of dropping our packs on the Benvolio

saddle to ascend 'the Overlord of the Fitzsimmons drainage'. Skiing right to the summit and the edge of the precipitous north face we absorbed the Fitzsimmons drainage through eagle eyes.

In 89' Jordan and I navigated from Benvolio summits around Overlord Mtn and down Overlord Glacier in white-out conditions, which we did not enjoy. I was thankful we made it through one particularly nasty section just north of Overlord, below the north face at the top of the glacier.

This time the sun was beaming and the snow on Overlord Glacier was perfect. Barb and I were in telemark heaven. Doug and Graham were quite content to wait for us in the warm sun while Barb and I dropped our packs and climbed the glacier for another run. Perrrfect end to a perfect traverse. The snow on the west side of the Whirlwind - Fissile Col was pretty good too. At the bottom of the steeper upper section it turned to wind crust which sped us on our way to Russet Lake Hut by 5 PM.

The wind was starting to blow with every sign of an arctic outflow. The hut was empty and we would be thankful for its shelter this night. Three young women from Vancouver joined us by 6 PM and there was lots of room for all of us. Company and supper were good. By the time we climbed into our sleeping bags the wind was really starting to blow. It blew all night, at times really pounding the hut and it was very cold indeed inside the hut.

The snow was boiler plate on the exposed slopes the next morning. We were relieved to round the hill and drop into Singing Pass, out of the wind, after a couple of hard falls by everyone from breaking through the crust. After some discussion the night before, and based on my desire to get off the mountain in time to catch a reasonably early ferry we opted to descend the 12 km trail which traverses forested slopes, creeks and the abandoned Northair mine workings on the west slope of Fitzsimmons Valley. The idea was this would be faster

than traversing the musical bumps of Oboe, Flute and Piccolo and then descend the groomed slopes of Whistler.

The three women from Van opted for the musical bumps route. We gave Doug the lead knowing he would be much faster without skins in his heavy touring gear. I followed and soon removed my skins opting for less control and more speed. Barb stayed with Graham and skinned their way down the 12 km trail. The long and short of it was: the trail was very icy or bare ground in many places, and the rest was very hard crusted snow. I found the descent the most brutal part of the whole 5 day trip, my knees and thighs ached from the pounding. Doug arrived at the vehicle first, I 30 minutes later and the three women on the alternate route 60 minutes after Doug (their vehicle was parked a few feet from ours). Barb and Graham arrived 2 hours after Doug.

Epilogue

We had fantastic weather and a fantastic time on the Spearhead. It is a world class traverse in spite of close proximity to North America's premier alpine ski and heli-skiing destination. We did not have to use the glacier travel, crevasse rescue gear, brought along as a cautionary measure. However that equipment is mandatory for safety. Conditions and weather can be very variable. In poor visibility it is easy to ski into serious trouble. Although we hardly saw any open crevasses, the entire route is riddled with them. In good winter conditions they are filled with stable snow bridges, our good fortune on this trip. We climbed the easy peaks. However, for the hardy of heart, there are several that offer short challenging exposed routes on steep snow in chutes and along knife edge ridges. You might find exposed ice later in the spring season. There are lots of cornices. So enjoy and go prepared for the worst.

Participants: Tim Eaton, Barb Brooks, Graham Maddocks, and Doug Goodman

MOUNT WADDINGTON

Ian Brown

August, 1996

Imagine it is 5 PM Saturday for the August long weekend in Lac La Hache — and the car is bust. No parts will arrive here until Tuesday at least, more likely Wednesday. We three: Rudi Brugger, Rob MacDonald and myself have one week vacation, dedicated to Mt. Waddington.

There are very few substitutes for plan B near Lac La Hache. The country looks flat for miles. So we were praying over a very scruffy mechanic in a very beat up garage with a lit cigarette dangling from his mouth in a shop with pools of spilled oil and gas. Our wilderness genie was rebuilding the alternator out of bits from other brands of vehicle. He succeeded, with help from trips by yours truly to the local general store to refurbish his supply of nicotine. Thus did we scale the first crux of the climb, our hearts in our mouth the whole time.

The second crucial task was maintain-

ing patience at Mike King's ranch while two other parties flew in ahead of us. We finally wheeled through the clouds and zipped in to the Tiedmann Glacier about 2 PM Sunday. Pouring rain was enough of an excuse to put off our intended climb to Rainy Knob (there's enough right here, thanks). So we camped in situ and spent the balance of the day practising our tent roof staring. The combined prayers of the three oldies (over 30 anyway) but goodies did accomplish another feat for the expedition. There followed 6 straight days of full sun, an unheard of run deep in the Coast Range.

Monday we slogged. Yeah! Even fairly firm snow (sink only to your ankles) is hard work in hot sun for Coasties at seven thousand feet with all that climbing hardware on our backs. But let us not whine; we were surrounded by the most fabulous mountain scenery in the

world; thundering avalanches entertained us every half hour and getting lost treated us to an uninterrupted view straight down 2000 ft back to the Tiedmann. We have Rudi to thank for finding a successful and safe way through the maze of two dozen yawning crevasses.

Tuesday contained some more slog but was also more interesting. First, we climbed the Bravo Glacier headwall: 45 degree snow with some rocky bits. Then the Bravo bergschrund offered the choice of dodging refrigerator-sized ice blocks coming off Spearman Peak or climbing through the 'schrund and up 100 ft of exposed hard snow. Through the schrund it was and quite safe after all.

I managed to enliven camp at Spearman Col by losing a tent pole. Put it down and now you see it, now you don't. I swear a gremlin just snatched it



Waddington high camp at 10,500 ft with Spearman Peak behind.

Photo: Ian Brown

off the glacier. The scientist aboard insists it just obeyed some obscure law of physics and a homing instinct back down 4000 ft to the Tiedmann Glacier. Thank God for my trip to Hong Kong. The feats those Chinese do with bamboo we repeated with garden stakes (aka wands), thereby avoiding several nights bivouacking under the stars.

By this time yours truly was fagged but a certain "law of the Coast Range" took over here. The law: "If it is clear, you go for it because it will soon not be clear." It was clear. So, we were up at 5 and off at 6. Our neighbours were a bunch of youth from Squamish who yesterday (in one day, note) descended 2000 ft from the Plummer Hut and walked our footsteps up 4000 ft from the Tiedmann. They shrewdly followed our footsteps the first 1000 ft up this day, then nipped ahead for the last 500 vertical feet to the rock and proceeded up 1000 ft of vertical rock tower en avance.

This was fine and good, except that the three ancient ones kept catching up to the youth and were required to catch a snooze at the belay points, and the

ground was a bit too vertical for much snoozing. Finally on pitch 8 or 9, our fearless leader Rudi tried to pass the slow pokes and had to back off when they finally got moving. Luckily he had just put in a piece because he was on the crux and came off — with a 5000 foot

crampons yet again. Oh for the quick crampons!

Summit at 6 PM Many rappels later, we were on the snow just at dark. Saved again by Rob with a handy Mars bar. Somehow we found our way down to the tents in the black without headlamps, following the deep footsteps of the Squamish trio. Mercifully they were quick on the rappel.

This slob did a day in camp on the morrow and the others somehow did not quite make their goal of Spearman Peak. Down we belted on the Friday to the Tiedmann. Nothing like gravity in your favour. Mike came in early to pick up our neighbours Saturday. He found them mostly unpacked and decided, politically incorrectly, that the women would be slow packers, so we jammed all the gear in the chopper first

and were back to hot showers and bacon and eggs before we knew what hit us. A good trip had by all despite some whimpering by your reporter on the crux.

Participants: Rudi Brugger, Rob MacDonald and Ian Brown



Mt. Waddington from Ice Valley 1926.

vertical view under his feet.

When I got to the same point, it was 5:30 PM and after waiting in the shade for an hour, I was tired and cold. Managed to come off three times and pull a TV-sized boulder off on me. Thanks for the catch, Rob. Climbed the last pitch on my knees, too tired to put on my

CLOUDRAKER MOUNTAIN AND FOUR DAYS OF CELEBRATORY SURPRISES

Margaret Brown and Judith Holm
August 8 - 11

Hanging over Lillooet Lake and Lizzie Creek Valley, Cloudraker Mountain offers a 360 degree view of Garibaldi, the peaks above Duffey Lake, the Stein and as far south as Mt. Baker. It had long been on my personal list, but immediately leaped to the top when we acquired a cabin on Lillooet Lake and could stare at it daily from our kitchen table.

I had wished to go on Judy's trip but thought there was no way I could manage to squeeze it in. However, as her dates changed and I acquired the use of Rudi's truck, a glimmer of

possibility dawned.

Leslie and I had agreed on a sailing adventure for that week, but decided maybe a combination of sailing and mountaineering would be even more fun, especially since it seemed to be a time for birthday celebrations. Trying to communicate, while on a sailing trip is hard but we finally arranged a rendezvous - for either on the trail or at Long Lake above Lizzie Creek cabin.

Judy's group caught up with Leslie and me at the stream at the foot of the gates of Shangri-La. We had decided a

tea break was in order. I soon learned that a heroic long day to Cloudraker was planned for the morrow.

We made a good team, reaching consensus about routes after pondering terrain and topos. It was fun discovering ways around the bluffs and drop-offs that broke up the ridge. Shields Peak is the crux - heading east we tried to contour around the south flank, but ended practically going over the top and back down. After Shields Peak the route is long but obvious as it keeps to the ridge. Cloudraker looked enticing but daunt-

ing in the distance.

Finally we were on its glacier, but the face above us looked very steep and exposed. We dropped over the saddle and contoured below the bergschrund until we reached a pass between the summits. We scrambled up the rocks on the ridge line to the highest point.

What a feeling of elation and accomplishment to be on the summit! It was new territory for all of us. Out came the birthday cake, candles, brandy and soap bubbles. It would have been great to linger, but time was on our heels.

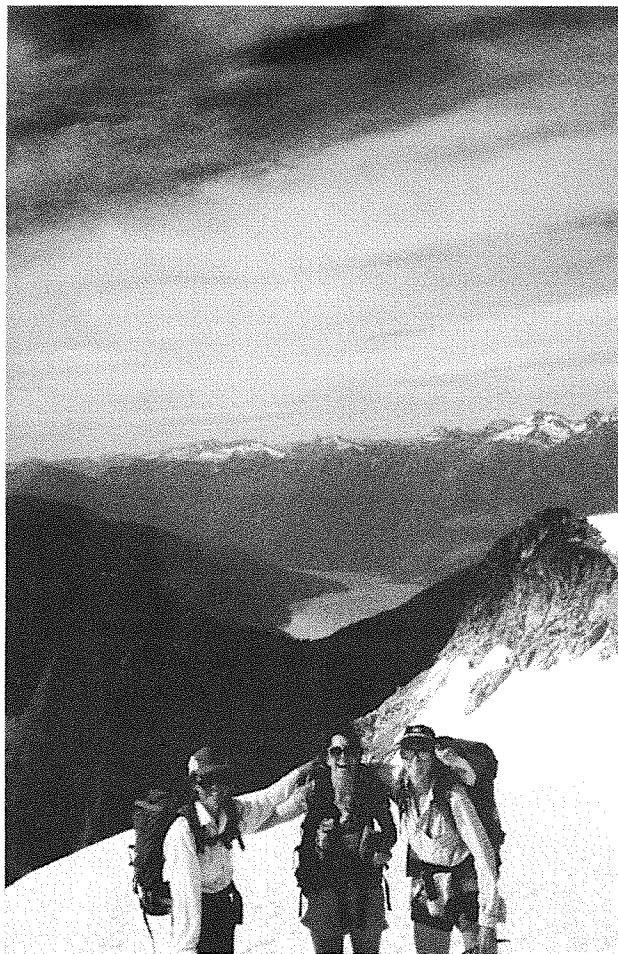
Going back, we explored a 'short cut' around the north flank of Shields Peak. Aside from almost being flattened by a Volkswagen-sized piece of cornice that came crashing down in front of us from the ridge about 300 feet above, the route is longer and more difficult than the south side. Probably the best route is keeping a little lower on the southern route, contouring initially into some bush.

We were overtaken by dark about a kilometre short of camp. It was a long km. With a tricky boulder slope, river crossing and a confusing route just short of our tents. At 11 PM we had a welcome, but belated dinner and another round of birthday celebration and libation.

It was a wonderful day. The others carried on to climb other peaks on the morrow. I, mercifully with my other commitment, had an excuse to stumble down the trail to the comforts of a shower and a long rest at our cabin.

All part of the climbing was the laughter and fun and celebration of life in general:

What goes up mountains inside packs? Of course the obvious basics necessary for good climbing, but, in the Vancouver Island Section, the rest is often hard to believe. Reiner kept laughing and shaking his head in amazement at what was drawn from inside those packs. Everyone had a surprise up her sleeve (and Claire's sleeve was stuffed with them!). For FOUR DAYS surprises kept appearing, one at a time, and at



The happy summiters on descent from Cloudraker (Judy, Claire, and Barb)

Photo: Claire Ebendinger

most unexpected times. The reason? Barb's 40th and Judy's 50th birthdays were the excuses, but it was mainly because this group really likes to have fun in the mountains.

Evening one in camp above Long Lake: rhuBARB and strawberry pie for Barb - candles, balloons, card and bubbles (yes) and accompanying silliness. Midday 2 - birthday cake for Barb on the summit of Cloudraker - whilst the other half of the cake was on Anemone Peak with the other half of our group (also celebrating) - and Barb finesses by adding a fifth candle so it also becomes for Judy - more bubbles. Midnight, day 2, dinner in camp after the climb with Pecan Pie (in perfect shape, not one bit squished) and birthday card and marvellous shooting stars above - lots of them (it was during the meteor showers). Day 3 above Cherry Pip Pass: Barb presents an absolutely incredible box of special mountain candies - which continue to be savoured at Tundra Pass as part of a sendoff for Reiner who was continuing solo on the traverse, then high on

the ridge by Tabletop Mt. as we experience a glorious summer sunset. Bedtime of day 3: Claire keeps insisting that I need my headlamp in the tent, despite my equal insistence that I am all right in the dark - and then I discover why! Margaret and Leslie have been up to happy mischief inside our tent and there is much to discover. Day 4: on the way out, below Lizzie Lake cabin, we stop for a break: Wendy pulls out a gigantic white chocolate Toblerone (our family's favourite). Imagine, for four days she has waited to share her surprise, all this time hoping it would not be melted by the warm weather and not really being sure she would even get a special time to bring it out. What a treat and finale to four marvellous days in the alpine west of the Stein.

Participants: Judy Holm (Leader), Claire Ebendinger, Leslie Gordon, Barb Brooks, Wendy Croft, Trudi Rey, Reiner (see 'The German Connection') and Margaret Brown

ST. MARY'S ALPINE

Gil Parker

The South Purcells you say. In mid summer? I thought that we just went there to ski, not to hike the wilderness when the bears and mosquitoes are out!"

But Ron was persistent. My "sometimes climbing partner" from Gabriola Island assured me that he and Sylvia were just doing an easy trek over a route he had done by horse party five years previous. Then he mentioned St. Mary's Alpine, and then the Leaning Towers. I started to come around. The Towers are at the head of Fry Creek east of Kaslo, scene of many first ascents by our own Roger Neave in 1933. Ron neglected to say that no one had been on the route since his previous trip!

Our friends Art Twomey and Margie Jamieson of Ptarmigan Tours were planning a traverse from east to west and we could meet them near their start-point on the Skookumchuck River. Of course, Ron 'forgot' that most of our troubles would be over by then. My first premonition: the driveshaft blew a seal and my truck had to be abandoned at Crawford Bay.

So onward. Over Gray Creek Pass, a steep, narrow, and extremely rough dirt road, Ron's old VW van brought us to a junction of three valleys just west of St. Mary Lake. From one of these valleys flows White Creek from St. Mary's Alpine Park. We had skied at Art and Margie's Boulder Hut in a side valley, had helped cut firewood, built an inlet structure in a torrent for a mini-hydro electric system. It was close to home. But we were going up Dewar Creek.

The first day was planned to be easy, just up to the hot springs. Ron and I, each carrying over 50 pounds (and Sylvia a bit less), stumbled the first half mile through huge deadfall firs too close to the ground to duck under, all fallen across the route, yet unsuitable as an elevated walkway. It was a scenario to repeat often in the narrow valleys on a trail/route that no one maintained. At day's end the springs were welcome; a pool with hot and cold running streams just above allowed us to divert and mix to just the right temperature. Hot! Three goats inspected our camp from close

quarters that evening.

Climbing the 2200 feet to Dewar Pass the next day we surprised a herd of elk, who promptly climbed up to a ridge where I'm sure they could see the Towers. They probably didn't even care. We toiled in the bottom, wading the icy creek at least five times. Our technique improved: off boots, on sandals, hitch up pants, wade the stream braced one on the other (sometimes with downstream poles for stability), off sandals, dry, thaw out, put on boots.

From our camp at the pass, we climbed to the west ridge, then Ron and I went on to scale Klahowya, while Sylvia read and recovered, never far from her "bear bomb". Our climb was the fifth recorded, the third being done on Ron's last trip. To the north we could see the peaks of Toby, Jumbo and Glacier Creeks (mentioned in Kayla Stevenson's "Goat Range" report in the last Bushwhacker Update). The view west was spectacular, with the Leaning Towers, only three miles away, dominating. The Interior Ranges guidebook confirms that these are serious climbing pinnacles, with steep slabs, chimneys and magnificent exposure. In the ample and largely unused summit register I wrote a dedication to my friend and previous ropemate, Roger Neave. Back at Dewar Pass, that night we had rain and lightning, a cycle which repeated often.

We chose to descend Findlay Creek rather than traverse Radiant Peak to St. Mary's Park. It looked a feasible climbing route, but we were still humping huge loads, and Sylvia was short on mountaineering experience. So it was a pleasant day despite several dicey stream crossings, then losing the trail and making several false starts (following some elk — they always know where to go, don't they?). Finally a 1400 foot climb up to a most beautiful lake in a cirque of glaciers — Avalanche Lake at the northwest skirt of Mt. St. Mary. That night another sound and light show.

Our entry to the Park was over an 8600 foot ridge coming off Radiant Peak. We roped and cut staves to supplement my ice axe, but the slope was not steep

and the snow soft. At the col we traversed on scree, dumped our packs and scampered to St. Mary's summit, our second just under 10,000 feet. The new panorama was south, peaks in and around the Park, some we had skied a year or two before. Below us we could see six separate lakes, the upper ones still locked in winter ice, those at lower elevations already bottle green. All around, sparse conifers and erratic boulders lay on the slabs or poked through the snow. Collecting our packs, we plunge-stepped down a slushy south face to the first lake, then traversed to the second, a jewel named Phyllodoce. A leisurely eight hour traverse.

To the south a bare hogback promised views of the middle of the Park. Ron called it the "four lane highway", but it reminded me of our own Flower Ridge. From one end we examined Nowitka Mountain for a climb next day, from the other, the exit route down Alton Creek. Over the ridge, another four lakes appeared, surrounded by moose (and perhaps bear) pasture. Ron and I had spotted a bear earlier and kept the news from Sylvia, but on the trail we were pretty safe, the din was incredible, no bear could accuse us of surprise! Back by our lake, the smaller pools were warm enough for a comfortable swim, so we did, wrote poetry, cooked bannock over a fire of twigs.

Threatening overcast at daybreak sent us scurrying down our exit route, 1600 feet down Alton Creek, 900 feet up to Skookumchuck Pass and then, in heavy rain, down 200 to our first mosquito-infested meadow. But the morning was better so we climbed north toward Rusty Ridge, aborted that after a 1000 feet of lichen-covered boulders, scouted south up the ridge toward Mount Alton, aborted that because it was clearly too far and technical for our party, then returned to the mosquitoes. Even though it was 3 PM, they were bad enough to force us further down the valley to find peace. After some horrible bushwhacking and deadfall stumbling, we met Art and his advance party cutting a trail for the horses. Great reunions all 'round.

We camped with them in an avalanche chute with horses, mules, (plus their dung piles in all the possible flat tent spots) and perhaps 8 humans. It was one of worst camps I have ever endured, so I guess I've been lucky. That night we had heavy rain, and the thunder was incredible. We finally gave up trying to count between flashes, and just went to sleep.

Morning farewells as we departed east, Art and company, west. "Oh", said Art, the master of understatement, "you might want to cut poles for the crossing at Greenland River." So off down the Skookumchuck, happy to be on a well travelled trail (though frequently marked/marred by horses and bears).

At the Greenland I realised the value of horses, you just climb on them and they wade or swim. It was a full three feet of fast-flowing water for the middle ten feet, altogether about thirty feet wide. A hundred feet downstream it joined the Skookumchuck, by now a real river. We cut strong poles this time, struck out across with Sylvia in the middle holding us together. Despite a few slips and three hearts in three throats, we got across. We took a little longer to dry out this time, immensely grateful that no one had fallen over.

The rest, as they say, is statistics. We had started on July 22 after a very heavy snow year (lakes still frozen at 8,000 foot

level), encountered no mosquitoes till the last pass at 7,000 feet, and lost them 1000 feet lower. In eleven days including two sort-of rest days, we crossed four major watersheds and two minor ones, waded fifteen streams (3 or 4 serious ones, and one positively dangerous), did two peaks with little technical difficulty, but saw nearby many tougher — the Fry Creek Towers extremely so. We were in the Purcell Wilderness most of the time, but also explored the north two valleys of St. Mary's Alpine. Great back-country travel with compatible companions!

But the immensity of the land inspired the following cry of pain.

ST. MARY'S ALPINE

So many camps like this,
our tents nesting the rocks on drying shore
'tween snowfield and lake,
and hummocked moss makes a mattress
never matched by level foam at home.

So many lakes like these,
with winter ice fading in solar fire,
the edges bottle-green, where
granite slabs dive down.

So many meadows like this,
where daisy and dryas, a yellow sheen
glowing over the heather,
the moraine sprinkled with lonely larch
and bunched, dwarfed spruce.

So many avalanche chutes like that one,
home to the hoary marmot and pika,
where grows verdant feed for migrating elk,
and fireweed, scarlet shows against the grass.

Too many days like this,
hard snow cupping my crampons,
the creaking ice biting my axe,
warm rock grasping my fingers
pushing me upward on knob and crack.

Too many peaks like these
for me to climb them all;
only to live as though it were possible.

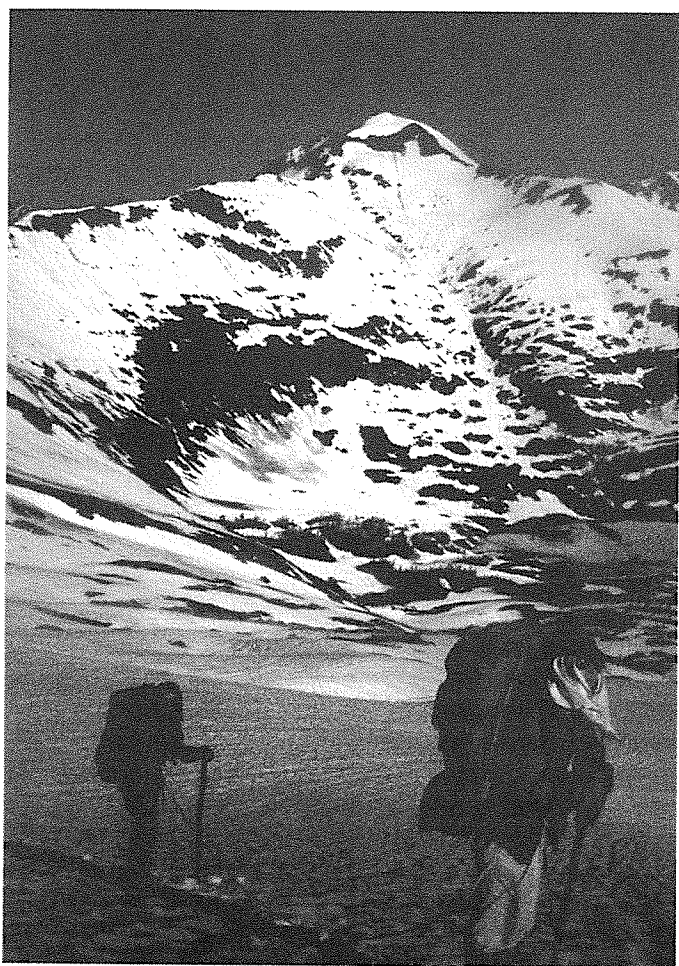


Photo: Gil Parker

Climbing Mt. St. Mary ridge from the north (Findlay watershed) at 9,500 ft. with Radiant Pk. in the background.

Post Script

Unfortunately, Art Twomey was killed in a helicopter crash, January 11, 1997, while flying in to the Boulder Hut to teach an avalanche course. An experienced mountaineer, skier and wrangler, Art was a strong proponent of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy who deserves much of the credit for its preservation.

He will be missed by Margie Jamieson, his partner of over 20 years, by Ron, Sylvia, Gil and many friends.

- Gil

DISTANT OBJECTIVES

VANCOUVER ISLAND MOUNT LOGAN EXPEDITION

Lindsay Elms

May, 1996

An, alarm goes off at around 7 AM somewhere in the folds of a North Face three-person dome tent ensconcing four people crammed into it. The temperature is minus..., it doesn't matter what it is except to say that it is cold. There is a thick layer of rime lining the tent that wasn't there last night which we attribute to our deep breathing and by the way our breath is still freezing, it is probably continuing to form. Sandy is the first to acknowledge that the alarm has done its job and sits up. As his toque brushes the tent a shower of rime falls off and finds its way into our bivvy sacs and sleeping bags. On its own that would be okay but we happen to be still laying in them and found it to be a rude awakening in our slumber. Slowly, being the imperative word, we all begin to move but the two outsiders have to wait for the middle two people to make room. Finally Jules and Dave can make their move and all the bags are moved into the corners of the tent.

The stoves have been sitting in the vestibule along with packs, climbing hardware, pots and God-knows-where-all-this-stuff came from and were also covered in rime and spindrift. These were brought out and placed on two specially designed stove platforms built by the Briggs Invention Co. of Victoria prior to the trip. After rigorous testing

(23 continuous days) the half inch plywood bases with either-asbestos or aluminum covers eventually became, too hot and addition-insulation had to be found to stop the bottom of the tent from melting. No CSA label of approval here but then who was going to check on us and shut us down. The stoves were fired up and water bottles extracted from the bottom of sleeping bags. The water bottles weren't the only things in the bag, cameras, avalanche transceivers, inner

insulated super-gaiters are pulled on. Outside the temperature is 'bloody chilly' compared to the warmth inside so there was never a race to be first out. It seems like everybody wants to be the last.

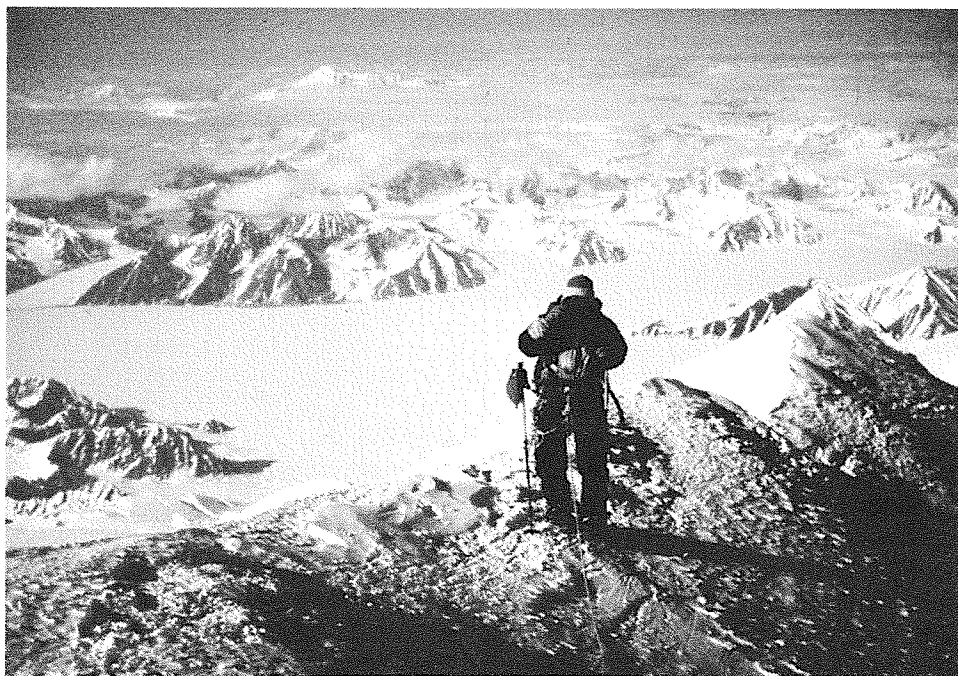
Packs have the minimum of gear in them for the day. Down jacket, 2 litres of water, chocolate bars, dried figs and raisins, spare gloves, ski goggles, camera and compass, and a few wands for marking the route. It's a slow process getting ready but by 10 AM we are all

roped up, ski's are on and we're ready to go. It was good to get moving and feel the blood starting to thaw out and begin circulating.

From our camp at 5350 m we had 600 m of elevation to gain over 5 km to summit the West Peak and then to gain the Main Peak it's another 2 km with a descent and ascent of 550 m. On the rope Jules is out front with Sandy behind her, then Dave and myself bringing up

the rear. This appeared to be the best combination for keeping a good pace. We had had the last 18 days to sort this out.

The summit plateau was a bleak, desolate wind blown place, a huge South Col lacking the gruesome bodies of expired climbers and their abandoned oxygen bottles. I should say it was not completely devoid as we did come across two seagulls, or were they ducks, who hadn't succeeded in making the trans-



Lindsay approaching the summit of Mount Logan.

Photo: Sandy Briggs

boots, gloves and socks laid nestled in the warm cocoon. Soon the fiery hum of two, MSR's had a pot of brew ready and another pot melting snow for water. The brew tasted good but our breakfast appetites had seriously diminished.

A good hour and a half had gone by now so it was time begin gearing up. The tent was beginning to look like the inside of a goodwill clothing box as fleece pants and jackets, Gore-tex windbreakers, inner boots, gloves and

alpine crossing. Their frozen bodies were testimony that this is an unforgiving place for any form of life. We left Jonathon and Fletcher in their icy graves but later found out Dave had been thinking about Peking Duck for dinner.

Eventually we abandoned the skis and replaced them with crampons which gave us better purchase on the hard snow. The angle had increased now and we had to switchback up the slopes. After about five hours we were just meters below the West Summit. The weather was clear with not a cloud in the sky so we had a quick discussion and decided to keep going. We had to traverse around the West Summit and then descend again onto the plateau below the Main Summit. Here we chose to have a rest break as we had been on the move fairly continuously.

I had come down with a cold just days before starting the trip and hadn't been able to shake it. My appetite had seriously diminished to the point where I wasn't eating enough to satisfy my bodies needs and in banking terms I was 'overdrawing my account'. I had to get this climb over with and get down. I chewed on some dried figs which took five minutes each to swallow, ate half a chocolate bar but did manage to drink half a litre of water. The others were also struggling with their food but they're caloric intake in general was higher than mine.

After half an hour we decided we had better get moving again or we would never get to the top and as it was we had to wake Dave up. It was time to kick in to overdrive, we were getting tired and we found ourselves wanting to stop more often. This wasn't good enough so we chose specific places to aim for and we wouldn't stop until we got there. This worked really well as it gave us something to focus on. Our pace had picked up and we all sensed the

summit was getting closer. Finally at 7:20 PM we stepped onto the Summit. There was a change in our spirits. After keeping our thoughts to ourselves during the day all hell broke lose. I don't know who yahooed first but it was catchy and we were all soon doing it. We all hugged and congratulated each other and found it hard to believe that we had pulled it off. It was an incredible feeling, we were at the highest point in Canada. On all those mountains surrounding us there was nobody higher then us, at least in a physical sense.



Lindsay, above camp 5, at a steep bit on descent.

Photo: Sandy Briggs

The view was also pretty amazing. Snow, mountains, glaciers for as far as we could see and behind Mount St. Elias was the Pacific Ocean. The very ocean that usually brings in the bad weather that we had been expecting for 19 days now but hadn't happened. I don't know how long we spent on top but I know we could have stayed up there longer. Before we could leave though, Jules wanted to get into her Hawaiian shirt which she had carried up all - the way.

Sandy also pulled out the shirt Gerta had given him and the pair of them looked like they should be on a beach somewhere.

With all the photos taken it was time to head back to camp, all 8 km of it. Back down onto the plateau and then up towards the West Summit again only now we were in the shade and a biting breeze had sprung up. We donned our down jackets, pulled the hoods up and put ski goggles on to minimize the amount of exposed skin. It was getting COLD. Anyway the trip back to camp

was uneventful and we all arrived there safely at midnight. Not that the time we got back meant much because of the virtual 24 hour daylight but we knew we could get a few hours sleep before we would have to pack up and head down towards base camp.

The next morning we slept in until the ungodly hour of 8 AM. Packing up was a leisurely exercise and we were ready to go by midday. We had about 5 or 6 km to cover to reach Prospector Col which was 200 m higher than our camp but from there we knew it was all down hill. That day we got down to Camp Three which was just above the icefall. We were surprised to see one of the snow bridges across a large crevasse still there. On one of our carries up to Camp Three one week earlier, we had just crossed one of the snowbridges and were taking a rest just 1 km from the crevasse, when we heard

and felt the glacier move. As we looked around all we saw was a cloud of snow billow up from where the bridge had been just minutes before. It was one of those occurrences that you only ever read about and don't think it will happen to you and then you think they only add to spice the story up. It gave us a good scare and made us realize why we rope up on a glacier. We then had to find an alternate route down. It was this alternate bridge that we were surprised

was still there as it didn't look to substantial.

On Day 21 we finally arrived back down in Base Camp with large sleds in tow. On one hand we felt like we had carried too much up the mountain but then on the other we knew that if we were caught in a storm we had enough food and fuel in several depots to be able to sit it out. Once back at the lower elevation the worms came out of hibernation and our appetites returned in full force. For two days we sat at Base Camp in glorious weather waiting and wondering why Andy Williams couldn't get in. The morning he arrived we were ready for him and four hours later we were all sitting at Kluane Lake waiting for our friends to come and pick us up and drive us into Whitehorse.

Overall we had fantastic weather. Of the 23 days on the mountain we only had 2 days where it snowed and it was not what I would call a storm, it JUST snowed. In total we only had about 4 or 5 days where we didn't move, some of them being rest days. Being on the mountain in early May had its advantages. There was only one other party on the mountain and we soon got in front of them and were able to have the thrill of route finding and trail breaking.

Upon descending we found the route had become a pack trail and there was no route finding challenges. All they had to do was follow the wands. Once we were back at Base Camp we calculated there was at least 40 people above us. A little overcrowded we thought.

As for our team, we had a fun crew. I had known everyone for a number of years but had done very little with them. Jules was the only female and the most hyper amongst the group. She just couldn't sit still for long and had to be out building the bivvy bigger or entertaining us. Jules was always on the lookout for cute guys but in the end she said we were the best. I don't think there was anybody on the mountain that Jules didn't joke with, she was like a blonde Whoopi Goldberg. Jules also has a laugh that could be heard a mile away and I'm sure at times it was. Dave was Mr. Fix-it, being a mechanic he was always working on the stoves, trying to fix his sledge, building a snow cave or telling the pilot how to start his plane. This was Dave's first REAL mountain and if you ever meet him, pull up a chair as he doesn't need much prompting to recount the trip. Dave has a soft spot for French speaking woman from Quebec. Sandy, what more needs to be said about him. Nearly

everybody has at some time climbed with him and knows what a work horse he is. The thing I noticed the most was that throughout the whole trip whenever anyone was looking for something Sandy would poke his head up and say "I've got one somewhere in my pack." Sure enough from somewhere within his bottomless pack out would come the object,- wrapped in triplicate. His pack was like Doctor Who's Tardis.

And then there was Andy Williams the bush pilot from Kluane Lake who flew us in and out of Base Camp. It was his experience that not only saved us a long ski in and out, but was a wealth of information about the mountain. We had been told before hand that his favourite saying was: "It's so big out there (Kluane Park) you could fit a weather system in it." This being his excuse for not flying when the weather at the lake looked good, but maybe he was getting tired of it as he never said it to us.

Our team originally was to be a party of six but soon whittled down to a team of four who moved fast and light through the mountains with much joviality. Thanks to all for a fantastic trip.

Expedition Team: Lindsay Elms, Sandy Briggs, Julie Micksch, and Dave Holden

SOLO IN THE ALPS A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

Claire Ebendinger

After three wonderful weeks, visiting a family, playing tourist, and traveling all over France with my children, I was ready for a relaxing hike in the Alps "on my own." I had planned a circle tour from Entreves, a small village in Italy at one end of the Mt. Blanc tunnel. Using trails and routes, going over passes and through villages, and crossing the borders to Switzerland and France, I would end the 4 day trip in Chamonix.

With my eyes on a couple of peaks, I had packed basic climbing gear (a long sling, two 'biners, a figure eight, an ice axe, Gerta's tiny instep crampons and contour maps). The forecast was good for the first two days and I had planned alternate routes if it changed.

Everyone I met was friendly and helpful: the bus driver who dropped me off at the edge of the village (somewhat reluctantly as it was not an official stop on his schedule!); the Italian couple who picked me up as I hitchhiked on the road to trail head; the hikers and climbers of all ages and nationalities I met on the trails; and, most unexpected, the French team I met at Refuge Fiorio who offered to let me join their party and climb Mt. Dolent.

I had climbed to the glacier in the evening and noticed the open crevasses above the col; it would not be safe to attempt it on my own. I went on to explore the rocky ridge, high above the hut, and as I leaned over to look at the

slopes on the Swiss side, I noticed a herd of Ibex grazing on the rocks nearby. These long-horned mountain goats didn't seem to mind me while I spied quietly and watched the sun as it set in the horizon. I treasured this moment of peace, all by myself on this mountain in the Alps.

When I returned to the refuge, Richard, Beatrice, and Gerard had arrived. We talked, shared some tea, talked some more and I humbly spread out my gear; we agreed to give it a try, and that I could turn back if the snow was too icy.

At 5:00 AM we were ready to go; not a cloud was in the sky! When we reached the snow, it was great, soft enough for my insteps and easy walking; I felt so

grateful to my companions and was feeling high as we climbed in the beautiful sunrise. Richard, who had trained as a guide in his early 20's, was leading the way; I had tied in at the end of the rope. We crossed the crevasses carefully, then a steep icy section, and reached the rocky summit ridge by 9:30.

A team of French climbers was heading down; they had started on the Argentiére glacier, in France. After a short precarious scramble we arrived at the summit, where a statue of the Madonna greeted us. The view was fantastic; I remembered Valerio's comment about the Alps being the best mountains to climb (I will not add to this biased opinion). We named all the peaks we knew, checked the routes on the Mt. Blanc, had a good look at the north face of the Jorasses, the Gran Paradiso to the south and the Grand Combin to the east.

After a few photos, and a bite to eat we headed down. The clouds were moving in fast, the snow was getting softer and the crevasses a little wider. As we stepped off the glacier, Zeus declared war and sent rain and lightning in our direction. We were glad to reach the hut safely; this basic shelter with a dozen bunk beds (mattresses and blankets), a rustic wooden table and benches, was cosy and dry (and free of charge).

My climbing partners went back to their accommodation in Chamonix and I decided to stay in the hut as the storm was threatening again. Another party of three climbers arrived that evening; we watched a wonderful show of light and sound through the window and talked much, exchanging stories of mountain adventures and info on various hikes and climbs they had done in the Alps and the Pyrennees. The weather stayed with us all night; at least 5 climbers were reported dead in the area in this powerful storm.

The next morning was still grey and wet; we headed down and I hiked to Col Ferret, through the

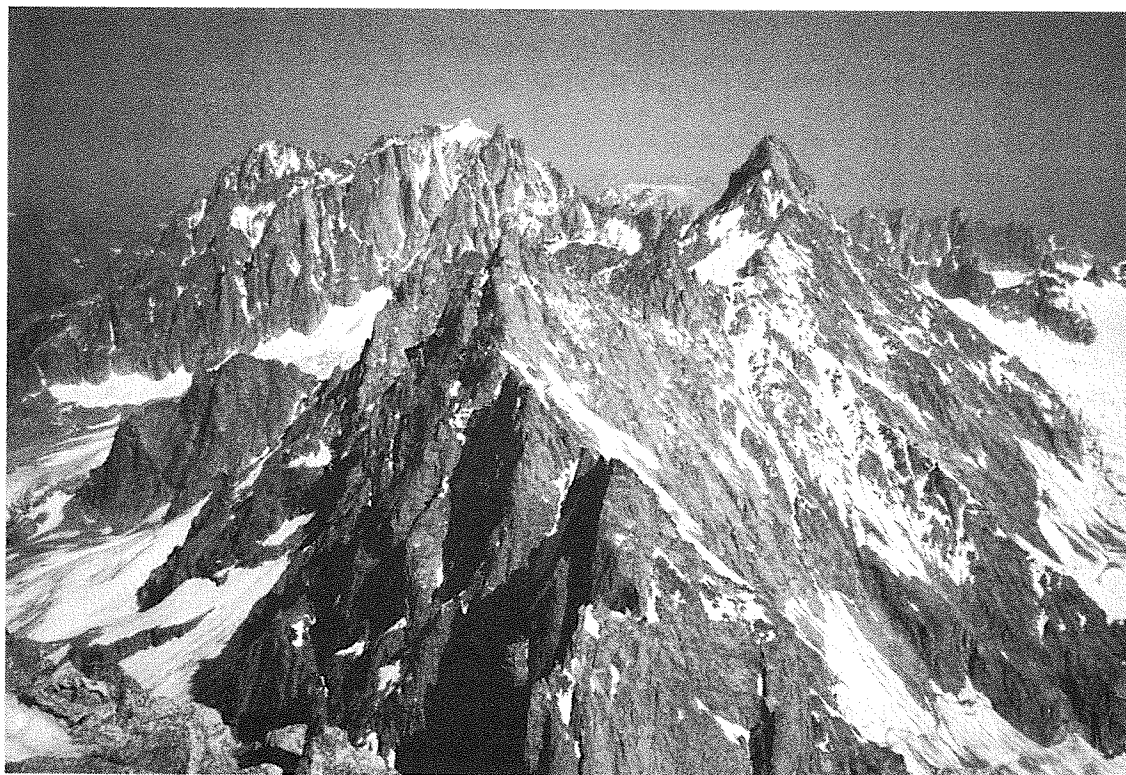
Swiss cow grazing domain (they looked somewhat threatening as they seriously chewed their cud and watched me trespass). At a place called Le Clou, I took shelter under the edge of a slate roof (the only building in the area). Soon a bus came by and stopped as I waived, and I found out that I could get to Champex on wheels, and avoid a hike on the hillside trail that paralleled the road. As the rain was still heavy at times I welcomed the alternative.

In Champex the bus driver drove me to a shelter at trailhead (so I could leave my pack there), and back to the village to do some grocery shopping. Two hours later the thunder storm was still hanging over rolling from one peak to the other. I decided to go to Trient via Fenetre d'Arpette. No one was on the trails that day; I could hear rock slides coming down nearby gullies, and found a leaning rock to hide under when the rain poured again. As I climbed up the steep trail through a boulder slope the clouds parted somewhat; Gerta had told me how pretty that part of the trail was, and even in thick mist and intermittent rain the place was magical. I could see the "towers" of Fenetre d'Arpette appearing briefly through the clouds, and vanishing again. It looked like a natural fortress, with over a dozen gendarmes

of various height, lined up in a horse-shoe shape and the trail leading to a crack between two of them.

Dazzled by the scenery I regained my energy, eager to see what was on the other side. The wind greeted me up there as I looked over the impressive Glacier de Trient. I walked down the trail to the village of Le Peuty which I reached in the dark. The gîte (a farmer's barn remodelled to accommodate overnight hikers) was filled with a church group of 20 young teenagers and their leaders. From their looks I guessed they were rather surprised to see me arriving so late, or maybe it was my appearance, soaking wet and a big grin on my face. After a friendly greeting they resumed their skits and creative songs (melodies of my own teen years were still alive!) and I enjoyed a hot shower and a cup of tea.

As they were getting to sleep (giggles and silly jokes) I reflected on my "solo" adventure... quite different from my solo experiences on the Island! The next morning they shared their breakfast with me (fat slices of baguette covered with jam and dipped in bowls of hot chocolate) and we headed up to Col de Balme. They were hiking in small groups, happily chatting about their 10 day hike around the Mt. Blanc. From



Aiguilles Rouges de Dolent from the summit of Mt. Dolent.

Photo: Claire Ebendinger

the col the view was impressive: the Mt. Blanc massif was slowly appearing nearby as the clouds lifted, and the various Aiguilles, aretes and cretes were tantalizing and seemed so close. I took the longer ridge rout to the valley, taking my time, reluctant to leave the mountains, and forming new dreams as I studied the peaks and routes on my map at every view point.

I hitchhiked to Chamonix and met a climber from the Swiss Alpine Club who told me about the activities and regulations of his club . As we arrived at the edge of town I walked the rest of the

way to the train station where I waited for the bus. The 24-hour storm had raised the levels of the river Arve which crosses the middle of town and the streets were so flooded that it was declared a state of emergency... a different adventure.



Grandes Jorasses (left), Mt. Blanc (behind), and Aiguille de Triolet (right) from the summit of Mt. Dolent.

Photo: Claire Ebendinger

THE JASPER PARK LADIES, WHO GO FOR THEIR SKIS.

They fall over boulders, and snow-covered stomps,
They're covered all over with bruises and bumps,
But a bang on the head, or a bruise on the knees,
Is counted an honor if done while on skis.

They're never too crippled, and never too old,
They love the deep snow, and they don't mind the cold.
Don't mind if they starve, and don't mind if they freeze,
As long as they're out on those wonderful skis.

They'll pass up the bridge club, and neglect the Church,
And leave other forms of sport right in the lurch,
They've no time for parties, and no time for teas,
They just spend the winter outside on their skis.

Too tired to go shopping; it's ever so far,
To walk to the store, so she must take the car.
But half an hour later she's splitting the breeze
At forty miles per, but she's got on her skis.

Cross country, through valleys, o'er rivers, down hills,
They scramble, they tumble, enjoying their spills.
They get wet and catch cold, then they cough and they sneeze,
But they won't stay in bed, cause they can't wear their skis.

There's many a husband who knows how it feels
To sit at home patiently waiting for meals;
And finally dishes up crackers and cheese
While Mother's cavorting around on her skis.

There's many a nuisance and many a pest
In this land of ours, out here in the West.
There's measles and bagpipes, wood ticks and fleas
But the worst one of all, yep, you guessed it — is skis.

- Frank Darlow

Frank Darlow was a CNR conductor who was also the band leader and manager of the Jasper Curling Club during the 1940's.
"Frank had an unusual sense of humour. Making fun of his wife and her friends was one of his delights. "

- Nora Findlay

This poem was taken from the Alberta Nordic Skier, 1995/96 Annual article "Breaking Trail: Pioneer Alberta Women on Skis."
A few of us ACC gentile members recognize ourselves in this poem describing our passion for winter and a passion for these boards. Ibut bring adventures, excitement and magic to our lives.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

CREVASSE WORKSHOP

Rex Andrew

June 22 - 24

Although the Mother of all Logistical Nightmares, this workshop went a bit smoother than last year's. The program was nearly the same: the "Saturday" group assembled at the trailhead Friday evening and hiked in to the Glacier Lookout, practiced rescues on Saturday, and made a summit attempt Sunday. The "Sunday" group schedule was the same, except displaced one day later. The complicated logistics are required because there is a 12 person party limit on the north side of Mt. Baker. Since this trip traditionally attracts more than 12 people, I dodge the rules by pretending to have two separate groups.

As before, Peter Mason allowed us to use the Cage several weeks earlier for prussiking practice. JD even provided us with some excitement when he demonstrated a thrilling caver descent.

I had more excitement Saturday evening. The Sunday group did not arrive when I expected them. Mountain fog had settled over the slopes, and I became concerned that they had lost the trail. I had dinner, but they still had not arrived. I was particularly worried about GS, who was planning on staying in my tent and had no tent with him. All right, Rescue City! I launched out and traversed back above the trail, where wayward

trippers might be wandering. Eventually I found myself at the top of the Hogsback (the normal Climber's Trail) where, in fact, I found MD, BK and DM comfortably establishing a camp with the growing suspicion that they were not Where They Were Supposed To Be. But they were safe, so we made rendezvous plans for the next morning. Then I dropped

watch JD's thrilling caver descent too.) WS, who was staging in Vancouver before The Big Move to a new job in Monterey, CA., also volunteered to join the summit climb. So Saturday afternoon, RK, WS and KS picked up their charges at the Lookout and took them up onto the great plateau and across (via an interesting route, I'm told) to a high camp

below the Black Buttes. They had a gorgeous dawn, sandwiched between fog banks below and a thickening cloud bank above. They set off from camp at about 0630 with the weather looking more and more ominous. RK began to wand their route almost immediately. They met several parties who had started earlier but were retreating after encountering nasty



Hannah pops back into the world of the living! (Coleman Glacier, Mt. Baker.)

Photo: Gerta Smythe

back down the Climber's trail to the junction, didn't find any more trippers, and traipsed back to the Lookout. Still no trippers. I was about to set off the flares when I stumbled back into camp and found GS sitting patiently outside my tent. And simultaneously HH, RW, SM and FS bounded down into camp from the upper moraine trail where they had been dallying. Whew!

RK and KS had graciously agreed to lead the Saturday group on the Sunday summit attempt, and they even came out to prussik night. (Probably eager to

conditions above. By the time they reached about 8600', the mountain had been enveloped in clouds, the wind was howling, visibility had become poor, snow was starting to fill their steps and they were out of wands. (Months later, LM sent me a picture of the party at this point, and until I read the attached letter, I thought it was a photo from some horrendous Himalayan epic!) So they wisely turned back, navigated their way from wand to wand back to their tents and then came off.

Meanwhile, on the glacier several

thousand feet below, we were discovering that new cracks had appeared overnight in the snow where we had practiced the day before. The ice below us was waking up and popping and cracking in a most interesting manner. I ran two rope teams simultaneously (and, boy, was I running!) and we finished in good time. But the weather was not good, and with forecasts for worsening weather, the whole group (except FS, who figured, after his experience on Gerhardt Lepp's climb of Mt. Harmston, that this kind of weather was a *prerequisite* for a summit attempt) voted to skip the summit attempt and go home.

Once again, I found this venue to be

workshop-friendly in the sense that the access is short and relatively easy even for beginners. But as RK pointed out, holding the workshop on Mt. Baker adds the enormous expectation of a summit attempt into everyone's mind. In fine weather, the ascent is straightforward, but in bad weather, even the standard route can be dangerous, and in the those conditions an overeager group of beginners is a sure prescription for disaster. Fortunately, RK, WS and KS came along to lend their experience, but without that kind of leadership I would have to conclude that, at this time of year, a summit is an unreasonable expectation.

Nevertheless, the crevasses are great,

particularly the icy squeeze slot where HH rediscovered her latent claustrophobia!

Participants: Saturday - John Damaschke, Linda McKay, Richard Pawlowicz, Neale Postma, Samantha Winslow (Heathens): Sunday climb: Richard Keltie, Wally Speirs, Kayla Stevenson. Sunday - Mike Dillistone, Hannab Horn, Bruce Kerr, Sylvia Moser, Dave Myles, Glenn Smith (from Sequim, WA.), Fleming Sorben, Robin Wark (Hannab's friend), and, of course, leader and touter of equalized multidirectional anchor tomfoolery, myself (leader)

CLAIRE'S BIRTHDAY BASH

Mike Hubbard

May 4 - 6

3:30 PM Saturday found four of us drinking beer and munching chips in a tavern just inside the border crossing at Sumas, USA. We were also watching the window for a tow truck and Toyota 4'4 heading back to Canada. A casual phone call had uncovered this last minute replacement for the Shuksan trip on the schedule. A mysterious ailment in Charles' truck had caused it to die outside the Sumas Trailer Park and equally mysterious cross border regulations had prevented the AAA tow company towing the vehicle to the nearest Toyota dealer in Abbotsford in accordance with Mrs. Claire Turner's instructions (this sudden name change was the result of Greg introducing Claire to the tow truck driver to the transfer the benefits of her BCAA membership to Charles in an intuitive moment of genius.)

Somehow by 5:00 PM we were equipped with a Tercel courtesy car and heading back, by popular vote, to the Mt. Baker trailhead. Darkness found us at the Hogback setting up camp in a crystal clear and cold night with a firm resolve to rise at 4:00 PM. Sometime after midnight the last stove fell quiet and at around 5:00 AM I was awakened from a deep sleep by the sound of balloons being inflated and other joyous Birthday noises. Claire had thoughtfully decided that all those celebrating their

nativity in May should carry a balloon as additional avalanche protection, so Claire's, Doug's, Catrin's, and Charles' packs were appropriately decorated. Around 7:00 AM we left camp on skis and roped up a little way up the glacier after the sun had warmed us.

A plod to the saddle, broken only by our leader's occasional order of, "We have to stop and eat NOW." In brilliant sunshine and a deep blue sky we further doubted the reliability of the weather forecast which had predicted an 80% chance of rain. Apart from Doug, we stashed our skis below the Roman Wall and slowly plugged on up as altitude was taking its toll (especially on the one member over 50 who insisted on leading so that he would not be left behind!). By 2:00 PM we were on the first summit where an enthusiastic party of young Americans and one German Shepherd told us it was just as high as Grant's Peak because of snow build-up. Since it was now a semiwhite-out with frozen rain, we decided to call it our top. From Doug's pack came a bottle of Champagne, from Barbara's a mickey of Scotch and from Greg's an iced carrot cake and Claire's Birthday was duly celebrated. (The Club's insurers will be relieved to hear that consumption was modest in anticipation of the dangers of the descent and that at least half the

champagne ended up in my water bottle to be enjoyed in the safety of Victoria!)

As we were about to leave the weather lifted and we could see that Grant's Peak to the SE was clearly higher. To Doug's delight, we went across the top in light crystalline snow, to the high point. In bright sunlight, amongst towering cumulus clouds, we caught glimpses of the Fraser valley and were exhilarated by an airy sensation of being between earth and sky. A considerable amount of film was expended and we then returned to the top of the Roman Wall. It was by now 4:00 PM and the weather was socking in. We descended as fast as we could to the saddle with Doug skiing in wild zigzags amongst us. At our skis the visibility was better but the snow was crusty. I had one moment of shock (too short for fear) when I skied across the tracks of the American party and looked down below my uphill ski into a bottomless hole quite big enough to swallow us all. Whilst Charles and Barb demonstrated the fine art of telemarking in crust with incredible elegance the rest of us either spectacularly skied from wipe-out to wipe-out or skied with paralysed caution from step-turn to step-turn. On the lower glacier there were some patches of excellent snow but by the end some

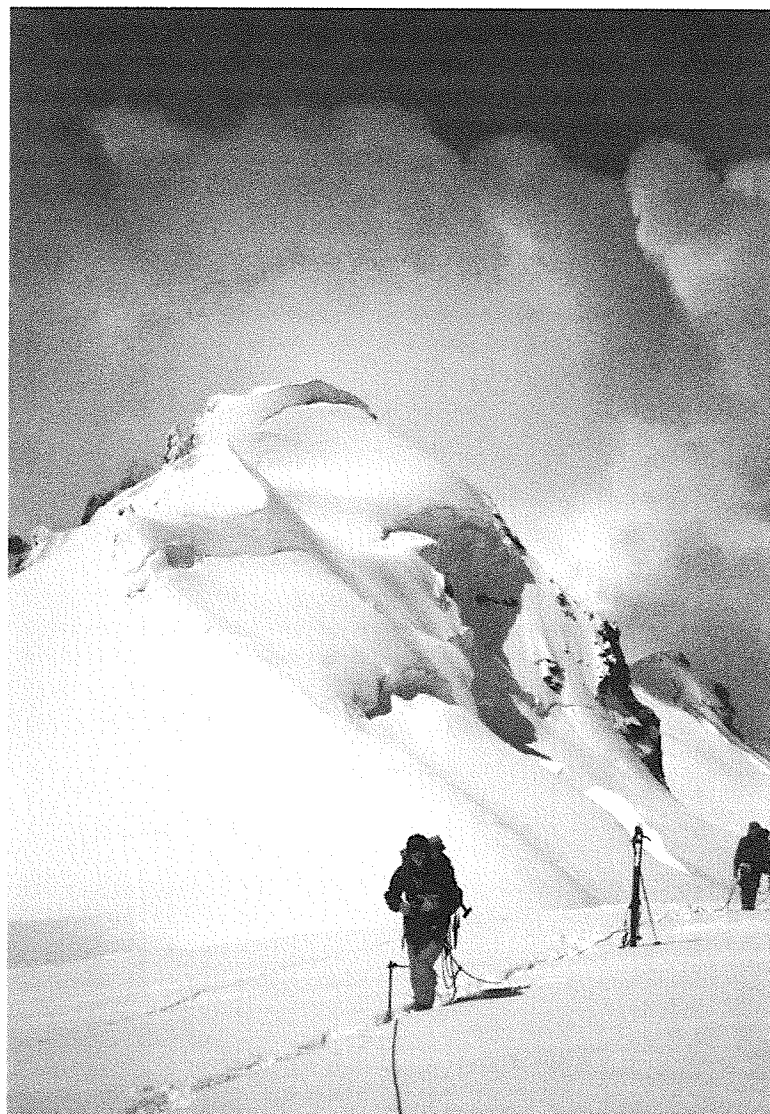
were converting their skis into bobsleds whilst others were taking long gentle traverses. For me skiing west into the evening sun with mellow light over the Straits of Georgia and then turning east with one's ever-lengthening shadow racing in front was one of the most aesthetic experiences on skis that I can remember (heightened, perhaps, by the fact that I was completely alone as the rest of the party were already demolishing camp).

The issue became not whether we would catch the 9:00 PM ferry to Schwartz Bay but the 10:45 PM to Nanaimo. We packed and set off with as much speed as possible, some skiing and others plunging down the wet snow until we reached the firmer going of the old Kulshan Cabin trail. We reached the cars in the last of the daylight, loaded all the gear of those from Victoria and two passengers into Doug's 4x4 whilst Charles nobly volunteered to drive Catrin, Greg and Barbara to Tsawwassen as he still had to return his loaner to Abbotsford the next morning. There followed a hectic chase to Sumas, to Avenue 0, following what seemed an endless wait for the CPR at a level crossing, and eventually, after some of the finest driving from Doug that I have seen outside of the Indy 500, to the Ferry Terminal, hotly pursued by Charles whose passengers tumbled into our car at the ticket booth.

The level of dehydration was evidenced by glass after glass of juice and even non-buffet ferry food tasted wonderful. Claire took over the driving at Nanaimo and 22 hours after the start of her Birthday Celebration she delivered us safely to our waiting cars in Brentwood Bay.

Thanks to Claire, our leader, Doug and Charles, who were our drivers for this superb trip.

Participants: Claire Ebendinger (Leader), Doug Goodman, Catrin Brown, Greg Gordon, Charles Turner, Barbara Brooks, and Mike Hubbard



Catrin and Greg climbing Baker.

Photo: Claire Ebendinger

SMITH ROCK

Rex Andrew

March 16 - 24

Six of us went to Smith Rocks for eight days and did a bunch of stuff. Now, it would be criminal to try to recapitulate the entire trip, so here are a few highlights:

- Valerio regaled us with tales about the black hole at the center of the galaxy, the black hole at the center of the sun, and the black hole at the center of Stephen Hawking's brain.

- Sheldon extended his leading capability — polished during a winter rockclimbing trip to New Zealand — to the 5.10b realm, whereupon he demonstrated whippers for us.

- James — leading for the first time outdoors on real rock — showed us how the Zen of Coca Cola and doughnuts can propel one on redpoints up to 5.10d. Well done!

- Petra showed us *Elbsandsteingebirge* style by waltzing up ugly routes and protecting with big fuzzy green macramé knots.

- Barbara danced up routes from 5.4 to 5.8 and demonstrated the art of "sleeping in," even after her tent had been packed up.

We were camping far from any street lights and had at night an excellent view

of the comet Hyakutake, which looked like the slivery smudge of a moth's wing on the galactic canvas overhead.

A sign on the washroom door at the Sunspot Cafe in Terrebonne: "4 R only costumes." Hey, this IS central Oregon, folks.

Anyway, a trip synopsis like this doesn't really make a good report, though, so let's see if I can sift through my memories and pull out an experience that made a distinctive impression. Ah yes, that would probably be this one.

Valerio and I had wanted to climb the *Pioneer Route* (5.7, A1) on Monkey Face

since our November trip. Monkey Face is actually a 50 metre tower on the west side of Smith Rock, but it seems much higher because it is perched on the end of a ridge which is another 70 metres above Crooked River. The tower overhangs on all four sides: that, plus the considerable additional air to the valley floor, provides "nauseating exposure," according to the guidebook.

Pioneer Route, the trade route to the summit, begins with one pitch of class 4, followed by a 5.5 corner to a 5 m ledge called Bohn Street. The next pitch is an A1 line of about 21 bolts that starts off less than vertical but then overhangs. After some 20 metres, this bolt ladder curves into one end of a horizontal gash known as the Mouth Cave. From the correct angle, the top of the tower bears a remarkable resemblance to a monkey's face, with this gash perfectly positioned as the mouth. The next pitch exits the far end of the Mouth Cave, stepping out over 40 metres of pure freefall, and climbs a short, well-bolted section of 5.7. This place is called "Panic Point", and the guidebook assured us that this is the most thrilling (c.f. "nauseating exposure") 5.7 pitch we will ever do.

We waited until our last day for the attempt. Valerio, Petra and I dashed over the top and scampered up to Bohn Street, only to find we were already behind a party of two. The leader was labouring up the bolt ladder, belayed by his partner Karen. We exchanged greetings and settled in to wait. There was already considerable exposure here, a front row seat on a 40 cm ledge (no railing!) overlooking a valley with teenietiny farms. It took me a while to get my blood pressure under control again.

We had seen this couple all week, comfortably cruising 5.7 - 5.10 sport routes on the east side. But today, here in this airy place, something was different. It was her eyes. At first I didn't recognize it—it had been many years since I had seen so much fear so close to the surface.

In due time, her partner scrambled into the Mouth Cave and established the belay. Karen started up. It was about noon, and we basked on the ledge. I even felt a bit drowsy in the warm sunlight every time the wind fell off.

Meanwhile, Karen was having inor-

dinate difficulties. She had never used etriers before, so it was expected that she might have trouble at first. Worse, though, she had developed incipient "sewing machine syndrome" in both legs and seemed unable to shake it off and relax.

An hour drifted by, and then another. At 1500, Karen was only two-thirds of the way, and had just reached the overhanging portion. Valerio and I looked at each other, thinking the same thought: we didn't have enough time to finish the climb. We would have to abort. It was over: end of our climb, end of the day, end of our trip. I scuttled over to set the rappel.

The rappel bolts were located at the far end of the ledge, where the ledge actually became a flake that jutted out into space. The rappel itself was only about 20 metres, but entirely free-hanging, over the backside (c.f. "nauseating exposure"). As I scooted out along this flake, my feet dangled over the void, *not touching anything*. The anchors were on the wall above, approximately at chest level, but at arms length. The flake also sloped a bit, so that as I leaned towards the bolts I started to slide inexorably off the flake.

Valerio had me on belay, of course. But as I put myself on rappel and untied from Valerio's rope, the check valves on my adrenal glands cut loose. My blood pressure skyrocketed. My heartbeat quintupled. My brain went into overdrive, filled with voices screaming *those bolts are gonna pull out! — your harness buckle isn't rewoven! — the rope is gonna snap! — you're gonna fall! ¾ you're gonna die! — you're gonna die!* It seemed like more than a minute before I could get a grip on my psyche and focus beyond the din in my mind. Once I slid off the flake and hung free on the rappel rope, the voices disappeared and I was fine again.

We were back on safe ground by about 1600. We glanced up and saw that Karen had completed the aid pitch. Her partner popped out of the Mouth Cave, zipped up the 5.7 pitch and established the next belay. We gathered our gear and prepared to leave. Karen stepped out of the Mouth Cave and reached Panic Point.

And jumped back into the Mouth

Cave.

This was so odd that we stopped. "You don't start a pitch like that and then go back down!" Valerio said in surprise. We couldn't tell what she was doing. She appeared to be kneeling inside the cave. For a fleeting instant I thought (c.f. *nauseating exposure*) that she was vomiting. Nah, couldn't be. After a few more minutes, she came to the edge and stepped out again.

By this time the sun was seriously low in the west, the wind was picking up and the temperature was dropping. On the face, the two climbers were entirely in the shadows, their sleeves and sweatpants flapping in the wind. Karen tried to pull the first 5.7 move but her form was terrible. She couldn't develop any push with her legs, so she was trying to muscle herself up with her arms. This was the classic beginner error, but she persisted, arms half cocked, not going up or down, hanging on until her strength drained away and she fell onto the rope. Again she tried. Again she failed.

We could hear their conversation quite distinctly. At first she tried to get clarification on the best holds, the best sequence of moves. She tried several angles, each time falling back, occasionally shaking an arm out. Her partner tried encouraging, cajoling, ordering, even pleading that he couldn't hold the belay much longer. But this was Panic Point, the worst possible place (c.f. *nauseating exposure*!!) to regain one's composure. Eventually, she stopped responding and sat in her harness staring numbly at the rock before her, legs locked out, arms folded across her chest. She was totally exhausted. Her tank was empty. She had resigned.

About a half dozen climbers had gathered beside us to watch as this drama unfolded. Not only was it gripping, but it was starkly clear that a retreat from that position, with one climber up and one below, in failing light, would be extremely awkward. That, perhaps, was the essence of "Panic Point."

At this point, Valerio ran down to the Springboard. This is a prow-like rock feature that juts out toward Monkey Face like a diving board, about 25 metres from and almost horizontal with the Mouth Cave. The location is so exposed that

hikers avoid it. Valerio crawled out to the edge so he could talk to Karen. I ran down and joined him, flat on my stomach.

Valerio was telling her to pull on the quickdraws. She stared dumbly at us as if we were speaking in tongues. And in her eyes there was nobody home. That's when I realized that those screaming voices were raging wild and unchecked inside her brain.

We continued to yell simple instructions at her, and eventually she started to respond. We coaxed her to pull on the draw, then clean it, then shake out her left arm, then shake out her right arm. The mechanical act of pulling and cleaning gradually reset her synapses, and she finally made her way to the belay station. A cheer went up from the audience above us, and Karen gave us a weak smile.

On the march back to the parking lot, we grouched and bitched in a generally profane manner at people who plug up aid routes and then take all day to do the climb. This had been our last day! It had been our last chance to climb the Monkey Face and we had been making good time until we ran into Karen and her partner. Besides, we had come all the way from Victoria for this! &@!!!} \$##!@?[] &*(^\$ \$&^!!!

Given our state of self-righteous braggadacio, it naturally never occurred to us that (1) Valerio had never led an extended pitch of aid, and (2) I had never ever used etriers before.

Now we have to go back again, not only to face the Monkey Face, but to face our own faces as well.

POSTSCRIPT:

A few months after we returned, I

read a chilling post in the Internet newsgroup rec.climbing that again reminded me of the powerful effects of exposure on even experienced climbers. An excerpt follows. (This was originally posted by Scott B. Crosson at the University of Oregon. All italics are mine).

From an AP article in the 5/26/96 *Eugene Register-Guard*:

COLLEGE STUDENT, 22, DIES AFTER FALL AT SMITH ROCK

BEND-A college student climbing with two friends at Smith Rock State Park fell about 200 feet to his death on Saturday.

Terry A. Mitchell, 22, and his friends were free climbing, without the aid of ropes or safety devices, when the accident occurred about 11 am. Mitchell and his climbing partners, Mike Heald and Miri Marie Anderson, were ascending a route called *Pioneer*. Heald made it to a ledge and was waiting. Mitchell was in the middle and Anderson was just starting the climb. Mitchell was within 30 feet of the ledge when he slipped or a handhold or foothold crumbled.

Mitchell, Heald, and Anderson were students at Willamette University in Salem. All three were experienced climbers. Mitchell and Heald climbed at Smith Rock almost every weekend. All three had climbed the same route with safety devices just a month earlier. That experience had given them the confidence to try the route without ropes.

Climb on, Terry.

Participants: Valerio Faraoni (leader), Rex Andrew, James Laurie, Petra and Barbara Strougal, Sheldon Zakreski

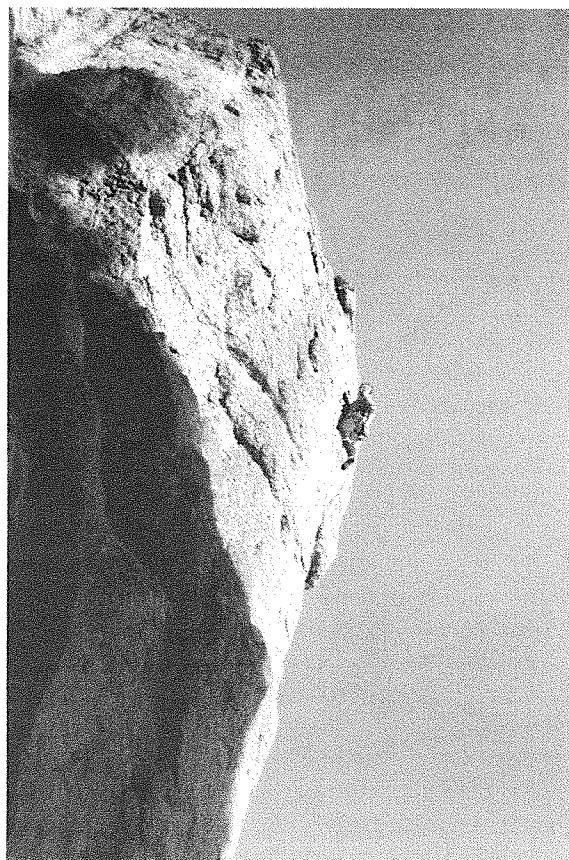


Photo: Rex Andrew

Valerio on the second pitch of *Headless Horseman* (5.10d). Smith Rocks, Oregon.

VOLCANO CLIMBING

Wally Speirs

June 1 - 6

Our party of four, Tony, Gerta, Catrin and myself, arranged a rendezvous at the Tswassen ferry terminal and proceeded south in Westfalia luxury.

After a short stop for impulse shopping in Seattle (REI anyone?) our uneventful drive led us to trout Lake,

Washington and the Mt. Adams Ranger Station for the usual "beta" gathering.

After some very high level diplomatic talks between our two countries, Gerta managed to negotiate camping in the station parking lot.

The following morning our stringent

climbing regimen included huckleberry pie for breakfast and a gas fill-up before heading to the trailhead in beautiful, sunny weather.

After donning our packs and skis/snowshoes we started the four mile slog on the road, still choked with soft snow,

to Cold Springs and the South Spur Trailhead.

Our progress this day can only be described as "awesome, stupendous," after a 2000 ft altitude gain in six tedious hours but rewarded us with a good view of our next objective, the spectacular Mt. Hood.

After setting up camp we found that due to a misunderstanding we had a stove but no fuel pump! Thanks to Catrin's skilful fire-making we had dinner that included such delicacies as "noodles sans fuel-pump" and "soup de-who needs one?"

Day 2 started at first light with Catrin, the "human chronometer/altimeter," Tony the "up-direction finder," Gerta the "down direction finder," followed by Wally's cheerleading ("Are we at the lunch counter yet?").

At noon at the South (false) summit, known as Pikers Peak at 11700 ft, with strong winds and fairly cloudy skies. We carried on down into a big bowl, and then up to the main summit at 12276 ft, with great views of Rainier, Hood and St. Helens.

After a glissade/ski back to camp for hot tea and a short rest we continued

back to the trailhead, thanks to Gerta's memory, arriving at 10 PM for a beer and bed after being on the move for 17 hours.

The following day we went sightseeing along the Columbia river Gorge, took an impromptu swim at a roadside lake, and after crossing the Columbia River on the Bridge of the Gods passing several apple groves we eventually arrived in the afternoon at Timberline Lodge, at the base of Mt. Hood, greeted by Bruno, the St. Bernard, and "lodge mascot."

We started off again at dawn, soon leaving the "miracle mile" of ski-lifts behind. Catrin pushed her skiing technique to its limit, needing only a friendly nudge over the last ridge before putting on crampons.

We passed by the Patagonia-like Illumination Rock, between Crater Rock and Devil's Kitchen, to the fumeroles of the volcano, venting their acrid aroma of sulphur.

The sun was now beating down on us as we made our way along the Hog's Back ridge to a bergshlund, where fortunately a snow bridge was still relatively intact at its centre, allowing the "Alpen

Angels" to pass up to the "Pearly Gates," composed of 50 degrees of firm snow. Here we passed Richard, Kayla, Kate and Rob on their way down, having summited earlier.

A short push beyond gave us the summit at 11237 ft and 7 hours of great climbing, where excellent views of Rainier, St. Helens and Adams to the north and Jefferson to the south availed us of their massive beauty.

Gerta and Wally greeted Catrin and Tony with the sounds of Gerta's flute and Kahlua in celebration of a terrific day.

Gerta and Catrin enjoyed great skiing on the way down, taking 18 minutes from where they left their skis to the Lodge, while Tony and Wally managed a couple of short glissades.

A much enjoyed dinner at the Ram's Head Pub in the Lodge, followed by a refreshing swim at Trillium Lake was a perfect end to a great day of climbing.

The next day found us, as usual, driving like maniacs to catch the ferry. We made it safe and sound with everlasting memories of a fantastic trip to the Cascade Volcanoes.

AN OLYMPIC SONG

Unpublished until now, a literary masterpiece from a trip during the Summer of 1993.


Margaret Brown

From Victoria via Ferry to the Olympics we will go,
Our plan's to hike the skyline of the North Fork of Quinault.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we shall go.

Our Margaret reads the compass, our Gerta sets the pace,
so we each use our strong points, and it never is a race.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we shall go.

First stop was at Elip Creek, where the camping was quite good,
and there were no other people, we enjoyed each other's food.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we shall go.

Several signs proclaimed "No Camping" on the shores of Margaret Lake,
but since this was our objective, we discreetly set our stake.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!



And to climb the Mount Seattle was the next goal on the list,
it was calling and did beckon over the lake's morning mist.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!


And we followed Margaret's "bible" and the ranger's water hose,
and the game trail curved obliging 'til it almost was on course.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

Up the creek and past the snowpatch over many-coloured slate
to the ridge just like a knife's edge, that puts Margaret in a state.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

And the summit looked forbidding and it surely was quite steep,
but we both dug our heels in and it was a rubble heap.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

The next morning we rose early and we scampered right along,
past the elk in Martin's Park to a col up in the sun.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

Back at camp we swim and frolic and we load the packs once more,
and we start our next adventure with Mt. Zindorf at the door.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!



We had to stop and soak our feet in the cool Seattle Creek,
our speed was so tremendous, that it blistered all our feet.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

Just in time now for a sunset on the shores of Beauty Lake,
on and on the alpenglow, so many pictures we did take.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

The guidebook, "Margaret's bible" said the going would be rough;
but we never saw the evidence, so I guess, we must be tough.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

Our worries are now over and we only hike half-days,
and we lie down in the heather and we soak up all the rays.
Hollari, hollaro, from the forest to the mountains we did go!

And we climbed the rugged "Klimta" and we prove our iron will,
and we see the route before us and it all will be downhill!
Hollari, hollaro, from the mountains back to forest we will go.

The largest yellow cedar, disappointing as it stands,
but the beer we found refreshing by the sea in surf and sand.
Hollari, hollaro, homewards on the ferry we will go.

Participants: Margaret Brown & Gerta Smythe

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