



THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION  
ISLAND BUSHWHACKER  
1997



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Front Cover: Jules Thomson on Redwall Peak in the MacKenzie Range, April 1997. Photograph by Doug Goodman.

Back Cover: Todd Patton testing a snow bridge on Mount Baker's Coleman glacier, September 1997. Photograph by Greg Gordon.

Table of Contents: Colchuk Lake and Dragontail Peak, Enchantment Lakes region, Washington, June 1997. Photograph by Michael Kuzyk.

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# VANCOUVER ISLAND

## GOLDEN HINDE

*Paul Clark, Tyson Gallagher & Glenn Raynor*

July 25 - August 1

Due to an unfortunate rock climbing injury in Squamish, Graham Bennet's ankle was unusually watermelon-sized and swollen to proportions too large to be comfortably stuffed into a plastic boot. Good judgment got the better of him as he decided not to lead the Golden Hinde traverse. And so it was that Tyson, being youthful (naive) and full of enthusiasm was promoted to lead the trip to the Golden Hinde—his first lead! The original intent of the trip was modified from the traverse, to doing the route from the mine to the Hinde and back.

Being a small group, four in total, of pseudo-experienced bushwhackers, Tyson felt comfortable with the responsibility. So what's a leader to do? Hmm. He guessed that he should study the route? Richard Keltie and Kayla Stevenson were kind enough to share a beautiful slide show, map, and thorough description of key land marks with him; thank you to Graham and Claire as well for sharing maps and information. After all of this preparation, his map was crisscrossed and marked with possible routes and definite landmarks—but how many options is too many? With a week of primo summer weather ahead of us, we took up the challenge.

DAY 1 - Victoria to Westmin Mine/Hike to Arnica Lake - 5 hours

It was 6:00 am on a beautiful summer morning when we started out. Campbell River saw us having lunch at Patty Joe's. The jury is still out. On the drive up, Jacqueline recounted her hike to Mt. Harmston with Messrs. Goodman, Lepp, Servin, and Zareski.

We arrived at the mine at 1:00 pm, mentally raring to go but stiff from the drive. (Hey, it's a start!)

Dodging trail runners, we slogged up the switch back trail fighting gravity with packs laden with nine days of food and gear. We arrived exhausted, ready to savour a succulent feast of rehydrated trail gormandises amid a

thanks to Tyson's tree climbing skills learned from a UVic ecologist studying arthropods in West Coast forest canopies. Our vittles were safe.

Suddenly, a great rumble shook the ground and the food rope vibrated like a plucked guitar string. The Arnica Lake Frog Choir silenced. Paul, Jacqueline, and Tyson wondered aloud if it was a Westmin explosion deep in the bowels of the earth? Was the rumble Thunderbird dropping its prey, a whale, at its mountain nest? Maybe even an earthquake? Glenn, snoring in the tent, slept through it.

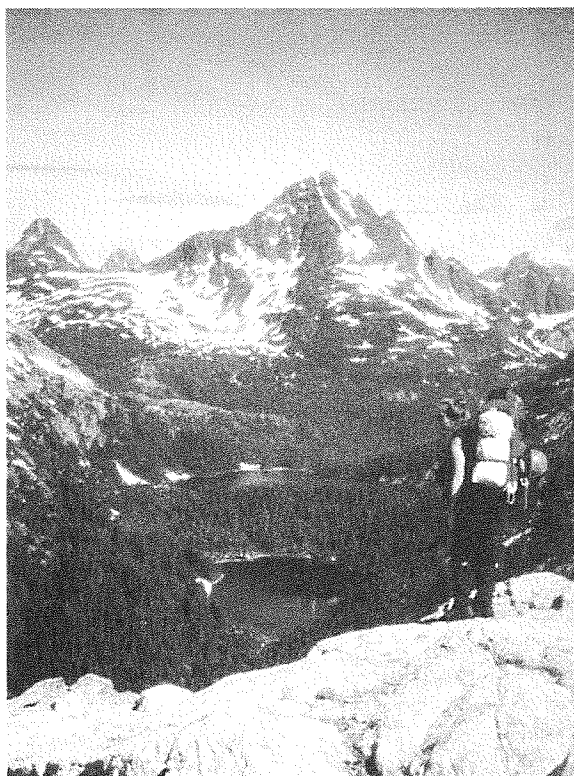
DAY 2 - Arnica Lake to Phillips Ridge just past 1732 - 8 hours

Too many routes to choose from. Intuitively, Tyson chose the hardest one (much to the disgust of everyone). We found ourselves on a mountain (1732) looking across at...our planned destination. Oops! "Well what a beautiful view, hey guys?" Silence greeted Tyson's remark. "Honestly, this is a route on my map" Tyson is still known to exclaim. We negotiated a way down and over to Phillips Ridge and camped. It was at this point that Glenn realized that he had left his camera on top of 1732. Something like #\*^!! was mentioned, then Glenn cheerfully retraced his steps and

found his camera. The sky looked great for tomorrow as the Hinde beckoned.

DAY 3 - Phillips Ridge to Schjelderup Lake - 10 hours

We quickly discovered that Phillips Ridge would be better named Phillips Range, as it involved climbing up and down SIX mountains before dropping down to Schjelderup Lake. We named the last peak Big Black for its black



The Golden Hinde from Phillips Ridge.  
Photograph: Paul Clark.

splendid display of Alpine White Marsh Marigold (*Caltha leptosepala*). "Are we there yet?!" At dusk Paul, Jacqueline, and Tyson heaved heavy bags up the park bear cache, only to have the line snap. Tyson, on the ground, laughing, was helped up by Paul. Has the park's Department never heard of galvanized cable? Using found rope we managed to re-string a new bear cache,



Tyson on Burman Ridge. Photograph: Jacqueline Cameron.

volcanic rock. Big Black displayed the greatest array of flowers to yet be seen: Mountain Buttercup (*Ranunculus eschscholtzii*), Purple Mountain Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*), Alpine Paintbrush (*Castilleja hispida*), Mountain Monkey Flowers (*Mimulus tilingii*), Mountain Arnica (*Arnica latifolia*), and Red Columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*).

Upon cresting out on Big Black we could see a well-defined route down to Schjelderup Lake. It commenced in the col between the next hump of 1,700 m. Getting down to the col was tricky, as wet, slimy rock ended with a bergschrund. It was here that Jacqueline, whilst leaping over a sizable gap avec pack, bumped Tyson and they both went for a 25 m slide into rather unforgiving rock. Fortunately, only minor bruises were sustained. Whew!

The landmark telling exactly where we needed to descend was easily found (thank you Richard). We bushwhacked down a steep, dry creek bed and there it was—the green webbing above the 312 m chute that Tyson forgot to tell us about. Maybe we are exaggerating a bit, but we still had to lower our packs by rope. Yes, we were going the right way and, apparently, the easy way. No one wanted to know what the hard way was like.

We negotiated the 20-30 m chute and eventually came out of the woods to Schjelderup Lake. An iceberg cracked

and creaked as it floated by some goldeneyes. Amid an unusually high concentration of mosquitoes, we made a food cache, as we only needed two days' supplies for the trip to the Hinde and back.

DAY 4 - Schjelderup Lake to Climber's Camp - 7 hours

Up and down Burman Ridge, and then a bum slide on mud through bush to Burman Lake. The slide down to the eastern tip of Burman Lake was ugly, and several gouges and scratches were sustained. Morale was fading, but Paul pulled out the bottomless Jar of Tasty Treats and saved the day. A lunch at Burman Lake, and then up to climber's camp.

We loved climber's camp each for our own reasons: Glenn, because of the great bouldering possibilities; Jacqueline, because of the vistas and photo opps; Tyson, because he could smell the summit of the big nail; and Paul, because his boss could not phone him here. Being youthful and having pure energy oozing from every pore, Tyson did a reconnaissance of the route from climber's camp to the bottom of the SE Gully. He returned after two hours having found a way up and out of a narrow gully, which dead-ended. The Golden Hinde's shadow cast upon Wolf River Valley was a soothing sight.

DAY 5 - Climber's Camp to Sum-

mit-return - 12 hours

A blanket of West Coast foggy cloud and cloudy fog lay below our feet; peaks protruded above the down duvet as a brisk morning chill greeted us. The sky was crystal clear with a blazing sunrise igniting every snowy peak like a jewel. The summit sang a Siren's song: "Climb me, climb me," were the whispered words in the windblown verses.

We arrived at the place that had been referred to as the exclamation mark; but up close it no longer looked like an exclamation mark. Great debate ensued on whether or not we were where we wanted to be. Some looked up the gully and thought it was the S. Face, but it was determined we were definitely at the SE Gully. All were not in agreement on how to approach the summit. Tyson drooled at the idea of ice-axing his way up the snow, Jacqueline thought the rock route up beside the gully looked good, Glen thought he would like a short period of meditation, and Paul had no idea what the hell to do!

Fortunately, Tyson had done his homework and was informed by Claire Chairwoman Ebendinger that the rock route was a feasible alternative route to the summit. The group split up, and we took our own times to go our separate ways. We met up at a great level viewpoint 30 minutes from the summit. One very dramatic feature was a semi-truck sized boulder, the 'mother of all chock-stones', jammed between two rock spires high in the air.

We scrambled to the summit rejoicing in weary, tired bodies. Soup was made, summit photos were taken, and, elated, we sat back to enjoy the view. We were all excited by the fact that all other (well, all other Vancouver Island) peaks lay below.

The morning cloudy fog/foggy cloud threatened to envelop the Hinde and us. It was time to head down. Slowly and carefully, over very loose rock, we made the methodical descent to camp as a cohesive group. Only when we reached camp and were congratulating each other did Jacqueline let out that

today had been her birthday. We had already used up the Dom Perignon ration for the trip, so the celebration would have to wait.

DAY 6 – Climber's Camp to Phillips Ridge - 10.5 hours

Morning mist was late in dissipating, and that suited us fine, because we were in no hurry to leave this gorgeous spot. It was a slow pack-up but we eventually left for Burman Lake. Up on Burman Ridge, turning east before the summit, we tangled with the tree line, somehow losing the route, and had to bushwhack down to Schjelderup Lake. We emerged from the dense greenery almost exactly where we had originally entered two days previously. Here the food cache was undisturbed. No bears on this trip!

We rested in preparation for the gruesome climb up. It didn't take long for us to reach the dreaded chute, and it was not without considerable huffing and puffing, pleases and thank you's, that we gave the freaking chute the hasta la vista.

DAY 7 - Phillips Ridge to Westmin Park Boundary - 9 hours

This was the only day that we saw anyone else. Four adults and eight young adults with Amazonian physiques and steam snorting from their nostrils said "hi" as they traversed through to the Elk River. They too intended to climb the Hinde. We wished them bon chance. It was surprising, with such a window of good weather, to

not have encountered more hikers. Tyson asked anyone one if they wanted to go back up 1732. Piercing glances and threats were directed at him, and his map was quickly snatched and confiscated.

DAY 8 - Westmin Park Boundary to Parking Lot - 5 hours

Glenn and Tyson, with seemingly lighter packs and gravity on their side, descended to the valley bottom in what must have been record speed, eager for a shower and fresh food. At the parking lot they were greeted by three gentlemen who inquired about their travels and offered them ripe, oh-so-sweet, golden-as-the-sun peaches. When they found out we had made it to the summit on our first attempt, they had to shake our hands for good luck, as they had attempted The Golden Hinde nine times without ever making it to the summit.

Glenn and Tyson also met up with Udo of the Mine, a foreman, who came upon them as they were furtively sawing a piece of old two-by-four they had found under some trees. "Oh shit," murmured Tyson, "Don't mention we're from the Alpine Club." They explained they were cutting it for Jacqueline's roof rack. Udo whipped out his tape measure and was back in five minutes with freshly milled boards, cut to precision. What a great guy!

Udo informed us that the 'mine explosion' we had felt on the first night was, in fact, an earthquake. We chat-

ted and found out the mine is 531 m deep (1,700 ft)! As we said thank you and good bye to Udo, he asked us to let people know that if any hikers ever needed medical attention, help, or a phone, all they had to do was go up the road to the main mine office, where there is a medic and ambulance. Good stuff to know! On the way home, the trip was discussed with that glow of satisfaction that all alpinists have after a successful climb. The wheels were already turning towards our next adventure.

Final thoughts from a first-time leader: After our trip, I heard about the many weathered-out summit attempts and other problems experienced this summer by climbing parties at the Hinde. For example, one group did not believe their leader when he told them that the lake below was NOT Burman. The group mutinied on him and went on a gruelling bushwhack to that unnamed body of water only to discover they should have LISTENED to their leader—the lake was not Burman Lake. This group never made it to the summit. I feel extremely fortunate to have had the many opportunities provided by this trip to learn and grow (and to have had the superb weather we did). We went up as strangers and came back as friends. Thank you Jacqueline, Paul, and Glenn

*Participants: Glenn Raynor, Jacqueline Cameron, Paul Clark, and Tyson Gallagher.*

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## MOUNT MAGNIFICENT

### NOTES OF AN INITIATE

*Jennifer Bates*  
September 21

Everything seemed pretty normal as we sat having a pre-hike breakfast. Little did I know I was about to encounter an entirely new species of human being. I should have known something was up when I sensed muffled wrath from Russ after I told him that

I didn't have proper boots and would be wearing my tennis shoes. But being a cocky easterner with some hiking experience I naively thought I was simply going to be among the usual crowd of western mountain trekkies caught up in the high-tech of expen-

sive equipment. But if I failed to get the hint from Russ that my expectations were askew, I should have known from the waiver form. I mean, 2 pages long? And what's this about risk being pleasurable? Apparently "the inherent risks of these activities contribute



to... enjoyment and excitement." I read with some confusion that "participants can be overcome by rockfall at any time, without warning."

Being a trained philosopher, I naturally began arguing that it is not the risk of rocks falling on one's head which gives one pleasure, but rather the avoidance of such an event and the other experiences of being out of doors—the clean air, the exercise, the companionship, the sense of accomplishment and the wonderful tiredness at the end of the day. My argument of course got nowhere. So against my philosophical principles I signed the thing and resumed eating my toast. Russ said the only risk we were going to encounter was the possibility of wasps on the way down off the mountain. (Was this rather minimal risk going to make for a less pleasurable trip, I wondered?)

When we'd gone as far as we could in the cars along the logging road, we piled out and began to prepare for the ascent. Watching them strap on their gaiters and high-tech mountain boots I thought to myself simultaneously, "Oh, come off it!" and, "Boy am I in trouble!" Then, I thought, "Oh well, I have youth on my side". Little did I know I was dealing with the Alpine species of humans.

While I was pondering their difference from me, they however, were pondering my difference from them. It had not gone unnoticed that I was a philosopher, and so the conversation occasionally turned to important issues. As for instance, when Russ asked in all earnestness "What IS a pair of long pants?" Naturally I replied that there were a number of ways to answer that question.

We climbed along the logged section at the base of the hill, and then Russ took us off the trail, and we scrambled vertically into old growth. I thought we would be scrambling like that just for a while until we reached the gully Russ was looking for. And indeed we did reach the gully. Little did I know however that we would then begin several hours of vertical scramble up the gully. Holy moley!

It was as we approached the gully that I realized I was with a different species. I mean, here was this guy over sixty with gorgeous thigh muscles and apparently effortless climbing ability, and here was his wife, mother of a 25 year old, who appeared not to need to breathe as she scrambled beside me, chatting away as if she were in a lawn chair.

At the gully break, I sipped coffee from my thermos. I soon realized that this was not a cool thing among this species. Having some skill at saving face, however, I brazenly voiced my DESIRE to dehydrate myself, and this sign of conscious choice at least got me some points.

We began the rough climb upwards, and I compensated for the lack of grip of tennis shoes by making a lot of use of the vegetation and sometimes a rope line dropped to us by Russ. Having bravely pushed myself beyond my limits before we stopped for lunch, I was despaired to hear Russ tell the group that we had another 900 ft to climb. Where was I going to find the energy? Looking at the healthy glow of Judy and Viggo Holm and the others, I decided that the average life span of this species of humans must be about 120 years.

As I struggled along, Sylvia Moser said, "Oh, this is nothing. You should have seen MY first trip. We were up to our waists in wet snow for hours, and it rained and snowed all day. I thought I was going to die." (—A sign of pleasure, I wondered?) Stacey offered me a similar story about his first trip. In my exhausted delirium I began to imagine that I was actually being put through the initiation rites of this species, that when they found out a new person (a coffee-drinking, tennis-shoe-wearing easterner no less!) was coming along, they changed the route from a nice amble up the side of the mountain to a straight vertical clamber up unknown territory. Mount Magnificent, Ha! After I calmed down, I realized sensibly that this "recky" trip, as Russ called it, was not "Rookie Trip" said with a Scottish accent, nor an adapted form of "wreck trip", but

rather a "reconnaissance trip".

As I ceased paying attention to myself and the fear of never walking again, I began really enjoying the company of the others. My philosophical question now was "What IS an alpine climber?" I was intrigued by the incredible clarity of their imaginations. As we were waiting our turn to use the rope to get up a steep and slippery section, Stacey shared with me in detail what he imagined it would be like to belay off the end of your rope at 2,000 ft. "Interesting", I thought, "maybe it is the long stretches of time at high altitude which leads them to engage in that particular kind of thought process. Or maybe he is attempting to add pleasure to his experience of climbing with the rope by thinking about risks—yes, that must be it."

Of course, we made it to the top, even I did. And as they all shook my hand I had the impression that maybe there was hope for my species yet. And what a view! It was of course, entirely worth it. I was beginning to be infused with that life-altering substance called love of nature, as I sucked in the clean air and smiled into the sunshine. Russ pointed out the various mountain peaks and ranges, and he and Viggo explained to me the logging situation on the island.

After a nice rest on the summit we began making our way back down. The route was tricky—for a while we couldn't find a way down from the cliffs. There was at one point a sign of hope when Russ said that the bear scat he discovered indicated that the bears went this way. ("Great", I thought, "let's go where the bears go! I guess this is a high-pleasure point, when you have a choice between jumping off a cliff or encountering a bear. I haven't quite got the knack of this yet!")

Anyway, we found our way down to the wonderful lake at the bottom. Judy and I stripped down and went for a plunge in the hypothermia-inducing water. It felt great! (—Maybe I WAS beginning to get the swing of things?)

The rest of the way back to the

cars was along a beaten path. Despite the exhilarating swim, I was quickly more tired than I can remember ever having been. Anxious to get back, and admittedly tired of hearing that coffee was bad for you and that it was incredible that I had survived in tennis shoes, I wandered the final section on my own. But back at the cars, my exhaustion and bad mood didn't last in the face of the unflagging good humour of the others, and in face of the wonderful flashbacks I had in the car of the how spectacular the trip and the summit view had been. I thanked Russ heartily for a wonderful trip, though I did express that it had fallen short of the promised degree of pleasure, since the wasp-risk-factor had failed to materialize. I'll just have to savour that expectation until the next trip!

*Participants: Russ Moir, Judy Holm, Viggo Holm, Larry Talarico, Stacey Dewhurst, Sylvia Moser, Norman from Duncan, and Jennifer Bates.*

## REDWALL

*Jules Thomson*

July 97

Selena and I were keen to climb anything so off we went one night to the MacKenzie's. Travelling light we tented at the trailhead, ate cantaloupe for breakfast and headed up the trail early, with 2-3 bottles each of bug repellent, the most essential item for the MacKenzie's in 97.

The trail up is very well marked, quite a vertical grunt initially but you find yourself at the foot of this tight little range in no time. The day was sunny, hot without a breath of wind, not even a hint of a breeze. Quickly we reached the rock, threw on our rock shoes and scrambled on. Feeling quite comfortable with the exposure we didn't rope up until the last vertical bit. Here I reached up and put a friend in to belay Selena on the first pitch.

As I stood there Selena put her left foot up on the wall, when suddenly her right leg whipped past my face to place a toe on a rocky point. Now

she was perfectly stemming over a lovely drop off, with me standing there with my mouth open thinking, holy! Am I supposed to reach that? I quickly tried to guesstimate my 5'7 stretch versus Selena's 5'8-9 stretch—hoping that I was really loose and limber that day.

Next pitch I took over along a ledge and then straight up. Although very exposed at this point—there are not great places to place protection, the rock tends to be rotten. Anyway the view was forever on a clear, blue, blue day with the snow and the sea below. Down we rappelled most of the way although not always easily. Selena free climbed part of the route, just to retrieve our tangled rope. Some fantastic flowers - *dicentra formosa*, and at such heights. We had a fun day climb. Trail access: 5 km past Cats Ears Creek on left, about 75 km west of Port Alberni.

*Participants: Selena and Jules*

## RAMBLER PEAK

*Rob Wilson*

June 28 - 30

BACKGROUND - 1964

The first successful recorded ascent of this unnamed peak at the time was June 19, 1964 by Ron Facer, Steve Todd and Barrie McDowall, all teenagers from Nanaimo. Immediately after the successful ascent, Ron Facer wrote the British Columbia Government to have the peak officially named. In his letter he wrote in part, "we would like to call the peak, "Rambler Peak." The word "Rambler" is derived from the name of my climbing club Island Mountain Ramblers. This Club was founded in 1958 by dedicated climbing men, Mr. Syd Watts being the main founder, and other notable club leaders

at that time were Jack Ware and Geoff Suddaby. Syd Watts has climbed the mountains in Strathcona Park and the rest of the island ever since he was a teenager. He is an experienced leader, who has devoted his life to the outdoors; to helping others, by giving us the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our alpine mountains."

Thus in July, 1964, Rambler Peak located in Strathcona Park at the head of Elk River Valley and near Elk River Pass received it's official name.

1986 -

I was on a Rambler Peak ACC climbing party in 1986, led by Brian Money

and Jim Kirby, which succeeded in putting five of the nine climbers on the summit. Unfortunately the rock climbing route we were forced to take was time consuming because of the continuous belays, and as it was getting late common sense prevailed and the last four climbers turned around. Thus just 300 ft from the summit, I vowed to return some day, as the chosen climbing route and the mountain impressed me.

1996 -

It took until this time to return and I found myself co-leading, along with Nick Vipond, a climbing party. On

the second day of the trip and near Elk River Pass, under deteriorating weather conditions, we decided to attempt a new approach and pick up my original 1986 route higher on the mountain. Climbing to 6,700 ft, and realizing we were too high to connect with the 1986 route, we left the group to rest in a protected area out of the storm.

Nick and I explored the route ahead and soon found ourselves on top of Rambler Junior. This secondary peak is separated from the main summit by very difficult down and up climbing which would have taken too long under normal conditions. With no visibility we returned to the well-rested party, and after informing them of the bad news, we all decided to descend to our camp. The next day we returned to the trailhead.

1997 -

On June 28, once again I found myself at the Elk River trailhead leading a climbing party of six. It was planned that Nick Vipond and his party of two would join us that night at the designated camping area.

The weather forecast for the next two days was very promising. Feeling very confident and in high spirits, we left the trailhead at 10:00 am travelling south for 14 km and gaining 1,060 m, much farther and higher than in 1996, thus passing our last year's campsite. We left a note on the trail for Nick's party and mentioned we would see him some time on the next day. We reached our camping area at 6:00 pm at the 1,330 m. level and 1 km north of Elk River Pass, due west and directly below Rambler Peak. Topo Map 2F/12(953128).

After digging snow platforms for our tents and eating dinner, we all rested under clear skies viewing the west face of Rambler Peak. The lower portion of the 1964 ascent route could be seen directly in front of us. The high col between Rambler Junior and the main summit of Rambler, as well as the summit of Rambler Junior could not be seen from our campsite. But as we learned the next day, we were

peering at the summit of Rambler Peak some 762 metres above our camp. Our ascent route in the morning would not follow the 1964 route, but would follow the same route taken in 1986 which I was familiar with.

The next morning at 6:00 am we left camp and proceeded on snow towards Elk River Pass. Shortly before reaching the Pass, we took the last snowfield to the left, which climbs to the ridge coming from Elk River Pass and is on the SW shoulder of Rambler Junior. On reaching the ridge, harnesses were donned, as the condition of the steep long SE snow gully we would soon encounter was unknown. Contouring the snowfield, the SE steep gully soon came into view. Rope was not required as the snow in the gully was soft and excellent steps could easily be kicked even this early in the morning. The gully is about a 45 degree slope and 125 m long. On reaching the top of the gully, another snowfield is directly in front and the east rock face of Rambler comes into view.

A well-earned rest along with a second breakfast was taken before proceeding. The route contours on the relatively flat snowfield and below the east rock face of Rambler. After passing the east rock face, proceed up the snowfield and very shortly another snow gully on the north-east side comes into view. This gully leads towards the summit.

In 1986, this was the gully we were forced out of and onto the east rock face because of an impassable bergschrund in the gully. I'm happy to say this year the snow was continuous to the top of the gully, and the unroped snow climbing in the gully was good, except for a short steep snow section where the bergschrund develops, ice axes had to be buried to the hilt in the snow.

From the top of the gully, we all scrambled on loose rock, and reached the summit within 15 minutes. The time was 10:00 am appearing down the west face, we could see our campsite at the top of the Elk River Valley. This was the first time I was aware that

the summit could be seen from our campsite location in the valley. This was one summit and one mountain I would not forget, and I could now look ahead to other island mountains that I have yet to climb. So many mountains, so little time!

Four of the climbing party elected to return to camp and hike out to the trailhead that day, while Ken and I elected to spend a leisurely night in the Elk River Valley before returning to the trailhead the next day. Thanks to all the participants who shared in this experience with me.

*Participants: Rob Eldred, Marc Elrick, John Millar, Ken Rodonets, Dean Williams, and Rob Wilson (leader).*

## MT. SEPTIMUS

*Charles Turner*

For all you fine weather climbers, don't be put off by a lousy weather report, pouring rain and dark clouds. You can still have a good time out there. Our spirits were soon to be dampened however, by the absence of a bridge over the first river on the Bedwell Trail, washed away by the spring rains. After much searching we found a fairly shallow (over our knees) spot to cross, just down from the bridge crossing.

Muddy trails, crooked ladders, warped boardwalks, rain and snow led us to the overhanging rock at Cream Lake. Expecting a dry sanctuary we were very disappointed to find that the rock leaks. Park budget cuts didn't leave any money for a new roof on the rock (just kidding).

We were not too optimistic about the next morning. Quite expecting to wake up to rain, I rolled out of bed at 5:30 am to find a fairly promising day. Though it was raining lightly I could see all the way up our gully route. That is the narrow gully on the left of the main snowfield known as Gully X. We were away by 6:30 am and sitting in sunshine on the sum-



mit by 9:30 am. A mighty fine climb  
ll on snow except for a small rock  
pitch about 30 ft over the headwall  
below the summit. This is the only  
place we used the rope. The gully  
went really well, but the 'schrund about  
2/3 the way up was starting to melt  
out. Much later in the year would make  
the climb more difficult. But it's a great  
route. Crampons made the gully much  
easier as it does become fairly steep  
in places. We all felt very privileged  
to be bathed in sunshine on the summit,  
when every other peak around was  
obliterated by cloud. It was like the  
mountain opened its doors to us that  
day.

I can now turn my Island Qualifi-  
ers plaque the right way round again.  
The Septimus I climbed originally turned  
out to be Rousseau (thanks Rick).

*Participants: Rob Wilson, Todd Patton,  
Tak Ogasawara, Brian Ross, Charles  
Turner, Erika Kellerbals-Decker*

## CAT'S EARS

*Doug Goodman*  
July

On other trips I'd seen the ears  
from the creek below, and from  
the ridge to the east. Perky and invit-  
ing, standing out slightly below and  
to the north of the main Cat's Ears  
summit. Adding to their appeal is the  
reputation of their defences, known  
as the Mother-of-All-Island-Bushwhacks.  
Most members I'm sure enjoy the challenge  
and intimacy of thick bush, yet Rick  
said that this was the one peak that  
he vowed he'd never return to. I wasn't  
getting many takers.

From the highway, an easy 45 minute  
walk up the old Cat's Ears Creek log-  
ging road takes one to within 1200  
vertical metres of the peak, and maybe  
three times as many horizontal ones.  
I was carrying a rope, harness, a small  
rack, some warm clothes and a va-  
pour barrier liner, in case I was caught  
out by darkness. I left Victoria at the  
relaxed hour of 8 am, cruised through



Rapping off Septimus in fine Island weather. Photograph: Charles Turner.

light traffic, and was on foot just be-  
fore noon. Where the road used to  
cross the creek (the bridge is gone),  
I followed the creek-side a while, crossing  
once on stones, and once on stones  
and a fallen alder.

Then I took the plunge, into the  
bush, aiming for a slight ridge line  
just west of the gully that drains the  
basin/snowfield to the west of the  
ears. For a half-hour or more I was  
on "flat" terrain, scrambling over logs,  
ducking under salmon berries and devils  
club. Then a thick wriggle upwards,  
nuzzling slimy logs, thick berry bushes,  
young hemlocks and Douglas-firs.

The lower slope of the valley has  
been logged maybe 20 years ago, and  
this is where the thickest bush is to  
be had. A little higher and I was freed  
for a short time, enjoying lunch in a  
sunbeam that invaded the damp mossy  
understory of slightly larger trees. I  
stayed to the right of the gully, the  
slope pointing straight back across  
the valley, and kept the creek within  
periodic earshot. A small bluff was  
taken straight on, using a few ledges  
and a slippery deadfall. A band of  
old growth and sparse huckleberry  
gave a respite, climbing steadily, but  
not steeply.

Too soon it gave way to avalanche terrain, very thick berry bushes. Here I moved left, hoping to find easier going on snow in the gully. Sure enough, there was still snow in the gully, ... at the bottom of a 30 m near vertical bluff. Above were a series of side gullies, equally steep sided. Half an hour or more later, I'd skirted these and dropped finally down onto snow in the main gully.

How slow I seemed to move up on the blinding white, still surprisingly soft snow. Soon a 30 m waterfall blocked the way. I exited left up snow and onto mossy slabs, into a little alcove under overhanging rock. Unable to continue up through the scrubby trees, I traversed out onto the steep slabs and ledges beside the waterfall. Although wet with meltwater, the rock was rough, and a round-edged crack led to gentler terrain above. This bit was probably the riskiest climbing of the day. On other Island trips also the most dangerous part has been slimy bluffs in the bush.

At last, about 4 pm I reached the bottom of the big snow bowl west of the ears. I've no doubt that the route I'd come was not the easiest or the fastest, but it was reasonably direct, and plenty interesting.

Now, with the ears in view above and to my left, I was keen to keep on moving, climb all three peaks and return before dark. I was tempted by the slopes of loose rock to the left, leading directly up to the ears from the north, but continued up the bowl towards the ridge line just to right of the main summit. The bush had taken its toll, and I moved slowly up the snow, resting often. The rock summits were tantalizingly close.

At last, about 6 pm, I'd passed below the ears, and was looking up a steep grotty gully leading up to a low point between the ears and the main peak. It went OK on mud and loose sidewall hand holds, then I exited right on narrow ledges, zig-zagging, stepping cautiously and finally pulling myself over a krumholz hemlock on to the ridge several meters up from the low point.

This is where I had longed to be, among the peaks, in the warm sunshine. A single pitch on a prussic belay led me up the main summit to ears ridge to just shy of the main summit. On good rock, krumholz, and heather slopes, it was not difficult, using a few fifth-class moves on solid, warm, dry, rough-surfaced rock, and a couple of horns for protection.

On top, I found a film canister left several years before (Johnson, Manke, and Briggs 199?). But my pencil was still in my pack at the bottom of the rope, and to leave my mark, I climbed down, and up and down again.

To the ears! From the notch the ears are easily reached via the East Side of the ridge, through bush and rock. I dragged the rope behind me. Resting in the sun at the base of the south ear, I hung my socks on the rocks to dry, and slipped into rock shoes. I climbed both ears from the notch between them, the south one via its north edge, and the north one via its West Side and north edge. The rock was firm, sharp edged, not very steep, and with good cracks for protection. I did not linger to savour the ambience.

The light was becoming golden as the sun crept towards the Maitland Range. It was now close to 9 pm, and I had a ways to go. I reasoned that going down would be much faster, and that if I didn't make the road in the valley bottom then I could always find a bed of moss in the forest. I cleaned an old white rap sling from a rock at the top of the gully (no initials). A few feet lower, I put my rope about a big snag. The rappel took me to the muddy bottom of the gully where I'd started climbing 3 hours earlier.

I was relieved to take off the girdle, and flew down the snow. The left side of the gully looked easier, and was. By following snow patches I descended in a half-hour what had taken 3 hours to get up. I entered the old growth at about 10 o'clock, the light fading fast. Now I was west of my route up, with a creek to my left, and I made good time among

the big trees. Younger growth deflected me left, down into the creek. I did not feel like pushing through the thick bush in the fading light. Mostly, the creek went, rarely more than waist deep, and with only a few awkward waterfalls.

Fatigue and darkness and an invisible creek bottom turned my walk into a prolonged stumble. Several times waterfalls forced me up into the bush, and the slope brought me back to the creek. An old overgrown road led me west for a while, but I knew the main road was somewhere down on my right, but how far?

Wishing to lose elevation faster, I left the old road and soon found the creek again. A glance at the map confirmed my orientation. The creek did not run straight down to Cat's Ears Creek, but ran west, almost parallel to it for a half kilometre.

Now it was definitely dark. Even with a headlamp, I fell, staggered, and rolled through the bush as if I'd had belly full of beer. Roughly I headed in the direction of Cat's Ears Creek and the logging road that parallels it. There was no strategy, no cleverness, no assessing the terrain ahead, just blind stubborn, patient progress in a generally forwards direction. The old road was a joyous thing of the greatest humanity. I collapsed, gazed up at the beautiful starry sky, and fumbled in my pack for the remainder of my day's rations. By midnight I was in the driver's seat, rocking and rolling home to bed.

#### TECHNICAL SPECS:

Approach and retreat time, compared to climbing time = 5:1

Hiking and climbing time compared to driving time = 2:1

Bush difficulty = ecstatic

Rock climbing difficulty = a few moves of mid-fifth

# A DOG'S LIFE

Mojo

August 2 – 4

My pet human Chris had registered for this trip with the Alpine Club in Strathcona Park. I was all for it as it beat laying around the yard in Victoria for another weekend. Chris had been out boozing at Spinnaker's the previous evening and when we arrived late at the meeting place some of the more Type A humans seemed a bit tense. I enjoyed a game of Frisbee for half an hour while Chris crammed all the dense heavy stuff into my pack and the light bulky gear into his. Then I got to slobber all over the upholstery in Mrs. Dolan's van on the short trip up to Mt. Washington.

There was another wait while the humans lined up at the outhouse and then we set off over the well-trodden trails of the

Forbidden Plateau. We soon met a party from another mountaineering club who were attempting the same trip but after getting an adverse weather report on a cellular telephone (I was disgusted by this invasion of the wilderness by modern technology) had decided to turn back. Near Hairtrigger Lake we were accosted by a charming junior ranger, who perhaps being overawed by my admittedly imposing physical presence exclaimed, "Have you got a dog for that leash?"

After that I had to pretend I was on the leash until we started up the headwall above Circlet Lake. There was a short 2.7 move just below the

crest of Mt. Albert Edward's north-east ridge, which I flashed, on sight. We then continued up the long serpentine ridge through clouds and light drizzle and made camp at about the 6000 ft level on the saddle between Mt. Frink and Mt. Albert Edward.

As the group prepared dinner one of the clumsy humans stepped on my paw and I yelped in pain. I immediately thought "lawsuit" as the silly trip

and the clouds and we then left the trail behind and headed down the mountain's gently sloped south east ridge under brightening skies. The people chattered excitedly about the flowers and the views of mountains and waterfalls but I stuck doggedly to my route-finding duties.

Near the base of the ridge there was a short 2.11b traverse. Some of the humans were too slow so I rushed

across almost knocking them into the abyss below. At the low point we regrouped at a small pond set in a pretty green meadow and then we hiked up to the base of a small waterfall and stopped for lunch.

I would like to apologize for the fuss I made on the short bushy section above the waterfall but you



The author cooling off. Photograph: Doug Hurrell.

coordinator had neglected to get my paw print on the waiver but fortunately for the A.C.C. my injuries were minimal. After cleaning up on several of the camper's dinners I crawled into my snug tent. As Chris had been quite nice to me I let him curl up in the corner and we ignored the coarse jokes coming from the vulgar humans in the next tent and settled into a deep sleep.

In the morning the weather looked promising as we broke camp and hiked up to Mt. Albert Edward's often visited summit (named after Queen Victoria's favourite English Setter). The humans took a bunch of photos of the rocks

would probably lose your composure too if you were two feet tall and tried to climb up a 45 degree brush covered slope carrying a 50 pound pack which was wider than you were. We soon left the shrubbery behind and entered some lovely alpine meadows. After surmounting another small waterfall we reached Ruth Masters Lake where I and most of the humans stopped for a rest and a swim. Several people were weak swimmers and I had to rescue them. Just as they would go under for the last time I would let them grab onto my tail and I then towed them back to the beach.

Mr. Dolan was getting tired so in

exchange for a two pound salami (which I "woofed down" in 11 seconds flat - Chris was so proud) I agreed to carry some of his equipment to the next campsite. We climbed out of the cirque and regrouped at the col above. From here I turned right and led most of the humans on a side trip to the summit of Auger-point Mountain. Those who felt wearier turned left, traversed a small summit and continued down to the campsite that was situated in alpine meadows at about 5000 ft on the ridge above Buttle Lake.

Our campsite was a truly beautiful spot, with views of Buttle Lake below, the Golden Hinde to the west, and Mts. Mitchell, Albert Edward and Alexandra to the east. Waterfalls dropped off from the snowfields below our route to free fall onto the rocks many hundreds of feet below. Several small tarns provided for water and bathing. I was dog-tired from the stress of my route-finding and leadership duties but I managed a few halfhearted Frisbee chases before dinner and bed.

I was a bit annoyed at Chris after carrying all his stuff through the brush but I let him sleep in my tent again

after he begged for a short time. I'm not one to hold a grudge and he is basically a good, although flawed human being. He wisely didn't have the nerve to complain about the salami farts.

The morning dawned clear and the group got up early. The route along the ridge was gentle but truly spectacular with continual views of Buttle Lake below my paws. After a couple of hours we dropped into the forest and onto the steep Jack's Augerpoint Trail (named after the famous police dog of the Northwest Mounted Police). Wasps attacked some of the group but those moving at one with the wilderness (and those wearing thick black fur coats) escaped injury. We soon reached the cars on the shores of Buttle Lake.

SOME NOTES ABOUT THE ROUTE: due to the almost total lack of bushwhacking, the generally gentle terrain, and the beautiful alpine scenery and vegetation this is one of the most enjoyable trips in Strathcona. The route finding is quite straightforward and I recommend it to moderately experienced dogs with sturdy paws and calm dispositions leading groups of humans

who are reasonably strong hikers.

SOME REMARKS DIRECTED TOWARDS THE MEMBERS OF THE A.C.C.:

(a) Most of you folks are quite nice but some are a bit stingy with their food. When you are on one of my trips always bring a few treats for me. Try eating dried dog food for a few days and you will appreciate my point of view. Also bring a few goodies for Chris who prefers to eat food that is packed and prepared by others.

(b) Just because I can't converse in spoken English doesn't mean that I don't have values and feelings. Comments such as "Nice Doggie!" and "Come to Daddy!" are insulting to a beast of my intelligence, dignity and nobility and only tend to demean the speaker and the human race in general.

(c) Most of you guys are pretty slow. I recommend that Mrs. Holm try to recruit more young dogs into the club in order to raise the standards of the Vancouver Island Section.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Ian Brown, Chris Odgers, Mojo, Paolo Tancon, Erin Dinney, Brian Dolan, Carolyn Lindsay, Dave Remple, Doug Hurrell (coordinator)*

## HISSIN' AT THE ADDER

*Lindsay Elms*

April 27

Sssunday morning and up with venom Sin my leg. It was time to get out on my own again, smell the snow and feel the chill of the wind in my face. It was a good lookin' day when I left home at 6 am but by the time I got to Port Alberni an hour later I wasn't so sure. Still I kept on drivin'. As I got to the rest area at the Taylor River I was on the verge of turnin' around and goin' 'ome. It was hossssin' down! "Ah wha' the hell, I might as well keep goin'," I said to the steerin' wheel "It might clear-up by the time I get to put my pack on!" The steerin' wheel didn't say a word, it just kept on taking the necessary corners

to keep me on the road and headin' onward. Sutton Pass came and went and at the Marion Creek Main No. 2 I turned left onto the loggin' road and then took the second road on the left about 1 km in from the highway.

The road switch-backed for a bit and then petered out, it had been put to sleep. The rain had stopped by now but there was still a lot of low cloud about, none of the summits were clear and it looked like it might rain again. "Just go for it!" I mumbled "A bit of moisture won't kill ya." So with a small pack I hiked up the sleeping road a bit and then climbed through the clear-cut to the forest. There was a tongue

of snow just up and off to my left not too far away so I aimed for this. It was pretty obvious by the broken trees and debris laying around that this gully had seen a lot of avalanche activity fairly recently. I didn't have any concerns about it now so I started up. This gully just went on and on and on and eventually brought me out onto the summit ridge an hour and a half later. I had worked up quite a lather in the sheltered gully but on the summit ridge there was a stiff breeze coolin' me down. On with the jacket, a quick drink and then on up into the mist and clouds. Visibility was about 50 m, to my left were cornices and



up ahead somewhere was the summit. I was beginin' to understand what it felt like for a snake to travel in a sideways motion, as the cuttin' wind was causin' me to turn away and climb the mountain side-on.

The ridge started to level out and I soon saw a man-made frame and

box but no cairn so I assumed the summit must be a bit further. Down into a small col and then back up the other side and into the clouds only this time at the top I found a cairn. I pulled out my thermos for a hot coffee and spent twenty minutes on top hopin' to see somethin'. In one brief

clearing I got to see a frozen lake below me, from this I was able to confirm that this was the real summit of Adder Mountain. No need to stay up here any longer so I slinked my way back along the ridge to the gully and made a quick descent down the Adder's Tongue to the car getting back just as it started to rain.

## MT. GIBSON

*Sandy Briggs*

March 15 - 16



Mt. Gibson "ski trip" stream crossing. Photograph: Sandy Briggs.

I had wanted to climb this peak for some time because of its name, so that when I heard from Thom Ward that a hiking trail was being constructed up its NW ridge to Brigade Lake I thought to kill two birds with the proverbial single lapidary projectile and go check it out.

I had hoped that someone else would write this one, but nobody took the bait, so you have to put up with this. For example, it would have been interesting to hear the thoughts of one of our newer members, one whose experience of ski trips is, umm, different from what we did.

Something less than a kilometre past the new Taylor river bridge on highway 4 there is a small side road leading to a large open yard and gravel pit on the left. Alas we could not pull in there because of huge snow banks. In fact there was vastly more snow around than I had expected. We had to park on the north side of the river on the piece of old highway that now serves as a rest stop. The weather forecast for the day was, as I recollect, 100% wrong, with the result that it was snowing as we started at about 11:30 am.

The map clearly shows that the lower road by the pit leads gently and eas-

ily to the higher road, which then traverses back eastward beneath the ridge of our desires. In our enthusiasm — I'll attribute it to enthusiasm — we tackled instead a likely looking stream gully that led up through the trees.

Now there are those, and some of them in our number, who labour under the misbegotten notion that skiing is about going downhill, about a smooth concatenation of directional changes, about fluffy powdery snow, and (shudder) about having fun. Our first upward steps, though not actually calculated to do so, had the effect of somewhat, umm, modifying

these frivolous, incorrect, and unproductive attitudes.

Some members of the party were observed to actually remove their skis for part of this entertaining declivity, (or reverse declivity, as this seems to be a word with vector properties). Having with some trouble gained a hundred feet or so, we were once again safely back on a road. The new trail begins here (at GR323619).

One benefit of our perhaps inauspicious start was that no one was moved to balk at any of the further challenges that faced our attempted conversion of a summer hiking trail under construction into a practical ski trail. Even the then incomplete wooden staircases became hardly a problem at all.

The NW ridge of Mt. Gibson is very friendly looking, on the map. Continuous gentle contours lead in straightforward fashion to the desired peak. The reality is otherwise. Quite a few awkward bluffs and gullies have been fitted in just between the contour lines, so that the skiing remains, umm, interesting throughout. At about 5:15 pm we stopped on a small bench at 725 m and set up camp among some nice large trees, trees which, however, had menacing new clumps of snow loaded, as it were, on their branches.

I think it was at camp that evening when someone very politely asked if this trip really was a B (moderately

strenuous). I suffered a moment of self-reprimand, then gave my agreement. The trip had become a C.

Luckily we had a group of the very fit that broke trail through the new snow as we set off in the morning sometime before 8:30. The rest of us steamed along in their wake, grateful for the track. The sky was a gray overcast which hid the top of Mt. Klitsa (we later noted) but which left Mt. Gibson clear. There were a couple of brief snow squalls. Without really wanting to, we skied over the top of the unnecessary 960 m bump. (The real mistake, if there was one, was not going back over it on the descent to camp.) Mt. Gibson still looked far away.

However, our snowplough crew did good and enthusiastic work, so that we all made the summit around 11:00. Conditions were a little breezy, but not so unpleasant that we couldn't stop for a quick snack and a photo or two. Doug lingered in the comfort of a shallow snow-pit to soak up the scenery a little longer.

The alpine part of the descent was a little tricky, not least because of the flat light, the poor and variable snow and accumulating fatigue. However, between 1200 m and 920 m (mostly forest) the skiing was, according to the criteria of the misguided folk I mentioned earlier, not too bad, for

Vancouver Island.

The rest of the descent to camp, a traverse around the NE of the unnecessary bump, returned things to their standard state, which is to say that it became unlike the usual set of images conjured up upon mention of the words 'ski trip'. It is possible that a couple of turns were inadvertently linked, but I plead not guilty. I have this picture in my mind of one member up to his chest in snow and trying to climb onto an unconsolidated bank that just kept collapsing. It's a good thing everyone has such a good sense of humour, or I would no doubt have been found in a dumpster ages ago.

Ski conditions were sufficiently suboptimal that several folk elected to walk down from camp. The rest of us gave up skiing at different spots according to taste. Doug gave up at the cars, having, I am sure, executed several nonstandard ski techniques involving wooden steps, bush rappels, and pavement. He alone skied car to car.

So, would you like to hear about my latest idea for a ski trip?

*Participants: Sandy Briggs (Trip leader), Keith Battersby, Graham Bennett, Don Berryman, Barb Brooks, Lindsay Elms, Doug Goodman, Mike Hubbard, Carolyn Lindsay, Linda McKay.*

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## AMAZING GRACE (OR THE CASE OF THE LOST HAT)

*Doug Hurrell*

This is a true story. Some of the names have been changed to protect some of the innocent.

My friend Paolo and I tried to climb Mt. Mariner during the fine weather in the second week of September. We left our car at the Thelwood Creek parking lot and hiked up to and past Bedwell Lake and down into the Bedwell River valley. (The river flows into Bedwell Sound north of Tofino). The trail is

fairly good after leaving the lake but after crossing a big slide area becomes very rough and difficult to follow. The trail then descends to reach the old logged off area and becomes very flat from this point until it reaches tide-water. In places it is suitable for cycling but is generally quite brushy. At times it crosses wash outs or has been undercut by the river, which slows one down considerably.

The Bedwell River is very beautiful. Clear water flows over rounded white boulders from pool to pool. I hope to return there some day to do some fly-fishing. Somewhere along side the river Paul lost his cherished hiking hat. It is the broad brimmed felt type as favoured by such stalwarts of the mountains as Gene Autry and Tonto. I felt a bit guilty as I had tied it on top of his pack for him. We were



hopeful of recovering it on the return trip.

We walked until dusk and camped on a sand bar beside the river. We had hoped to reach Noble Creek below Mt. Mariner but were well short of our goal. The next morning we were up early and were lucky to share the dawn with a large bull Roosevelt elk that was observing us from the far shore of the river. After hiking for an hour and a half we reached Noble Creek and quickly found the route through the bush (surprisingly good) to the big slide area below the mountain. We climbed high on Mariner but had to turn back below the summit as we were running out of daylight. We returned to our tent just before dark.

It was another warm, clear night and blue skies greeted us when we awoke the next morning. Two hours after leaving camp we were surprised to see a fisherman who was kneeling on the gravel bar beside the river and were delighted to see that he was wearing Paul's lost hat. Paul shouted a cheery greeting and the fellow came staggering across the bar and collapsed against the bank below the trail.

We each grabbed one arm and dragged him up to the level of the trail. We were even more surprised when he gave us each a very emotional hug. It turned out that the "fisherman" was a lost hiker (I'll call him Harvey Hiker) who had spent two lonely nights in the forest wearing only a fleece shirt, nylon pants, jogging shoes and Paolo's

hat. When we found him he had given up trying to find his campsite and was kneeling beside the river and praying that a helicopter would spot him.

Harvey had eaten dinner at the Bedwell Lake campsite and then went for a short walk up the Cream Lake trail, telling some other campers of his plans. Instead of heading for Cream Lake however, he mistakenly took the trail that leads down the Bedwell River valley and somehow lost the trail just below Bedwell Lake. He spent the night in the forest and rediscovered the trail early the next morning. Instead of turning left to go back to Bedwell Lake he went to the right and headed downstream towards the Pacific Ocean. He spent another night in the bush near the spot where we found him.

We fired up the stove and spent about 45 minutes stuffing Harvey with Wasa bread (slathered with strawberry flavoured Philadelphia Cream Cheese) and Knorr soup (Cream of Asparagus). Since Harvey was unburdened I hoped he would propose to carry one of our packs (preferably mine) but no such offer was forthcoming so we shouldered them ourselves and headed up the trail. He soon regained his composure and proved to be a fine companion with a good sense of humour who had no difficulty keeping up with us.

As well as being relieved he was very embarrassed about his predicament. After about two hours of walking

we heard the rescue helicopter buzzing around, burning up my hard earned tax dollars, but we didn't see it until we reached Bedwell Lake as it was searching the terrain up toward Cream Lake. After another three hours of hiking we came to the campsite.

I was the first to meet a park ranger who didn't believe that we had found Harvey until he had questioned him personally. This took some time as Harvey had gone astray trying unsuccessfully to find his food sack which he had left hanging on the bear line two days ago. There were 6 park rangers, 3 volunteer search and rescue, a policeman and his dog and the helicopter involved in the search. Shortly after we arrived, 3 more search and rescue people arrived with their gear. Harvey had planned to stay the night and to do some more hiking on the next day but the rangers graciously but firmly encouraged him to leave with them in the helicopter. Paul and I stayed overnight at Bedwell (where it rained hard most of the night) and walked out to the car the next morning.

What is the moral of this story? Should you carry a map and compass when hiking or perhaps some rain gear or food? Should you stay with an experienced companion or maybe pack a locator beacon? My advice is as follows - if you get lost get down on your knees and start praying. Paolo and I will find you right away!

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## CONUMA PEAK

*Sandy Briggs*

So Valerio phones me on Friday at dinnertime and asks whether I might be interested in a trip to the MacKenzie range this weekend. I say maybe, but that I can't think while talking (some of my students may be able to comment on this), so could he phone later when he gets back from Fleming Beach. When we talk later I convince him to go to Conuma Pk. instead.

Thinking we might be in for some significant road walking, we left Victoria at the unheard-of hour of 10:00 am and arrived in Gold river around 4:00 pm, stopping there at the tourist information hut to try for one of the logging company road maps that the hut displays but never seems to have copies of (they didn't). We mentioned to the fellow at the desk that we wanted

to climb Conuma Pk. He said "Isn't that the one with the huge stone arch big enough to fly a helicopter through?" I don't think my jaw dropped, but I'm pretty sure my eyes brightened! All I could say was "Well maybe, but I've never heard of it."

Access to Conuma Pk. is well described in John Gibson's article in the fall '89 Bushwhacker (17.4). The sign

at the beginning of road H-60 says "Road Deactivated". It really means "Road Reactivated". We were able to drive 5.3 km up the road, to about 2,300 ft. in Valerio's car. The road continues around to the right into the little basin at the head of the valley, currently being logged.

We parked on a rise in a strip of forest yet uncut and began our hike at 5:30 pm in welcome shade. At about 3,400 ft we came upon a few residual snow patches. A little before that there were a few old remnants of red flagging tape. About 1 3/4 h took us to the terrace of tams, a very fine spot for a planned bivvy. Fine, that is, except for the insects.

We stretched out in our sleeping bags under a perfect sky and surrounded by great scenery. The thin crescent moon set behind Conuma Pk., and later just set its way right out from behind it again, only to then dive behind the planet for the rest of the night. The occasional meteorite, the 'leading edge' of the annual meteor shower, kept us duly entertained.

As sleep beckoned we were caught in a struggle with noisy mosquitoes probing persistently even through the never-quite-correctly-positioned headnets. The result was, alas, a night of almost no sleep whatsoever.

In the morning we scrambled, tenuously in one spot, to the summit in about an hour, reaching it at 8:30 am. Well, if Conuma Pk dominates the view from Nootka Sound, then Nootka Sound

also dominates the view from Conuma Pk, but the Alava-Bate group is a close second. What a fine blade of a summit this is! Not really much room up here for any stone arches, eh? We hung out on top for over an hour and a half. (Sunday August 10)

A lot has happened since John and Syd were here in '89. First, we found old bits of red flagging tape on the upper East Ridge. On a shoulder at 4,550 ft there is a cairn and mining claim tags dated June 22, 1992. The claim is called Conuma 1 and was



Conuma Peak, showing the stone arch (shadowed area, below and right of the notch).  
Photograph: Sandy Briggs.

placed by D.G. Gill for Noranda Exploration Company Ltd.

On the summit were the remains of some kind of nailed-together wooden frame structure, in its day perhaps a metre or so in height. There were two message tubes. The larger contains a memorial to a woman named Chantal Darvault who died in 1996. The smaller tube contains weatherproof paper and the following record:

17 Aug. '91 Chris Cordts - Vancouver (on third attempt)

20 July '94 Dave Fairhurst, Marnie Baxter

01 Aug. '94 Jim Curtin, Libi Stewart

16 Aug. '95 Jeff Koch, Glen Untereiner  
27 July '97 Mike Richardson, Jeff Koch (Gold River) and Dave Halawell, Bruce Luxmore (Tahsis).

Hey, that's two weeks ago! Gosh, it's getting busy up here. (The memorial seems to have been left Oct. 6, 1996).

Just before going down I decided to scramble along and look down in the general direction of John's and Syd's ascent route. My jaw did drop! My eyes really brightened! There really is a huge stone arch! Holy bagels and donuts

Batman! Is the fellow at the Tourist info place right? Did somebody actually fly a helicopter through this arch? Hmmm, tight fit! Both my first impression and my second are that I would not wish to be on such a flight. Does anybody know anything about this (unofficially and off the record, of course)? I

mean anybody besides the ptarmigan that lives just above the arched gully.

We scrambled down our ascent route, making the 20 ft rappel (see John's article) and rejoined the food and water about 11:15. From there to the car took about 80 min, and we even got home to Victoria at a decent hour. What a fun scramble and an interesting trip! It put all kinds of ideas into my head. I'm a little worried about what may have been displaced to make room for them.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs and Valerio Faraoni.*

# KARMUTZEN MOUNTAIN

Sandy Briggs

July 25 - 28

The word Karmutzen, as I understand it, refers to a geological formation, which characterizes much of Vancouver Island. It consists of lava that oozed out about 250 million years ago and cooled into basaltic formations, of which Mt. Arrowsmith is perhaps the best-known example. Your recent recreational road maps and Beautiful B.C. Travel Guide show a green blob (3950 ha) west of the south end of Nimpkish Lake. Not too surprisingly, it is called Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park and is listed as being accessible by boat and having no facilities. They stopped short of saying 'here be there dragons'. Having glimpsed logging activity here while I was on an April kayak trip, I was reasonably confident that we could get in close by road (see map).

I picked up Lindsay Elms and Curtis Lyon en route and we drove to the Anutz Lake campsite late on the Friday night. Saturday we spent a bit of time exploring logging roads to see how close we could get to the Mountain. The accompanying map is an attempt to show the way to our eventual parking spot in the mid-Tlakwa creek valley about 14 km from the Island Highway. (The turn-off is the same as for Zeballos, three rail overpasses beyond Woss.)

Once we got established in the forest it was good travelling in maturing second growth, the area having been logged long ago in a gentler era of springboards and lower-tech extraction methods. Later on the creek bed was dry and also provided good travel. At some arbitrary point we headed uphill, eventually reaching the SE ridge of the range just before (alas) the last major bump. A thirsty scramble among large boulders and large cracks got us over the top of this and down to a very welcome pond on a little terrace. We camped a little lower, in the forested saddle at 860 m, after about six hours of travel.

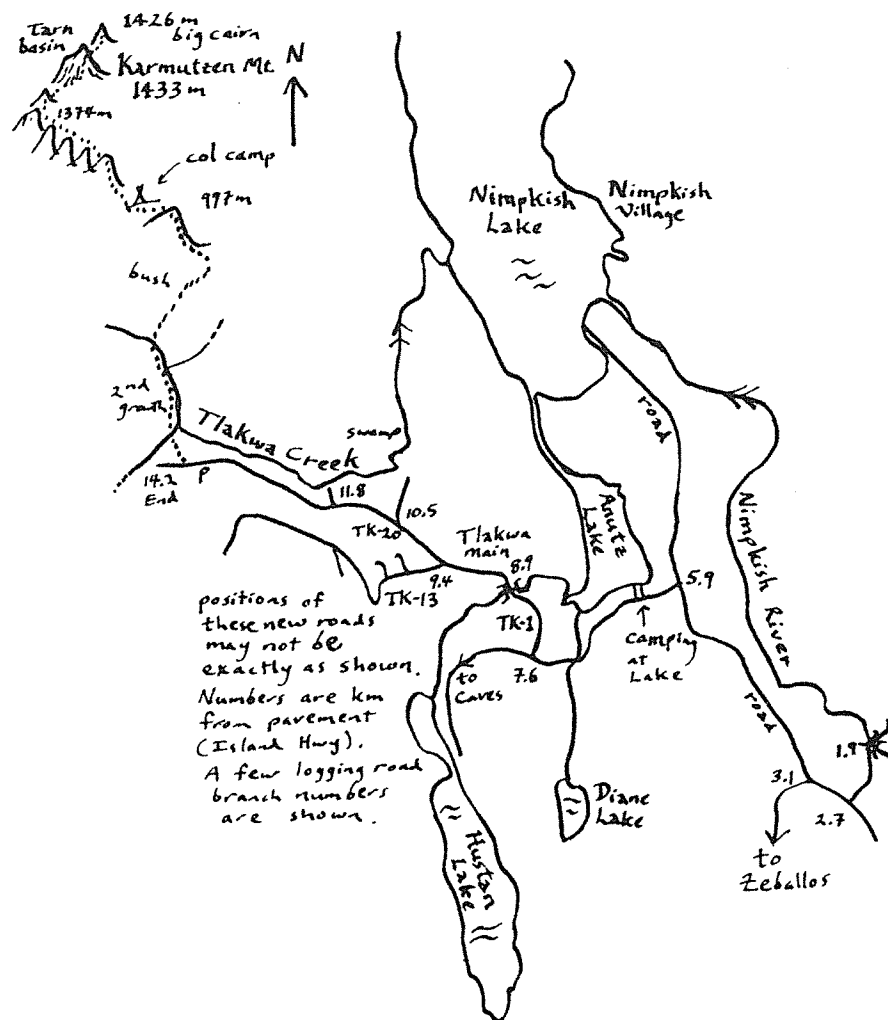
Our water supply was a small seasonal rivulet about a ten-minute walk to the north.

Sunday morning we gained tree-line uneventfully, and ultimately scrambled up, over, and down all the meaningful bumps around the horseshoe to Karmutzen Mountain's highest point (1,433 m), which we reached after a little less than four hours, me gasping and sweating in the wake of my more fit companions. Back in April I had glimpsed this area on some old topo maps and somehow imagined it might be a 'MacKenzie Range north'. Well it's not that, but it is a beautiful place and commands a tremendous view of all the north-Island peaks in-

cluding Merry Widow, Ashwood-Bonanza, Pinder, Tlakwa, and several others of interest that are completely unknown to me. And that is failing to mention the great bird's-eye view of Nimpkish Lake and its neighbouring lesser lakes, including our campsite of Friday night.

Lindsay knew of only one previous ascent of this peak, by George Lepore (1959 first ascent of Rugged Mt.) and friends in 1956 (see Island Bushwhacker Update 23:3, Sept. 1995). This summit had no cairn and we did not build one. The next summit to the north (1,426 m) had a large cairn and we scrambled over to take a look. We found no note.

As we were enjoying the view, admiring



the basin of tarns to the west, taking photos, and generally fighting off four species of insects, we were also, I think, patting ourselves on the back for having managed such a successful trip into this little-known and rarely visited area. Imagine, then, our surprise when two people appeared on a northern summit (~1,430 m) about a kilometre away, too far for communication.

Who were these like-minded souls? Is there a trail? What exactly is access like from Kilpala Main to the north? Will 'the grapevine' deliver us answers to these questions? In any case, new roads we saw in the upper Karmutzen Cr. valley to the west suggest that it

should indeed be possible to day-trip Karmutzen Mountain.

From the main summit we descended first to the lovely flat meadow on the west and then bypassed most of the bumps (except the last) on the left (E), a time- and energy-saving manoeuvre, but not a completely straightforward one. We reached camp about 5:30 pm and 'vegged out' in the tent for an hour to let our collective metabolisms return to normal. It had been a hot day. I was tired, and I cannot recall when I have sweat so much, except perhaps on the next day's descent.

Monday we went down to Tlakwa

Ck. directly from our camp. The lower half of what we did cannot be recommended. At the bottom we found the dry creek bed and followed it until the water re-emerged, at which point we entered the (rare) friendly second growth. We reached the car about 11:30 am.

With access now from the east (boat), south (ours), north (the mystery visitors), and west (possible now, but untried?) it would seem that this new park is sufficiently open to visitors and requires no trails. Enjoy.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs, Lindsay Elms, and Curtis Lyon.*



The Beaufort Range from Comox Harbour. A - Mt. Curran, B - Squarehead Mtn., C - Mt. Joan, D - Mt. Apps, E - Mt. Henry Spencer, F - Mt. Stubbs, G - Mt. Chief Frank, and H - Mt. Clifton. Photograph: Lindsay Elms

## BEAUFORT RANGE

*Lindsay Elms*

Various day trips in June & July

There is one range of mountains on the island that appears to have a select group of people traipsing around on its tops. The range is the Beaufort and the people are members of the Comox District Mountaineering Club. It appears, from the summit registers, that they are the only club that visits this range even though there was a mention of the Beauforts in Explore Magazine some time ago when Phil Stone wrote an article with a photo.

The Beaufort Range extends from Horne Lake in the south to the town of Cumberland in the north and the peaks are between 1,440 to 1,557 m, the highest being Mt. Joan. The principal peaks, starting from the south,

are Mt. Hal, Mt. Joan, Squarehead Mountain, Mt. Curran, Mt. Apps, Mt. Henry Spencer, Mt. Stubbs, Tsable Mountain, Mt. Chief Frank and Mt. Clifton.

All of the peaks are day-trip-able because of the easy access by the logging roads, but the trouble at times is getting access, as some of the roads have gates on them. A key must be obtained by first phoning the MacBlo office in Nanoose (Northwest Bay Div.) and then picking it up at a private home near Fanny Bay. The best bet would be to phone Ken Rodonets (CDMC President) and talk him into doing a trip into the area with you. Ken doesn't need much tempting and is one of the most knowledgeable on the area.

The CDMC also has numerous trips throughout the year into the Beauforts, from day trips, to overnights and week long traverses of the range.

I decided it was about time I looked into this area as it was literally on my back doorstep. I phoned Ken to get some info' and he said he had some time off and would go in there with me. The other bonus was that the gate at the Buckley Bay Main (opposite the Denman Island ferry) was unlocked because there was no active logging in the area at the moment.

We chose to go up Mt. Chief Frank and work on the trail, which had become overgrown. We clipped the brush back as we climbed. Higher up, the

snow still covered the underbrush. We traversed around under the North Face and then climbed onto the summit by the West Ridge. The summit book inside the cairn was waterlogged so we brought it down with us to dry out and replace at a later time. On top, Ken pointed out the different peaks and access to them from both the east side (Highway 19) and the west (Port Alberni to Comox Lake road).

A few days later I climbed Mt. Clifton with a friend. The following weekend I helped a CDMC work party to clear the old logging roads up to Mt. Joan and Mt. Curran. The access road to these two peaks is Cook Road off

the new Island Highway. Just off the highway turn left and follow it to a junction where you take the right fork, not the left (Chef Main). This road does not have a gate on it. After 15 km from the highway take the old logging road on your right. About 100 m in is a parking area for non-4 x 4 vehicles. Drive up several switchbacks to where the road forks. Park there and follow the road on your left. Eventually the road again forks; the left branch goes up toward Mt. Joan while the right fork goes up Mt. Curran.

A week later I went back into the Beaufort Range this time with Sandy Briggs. We climbed Mt. Chief Frank

via the bluffs on the East Ridge and then traversed across to Tsable Mountain and back, in a white out.

I continued to return to the Beauforts doing the traverse from Mt. Joan, over Squarehead Mountain to Mt. Curran on July 13 by myself, and then Mt. Stubbs and Mt. Henry Spencer via Mt. Chief Frank and Tsable Mountain on July 30 by myself. If you want an easy day trip with rewarding views this is a great place to go. On one side you have the Straits of Georgia and Denman and Hornby Islands; on the other side the Cliffe and Comox Glaciers, Mt. Septimus and Rousseau, Nine Peaks and a whole lot more.

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## THE MACKENZIES (LIKE NOT THE HOSERS, EH!)

*Rick Johnson*

May 5 - 6

This was a scheduled trip with dual leaders, Rick squared, Eppler and "yours truly". We have both visited the area on several occasions over the years, but Rick Eppler and Rob Macdonald really have this area wired. So it was very handy to have the guidebook along "in person."

It would be that we chose the first really hot weekend of spring to do our little outing. Russ (Full Monty) Moir did part of the hike up on Saturday clad in his skivvies. Considering how warm it was going up and that he had only wind pants otherwise, this was very practical. The trail up is very much improved now to about the 3,500 ft level and in about 3 hours we were out into the blazing late afternoon sun and a wet snowpack. We set up camp at around 4,000 ft on a nice level bit of ground and settled in for a great view of the Broken Islands. Plans were to divide the next morning after a quick hike up to the MacKenzie Col and for Eppler and group to try the standard route up Redwall and for Doug Goodman (not MacKenzie) and myself to drop over

to attempt Centaur by its normal route.

Next morning we were off early on nice crusty snow with the sun coming up in front of us as we climbed. We reached the col, already bathed in light, divided off and were away on our separate adventures.

Doug and I headed for the base of the prominent gully below Centaur and quickly snow-climbed up to about halfway. We then moved up a bushy drainage headwall (roped) to gain the upper snow ledges at the base of Centaur. Some 3rd, 4th and moves of moderate 5th climbing on sometimes-loose rock put us on the airy little summit. We waved at all the rest of our troop as they descended off their summit under Rick Eppler's watchful eye. They too had enjoyed a great MacKenzie summit. I set a rap and we were off for the Witch's Hat. Two raps down to the base and very softened snow conditions. We rounded the corner to the west and there it was. Looked straightforward, so Doug was on it like a wet towel. A little scramble up and it was "Berg heil" again.

It was now just afternoon and the

base of Witch's Hat sits atop the main gully leading up to the Hat and Centaur and seemed the obvious route down except we weren't quite sure what gullies feed into it from the sides, which is one reason we hadn't come up this way. We hastily back-belayed the upper parts to about halfway down. Rick Eppler and Todd appeared below to see how we were coming along. Todd wanted a little better view I suppose and wandered out into the middle of the base of the gully. Avalanche conditions were now extreme. I cut lose a little Slough from up gully, which grew and grew. Todd beat it for a patch of cedar forest to one side in time to see the huge rush go by like a loco. I don't think Todd will do that for a while again.

We all ascended up to the col, over and down to our camp. It was hot and soft until we dropped out of the alpine and into the trees.

Fun trip and a great bunch.

*Participants: Rick Johnson/Eppler, Doug Goodman, Selena Swets, Todd Patton, and Russ Moir.*

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# MT. MCBRIDE

*Doug Goodman*

February 1 - 3

As soon as we hit the road, we were a highly motivated and confident climbing team, already having fun: Greg Gordon, a 35 year old painter (inside and outside)/renovator artist/trip leader; Mel, a 28 year old outdoors equipment salesperson/mystic/canoelist/reggae fan; Andy, a 19 year old rock climber/cyclist/PK/student of mixed arts; and me, a 38 year old still somewhat illusioned ecologist/father/weekend adventurer.

After a dampish night beside Buttle Lake we quietly crossed it on a ripple, a 20 minute prelude to a peaceful afternoon. Our ascent to the meadows started in the sunshine, on a dry trail through Douglas fir and salal. After a couple of hours we were skiing, skinning, wandering upwards in the forest, dodging bluffs and, eventually, finding open slopes as the light faded. It was a dark and windy night as we reached the edge of Marble Meadows, having come up 1,300 m from the lake.

Near the top we moved very slowly, slipping on icy base beneath 10 cm of powder. Some of our skis would not go forward and upward, instead deciding to slide slowly downhill back to Buttle Lake. We were getting more than the advertised rating: "B2, requiring moderate skiing ability", mainly due to conditions, though the terrain does get less than gentle in places. It was a relief to be on the meadows, albeit just barely, and cosily ensconced in the club tent.

The next morning, a Sunday, the weather was cloudy, almost calm, and fairly bright. As I knew the peak was some distance away, I did not loiter to encourage the others to attempt it. Mel and Andy wisely realized that the top of Mt. McBride would require a large bit of a grunt on their part. They'd had their fill of grunting on the day previous, and were more interested in exploring the meadows. Greg, feeling a bit of a sickness, and

being his usual decisive self, flatly declined. Yet a half-hour after I left I could see him following me, and eventually realized that he meant to join me.

We skied together to the last bump before the main ridge above the Wolf River, where Greg decided to turn back on account of his illness (and maybe that he'd already bagged this peak). I didn't mind being by myself in the cloud, ice, snow, rock, and familiar island terrain.

I got back to camp rather tired, at 5:30, just before dark, having left at 8:30 am, and not stopping much. Though I hadn't pushed myself, 'twas a decent work-out, with a heavy-ish pack, including sleeping bag and Thermo-Rest in case I was caught by darkness or other circumstances. Here and there the icy crust made skiing slow, even being so hard as to prevent step-kicking.

Once on the main ridge, I left the skis and put on crampons, which sunk securely into the firm icy surface. It had rained on the mountains earlier in the week. When I reached the summit block I was confused, how to scale the big rock towers, but sense prevailed and I skirted left to the gentle North Slope of the mountain.

For a half-hour in the fog, I thought I was close to the summit, only to find each time that the ridge continued on higher. False summits, why do they trick me year after year?! The main ridge is gentle on one side, near vertical on the other. The summit is on a projecting spur, like a balcony looking south. To get to the summit I thought I had left enough room between me and the cornice on my left, then two feet from my left foot I noticed a hole in the snow, through which I could see a very long way down. I hastily stepped away, and did not venture to the highest point of snow ahead, unable to see the extent of any cornices. I rationalized that my position

on the snow was undoubtedly as high as the highest point of rock. On the way back to camp, the clouds cleared a bit, showing dramatic views of the peaks about, including the lower slopes of the Hinde, and the colourful south wall of McBride.

The evening brought a brilliant display of yo-yoing from Greg, a leisurely meal, and backgammon and massage in our cosy dome. Sunrise over the lake was pink and orange among imaginative clouds and shy peaks. Perhaps the most fun was yet to come, a classic island wild bush ski into the balmy valley. Luckily the lake crossing was again calm, and it was done a third and fourth time, to retrieve forgotten keys. Perhaps the exquisite views pulled me back, or maybe it was the giant snakes that called. As Melissa and I lingered on the water, enthralled, the snakes danced in the water, disguised as reflections of snow and forest.

*Participants: Greg Gordon (leader), Melissa DeHaan, Andrea ?, and Doug Goodman.*

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## EXCERPT FROM "TO A FRIEND"

As I climb a mountain  
The mountain climbs  
within me  
And from its summit  
I survey  
The magnificent vista  
with wonder  
and richness  
filling up the chasms  
in my soul.

- *Author unknown*



# CAT'S EARS AND COMET'S TAILS (BOTH OUT OF REACH)

*Sandy Briggs*

April 5 - 6



The MacKenzie Range from the West Ridge of Cat's Ears Peak. Photograph: Claire Ebendinger.

A trip to Cat's Ears has been on my mind for a long time, but I have to admit that the epic excursions of the R. Johnson parties earlier this decade served to damp my enthusiasm a little. (Don't bring this up. He doesn't like to talk about it.)

We left Victoria at about 6:00 am, met Lindsay at a garage on highway 4, and proceeded to Cat's Ears creek, just past the gravel pit just after the 'A' in Vancouver. Oh, that's not a very good map reference. The Cat's Ears creek road starts at GR258516 on the 92 F/3, Effingham River sheet in the 1:50,000 topo series. The road is steep and deactivated.

At my suggestion, and in a vain attempt to avoid serious bushwhacking, we walked along the paved road a short distance looking for a suitable place to enter the salad. There was no such place. We walked up the logging road several hundred meters and plunged

almost randomly into the bush, headed uphill. Less than an hour later we emerged from the protective 'bozone layer' (to borrow a concept from Gary Larson) and luxuriated in the sun by a small pool on the ridge proper.

We met the first snow at about 500 m. It soon became snow of the tiresome breakthrough kind. Luckily (again) there were fit people along in whose steps I could plod. A seven hour hike put us on a pleasant open shoulder just below the 1000 m contour where we made camp for the night.

Great views faded to sunset and then twilight followed by the wonder of a brilliantly starry sky with its chief feature that night the amazing Hale-Bopp comet. The comet's tail spanned an arc almost equivalent to that of my hand held at arm's length. This is easily the best comet I have ever seen, or expect to see.

Later that night a subtler phenom-

enon occurred, all the clocks moved an hour ahead. We chose to remain on old time for the trip. I suppose that made us 'old-timers'. I admit that Don advocated a very early start, but I couldn't face it and made convincing (?) arguments that it wasn't necessary.

In the event we got up at 4:00 (old time) and set off before sunrise, somewhere about 5:30. What a thrillingly wonderful beautiful morning!! Perfect conditions. The MacKenzie range stood stark, snow-plastered, jagged and impressive. We stopped on the first bump at 1155 m for a quick ice-axe refresher and to deploy the pieps, as well as to snap a few sunrise photos of the 'Highway 4 Himalayas'.

The ridge looked daunting, but it mellowed appropriately as we approached the steep rise to the west summit. Below this step we roped up, even belaying a short section on this exposed

slope. What a fantastic situation! A short undulation in the ridge hid from us what we were soon to discover, namely that the true summit was too far away for our party to reach that day. Had we been able to camp out another night we might have pressed on. It looked a fine, dare I say even classic, outing, but we had to reach Victoria that night.

Once down the steep part and off the west summit we unroped and lounged in the sun while Lindsay partook of

the old New Zealand sport of cornice jumping. As we returned to camp the hot sun was already turning the hard surface into unsupportive mush. It became a plod. We left camp at 1:20 and reached the logging road at 6:00, having put a hand-line down a steep gravel slope above the second growth. Needless to say, we got home in the wee hours (any clock), only to find that Claire's car had been vandalized at the Helmcken Rd. temporary parking lot.

Because of the quirks of miscellaneous employment I would get to sleep in a little in the morning. I felt sorry for my companions, some of whom had to report for long stints on the job by first thing Monday. True dedication.

*Participants: Don Berryman, Claire Ebendinger, Lindsay Elms, Greg Gordon, John (?), Ang Lopez, Guy Parent, and Gerta Smythe.*

## POGO PEAK EXTREME SKIING

*Lindsay Elms*

January 25

It was a bright sunny morning as usual on the Island (no I'm not taking the piss out of the Island weather) when Charles and I met Doug at Combs. We loaded Doug's skis into the Toyota and drove to the heavily-snowed-up Sutton Pass. All the logging roads were under a couple of feet of snow so we drove down the other side a little further to an abandoned/vandalized Landcruiser next to the highway and parked. The vandals wouldn't hit twice in the same area.

The snow was firm and crisp as we started skiing up the roads to the base of the old growth. Once there we took the skis off for a while until we got out onto the open East Ridge. This ridge curves around from the highway up to the summit ridge. Conditions for skiing continued to be perfect so I won't brag anymore or at least until I think there is something worth telling.

Eventually we had to take the skis off to climb a steep gully to gain the summit ridge; this was our Hillary Step. Ice axe out and 'pons on as we swam our way up through two feet of snow sticking to a 55 degree gully. No need to rope up because there was a good runout below. A couple of strong butterfly strokes and we were on the ridge where

we could again put our skis on to get to the summit. There we sat in the sun eating lunch.

Well it would have been nice to stay up there longer but we really had to be getting down. We locked into our skis again and enjoyed skiing along the summit ridge to the top of the gully. We looked over the top into the gully and mumbled that it was steep - but there was the good

runout below if we did wipeout. Should we or shouldn't we - and then Doug was gone. The gully was narrow and only the front and back of his skis were on the snow, the only other point of contact was his ice axe.

He wriggled down a few feet and then just went for it. "Go for it Doug!" we yelled out. Charles and I couldn't be out done so one at a time we skied into the gully and did the same. What a hoot! From there down the ridge and into the trees was beautiful ski-



Lindsay Elms on Cat's Ears West Ridge. Photograph: Claire Ebendinger.

ing. Once in the trees we stayed on our skis until it became dicey and then took them off (that is Charles and I anyway) but Evil Dougevil kept going until he was hanging upside down by a tree. We made it unscathed through the trees onto the logging roads and skated back out to the car, thus capping off another great day in the mountains.

*Participants: Doug Goodman, Charles Turner, and Lindsay Elms.*

## MT. ARROWSMITH SOUTH SUMMIT TO MAIN SUMMIT

Chris Odgers  
March 23

This trip was cobbled together at the last minute. The plan was to climb the "Non-Judges Route"; in this we failed completely, but what a failure!

We drove a little way up C29, walked to the end, and crossed the creek bed, then climbed up the broad treed slope leading towards the summit ridge, trending slightly to the right. When we got to the cliffs at the top we had a choice of two gullies, one straight above us and one requiring a traverse to the right across a broad concave snowfield.

None of us knew exactly where we were, and Russ especially didn't because he said that this was exactly where he had been the month before when he didn't know where he was then either, and never found out. So, working on the theory that pooled ignorance is better than no ignorance at all, we jointly decided to take the gully straight above us, which was narrow enough that you could almost touch both sides of it simultaneously. The steep rock walls had little plasterings of ice attached to them, which were hailing down in the late March sunshine. This aesthetic gully led us right to the main summit ridge, to the notch directly SE of the S. summit of Arrowsmith, although we didn't know this at the time.

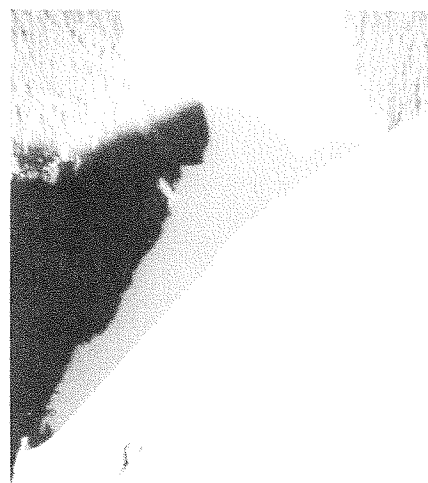
Russ will protest vehemently that a) he did so at the time and b) this route was his intended goal all along,

but don't believe him. He was as lost as a saint at a legal convention.

From this notch, there were good views of the Coast Range, and a steep slide down to Hidden Lake. From here it's a short mixed pitch, crampons on thin friable ice and rock. We roped that one. Then a longer narrow gully in the shade, leading who knows where? Well, it led to the base of the short, somewhat exposed ridge of the South Summit, which we also roped because the snow was soft. We enjoyed a lovely combination of the walled-in feeling in the couloir followed by the airy exposed feeling on the ridge. We all agreed that this was the best route we'd done on Arrowsmith.

We got to the South Summit at 4:30, warm and no wind! Deck chair weather. After a time the question arose, "How do we get down?" A number of ingenious proposals were advanced, each vetoed by all present except the proposer, which left the mundane solution; climb to the Main Summit (the last pitch of which we roped because of the ice), then down the Judges. Descent conditions were ugly but fast, post-holing and glissading. We left the Summit at 5:45 and managed to get back to the van without headlights.

A beer to the person who spots the excellent pun in the opening sentences of this report.



Another good day on Arrowsmith.  
Photograph: Rick Johnson.

*Participants: Martin Davies, Rick Johnson, Russ Moir, and Chris Odgers.*

(Editor's comment: Where's the gratitude for booting them out of bed and up such a well-chosen route?)

## EL CAPITAN

Doug Goodman  
November 9

What can we do in November, when it will pour rain all day in Victoria, and the snow will be too deep and soft to ski in the mountains? Go

for a hike up El Cap! Yet the sun shone warmly through a clear blue sky, and the nearest snow was on a distant glacier. No complaint about this November's weather.

Seventeen summitters on a sunny Sunday, a dreamy day for a stroll. Only our one canine member complained of the difficulty of the scrambling, and required a push up and pull down

the steepest rocky parts. Mostly she enjoyed it, adding extra distance as dogs will, and recovering quickly from the rock climbing anxiety. I was grateful to Denise and Wendy for their relaxed attitude, befitting my broken rib and lack of sleep.

The rest pushed forward, stopping at the end of the lake for a frosty lunch in a frigid wind. We went up with

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the trail and down with the bush rather than the other way about, the bush being more noticeable than when mostly covered with snow.

Cyclists had enough vehicles to leave for home an hour or two before the rest of us. For some reason I had decided to forget the gate key in Victo-

ria, and enjoy the long logging road walk. Nine 'til six I think it was. But next time I'll remember it, and have more time to scramble or snooze up high.

*Participants: Brian Everden, Selena Swets, Conrado Abelida, Don Cameron,*

*Larry Talarico, Larry Borgerson, Angelico Lopez, Doug Goodman (disorganizer), Denise Kors, Wendy Croft, Terry Lunn, Rob Eldrid, Scott Pearson, Greg Gordon, Mary Hof, (and a friend of Rob's, sorry I've forgotten your name), and dog (sorry I forget your name too)*

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## FLAT-TOP AND SHADOWBLADE MACKENZIE RANGE

*Lindsay Elms*  
June 10

Wow, the MacKenzie Range has really been seeing a lot of activity this year. This was Doug's third time this year, there had been a group up last weekend and there had been one or two other parties up in the spring. It's either a feast or famine!

So Doug phones me Monday night and says the forecast is good for Tuesday - pause - and can I get the day off. It just so happens that I was on days off so I said yes and then I asked a most important question: "Why?" It was a rhetorical question as it was fairly obvious what he wanted, Doug wanted to go CLIMBING, and the real question was where. "The MacKenzie Range," Doug said. There were two peaks he hadn't climbed, Flat-top and Shadowblade, and he was on a quest to climb them all.

Well I met Doug at 6:30 am near Coombs and we drove to the trailhead. With day packs that felt like weekend packs, we started up the trail. At

11 am we were on the ridge about to drop down to the base of the climbs. We found the gully between the two peaks and climbed into the notch. After one pitch from the notch we were on the slabs below the top of Flat-top and then scrambled up to the easy summit. Back down again to the notch and a second look at the route up Shadowblade. It was steep and exposed but Doug said he could lead it. Holds were plentiful but placement for runners were few, and at times, far between. Doug passed a rappel sling and continued up to within twenty feet of the summit. The rope couldn't quite make it all the way. He belayed me up and I squeezed passed him and climbed to the summit. I then went back and down climbed a little below Doug to a lower spot, put in an anchor and belayed Doug to the summit. We then downed climbed to the rappel sling and checked out the anchor. It was marginal but there wasn't

anything else around so we made it as safe as we could. I put my weight on it and it seemed okay so down I went. A few minutes later Doug was down beside me. It was now time to high-tail it off the mountain. We dropped down into the basin and back up onto the ridge. It was all down hill now. One hour twenty minutes later we were down at the car glad to be off the mountain.

Later, talking to Sandy, he thought we probably did the third ascent of Shadowblade but it's hard to say. This area doesn't appear to be frequented very often but you just never know with these Port Alberni climbers. Every now and then they sneak out from under the pulp mills blanket, pluck off one of the towers, and then forget to tell anyone else about it.

*Participants: Doug Goodman and Lindsay Elms.*

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## PEAK 5800

*Lindsay Elms*  
May 11

This is the prominent peak on the right hand side of the highway between Sayward and Woss and is directly opposite Jagged Mountain. From the road the summit can be seen as a

large black rock tower with smaller towers to the east. The first recorded ascent was by the Island Mountain Ramblers in 1982 and I have not heard of any other ascents until Chris Barner and some Heathens climbed it in 1994. Chris had climbed the mountain by the wooded slope from the highway, arriving on the ridge to the east of the peak. After following the ridge for awhile they then went around onto

the north side and up a gully to the summit. Julie Micksch and I decided to climb it via the southwest ridge.

To access the logging road we turned into the Eve River Rest Area and then left onto the logging road. We followed this until we crossed the obvious stream coming down from the ridge west of the summit. Here we turned and drove up on old road for a short distance and parked. We walked

the road for another 50 m until on our right was a small creek that virtually went all the way up to the old growth. This creek had been cleared of all debris and even had beautiful grassed slopes beside it making for easy hiking. Once in the forest we stayed left of the creek and continued to angle left up to the ridge. There were a few rock bluffs to go around but it was straightforward climb. On

the ridge we found ourselves about 1 km southwest of the peak. We followed the ups and downs of the ridge until we were able to traverse a snow slope into a big basin under the summit. It was then an easy snow climb to the summit.

To the north we saw an interesting peak with a repeater tower on the top. Its west face looked vertical and would warrant further investiga-

tion. This could be accessed from the Tlatlos Creek.

We retraced our tracks back along the ridge and descended via our ascent route. During the winter/spring the creeks to the ridge are choked with snow and these would give great ascent/descent routes for future climbs.

*Participants: Julie Micksch and Lindsay Elms.*

## THAT SWEET BERRY FLAVOUR

*Lindsay Elms*

It's summer and you're hiking your favourite trail. You've been waiting patiently for this time of the year when the berries are out and you're not to be disappointed. The berries are fat, ripe and succulent! You pick a few from beside the trail and lick your lips in anticipation: they taste great but there a few metres in from the trail you spy a bush, the sun glistening off the dew, just absolutely loaded with berries.

You've become obsessed and focused on nothing but those berries. You don't even see the bear munching away on his own bush just 20 metres from where you are.

The first fat berry is picked from the new bush and again you lick your lips in anticipation. You roll it around on your tongue, savouring the moment, saliva and dew amalgamating to create an infusion that sends your taste buds into a frenzy, and then your mouth closes down on it - but something isn't quite right, it doesn't taste as good as you expected so you try a few more. Again they don't seem to

have the same exquisite flavour as that bush beside the trail, so back you go to it.

Have you ever wondered why the berries right beside the trail are the ones that always taste the best? Well here is one possibility that gives food for thought.

It's a bright, sunny day and you've called a few of your friends together to go hiking. The group is of mixed age and gender: it feels like a family outing. You are a happy, carefree group who are revelling in being back in the outdoors amongst the mountains, rivers and trees that nature created. Where the worries of work evaporate like the steam from a boiling kettle. The talk on the trail revolves around last year's berries and the abundance of those juicy little nuggets: the pies and jams that you made with them get sweeter tasting the further away from the trailhead you get.

Soon you come upon the first batch of berries beside the trail and you pick the bush clean. You are not dis-

appointed, as they taste better than last year's crop. You go a little further and do the same there, picking this bush clean. They sure taste great!

As you start to move away to find another bush further along the trail, one of the young boys says that he needs to relieve himself. You all walk passed him so as to give him some privacy but either as a sign of concern or habit, you just have a quick peek back over your shoulder to see where he has gone and that everything is okay.

Ah, no need to worry. There he is enjoying that moment of peace, blissfully unaware that you're looking over your shoulder. He has not moved off the trail but just turned his back on you. A typical male you think, why can't he go behind a tree or somewhere out of sight. Your eyes scan the golden arch and quickly note that the bush that is the focus of his attention was, a few minutes ago, the very bush that you were eating the berries from and commenting on how good they tasted.

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# COAST MOUNTAINS & THE ROCKIES

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## RANDY STOLTMANN WILDERNESS

*Catrin Brown*

August 9 - 14

When Randy Stoltmann was killed in an avalanche in May 1994, he had already submitted a detailed proposal to the Protected Areas Strategy, concerning an area he called the "Stanley Smith Wilderness". He had recognized that this 260,000 hectares of wildlands located just 200 kilometres north of Vancouver in the headwaters of the Squamish and Lillooet river systems contains the largest cluster of unlogged valleys remaining in the Lower Mainland with over one hundred large glaciers, an ocean of soaring peaks and the largest remaining tracts of Douglas fir. Following Randy's death, some of his close friends picked up the baton of his proposal, renaming the area in his memory. The battle for its protection continues to this day.

John Clarke, famed Coast Mountain explorer, is one of the key people in the ongoing campaign. John has so committed himself to the cause that he has forsaken his lifestyle of extended trips into the wilderness in order to dedicate himself to wilderness education full time. His concern is that in the entire debate surrounding conservation decisions, three groups dominate: industrial stakeholders, politicians and environmentalists. He contends that "The Public" is just not involved, and his belief is

that people - all people - must see for themselves exactly what is at stake. Thus every weekend throughout the long summer, he helps to organize groups wishing to visit the area. A simple camp is set up at a sand bar

ciation of unique beauty and fragile wealth.

Claire, Judy and I were privileged to experience much of this directly, as we travelled up to Sims Creek with John for one of these weekends in

August. Just north of Brackendale, near Alice Lake Provincial Park on highway 99, the journey followed the Squamish River and its major tributary, the Elaho River, for 60 km of logging road. Along the route John talked us through our planned traverse, carefully annotating our map with his accurate descriptions and prompts that would prove invaluable in the following days. We spent a sweltering afternoon with his group at the Sims Creek sand bar, roaming through stands of gnarled old Douglas firs and looking back over encroaching clear-cuts. A definite sense of impending change hung in the air.

The following morning we parted from the group before the heat of the day, heading southwest up through steep bush on a flagged trail. Our first destination - the aptly named Bug Lake, scene of the Eat-You-Alive-While-You-

Swim Massacre. Emerging bloodied but unbowed from the experience, we were happily distracted by the surrounding peaks and beckoning ridges of our route. Judicious Judy, celebrating



John Clarke at Sims Creek. Photograph: Catrin Brown.

on Sims Creek, short hikes and interpretative sessions are arranged, but the approach is fundamentally informal and devoid of proselytizing. The emphasis is on awareness, on appre-



her birthday on this day, produced her own cake from her pack to complement a memorable lunch. Our afternoon hike took us on an ascending traverse through boulders and heather to the ridge where we made camp. (We are told that the following week a flagged trail was also put in here).

Breakfast of M & Ms (Muesli and Mozzies) got us buzzing on Day Two. Our route followed a snow slope to a fine vantage point where a 360 degree panorama of peaks was revealed. Mt Tinniswood and Mt Albert held our gaze - peaks that I'd had pointed out to me from the other side, on the Overseer ski trip. Ah, the vastness of this untracked land, it still takes my breath. A happy afternoon was spent scampering on the ridge before dropping down a stream bed (all cairned) and ascending another snow slope to the North shoulder of Sun Peak. The easy scramble to the top of this in the early evening was one of the most memorable parts of the trip. We lingered long on the summit, marvelling in the changing light as sunset and moonrise intermingled. From here too we had our first view down into Princess Louisa Inlet and the lights of Malibu far below. Just below the summit was a perfect place for a high camp (at 7,220 ft), notwithstanding the need to first level the boulder field by building a stone mosaic. Well our efforts may have



"Granite Nest", Randy Stoltmann Traverse. Photograph: Catrin Brown.

impressed a Roman road engineer (if only there had been one passing) but they were certainly not the precursor of a comfortable night. Only Claire, snug in her bivvy bag outside, punctuating the night with her roll call of shooting stars, achieved comfort. Dammit!

The following day our route saw us boot skiing down under the peak known as JJ, close to an area of ice fall with chilling blue minarets. Downwards still, over granite now, towards the twin lakes of sapphire blue called The Contacts. We established our Granite Nest on a rocky knoll thinking thus to escape the bugs. Needless to say

our optimism was not rewarded. Our afternoon scrambles took us over a NW ridge, past an area of wild rock formations and to a tarn that surely was designed to be a swimming pool. How sweet it was to have the time to indulge the facility in the long evening light.

The final day our descent to sea level followed a good albeit unrelentingly steep trail. Crossing Loquilts Creek, the route passes a spectacular waterfall, an old trapper's cabin and a small chimney for which a length of 7 mm rope proved useful for lowering the packs. Goat droppings and tracks, ptarmigans and bear prints all decorated the path, spilling us out at the base of Chatterbox Falls on the shores of Princess Louisa Inlet.

At this point a minor obstacle arose and our best laid plans temporarily faltered. We had been expecting a Ranger to be in residence in the park at the inlet, who supposedly would have been able to radio out for us to arrange transport. But on this day there was a noticeable absence of such a person. It didn't, however, take long for Claire, decked out in the cleanest of the trek-weary clothes we carried, to patrol the moorings of the many fine boats spinning a tale of our woes. Should we be surprised that it was the smallest boat, groaning under the load of the largest number of chil-



Claire and Judy above Loquilts and Turtle Lakes. Photograph: Catrin Brown.

# 1997 PHOTO CONTEST

HUMOUR  
ARTHRITIS CREAM - REINHARD ILLNER



NATURE - R



BEST PRINT- MARILYN HEWGILL

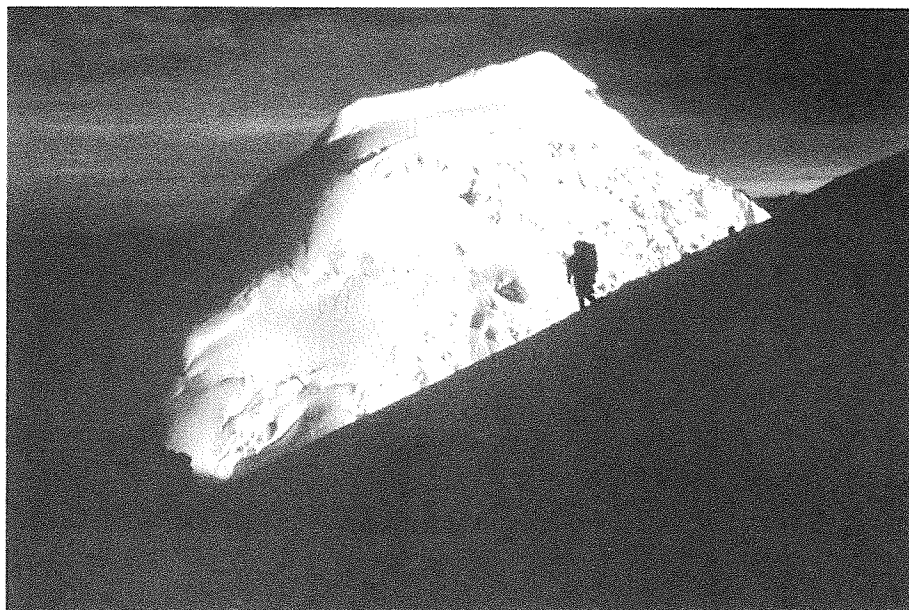


# TEST WINNERS

REINHARD ILLNER



PEOPLE IN THE MOUNTAINS  
HUASCARAN SUNRISE - REINHARD ILLNER



MOUNTAIN PICTORIAL  
HUASCARAN FROM YUNGAY - REINHARD ILLNER



dren and camping gear who came to our rescue? Cheerfully they took us on board, whisking us off down the Inlet to the Christian camp at Malibu Straits. Craning our necks back up at the peaks, plans for future trips took shape... This one ended with a float plane ride from Malibu, over the Sunshine Coast and Howe Sound to downtown Vancouver - quite a splashdown!

Notes: We spent 4 days on the traverse, with a full day for travelling on each end which gave a very leisurely pace. Completing the traverse is dependent on the juggling of some trans-

port logistics (thanks Claire!) Although John Clarke's group has been working to mark the trail in the high country, there is still a definite sense of pristine wilderness here and it is well worth visiting before it becomes too well known.

"I cannot expect of others anymore than my own modest contribution. Simply leave time to get to know the land and its wonders for yourself. Care for it as you would a loved one. Share the joy of discovery and the thrill of exploration, have fun and laugh. Hike

the forests, climb the peaks, ski the icefields, walk the beaches, canoe and kayak the rivers, lakes and seashore. Or just lie in a meadow, breathe the clear air and renew yourself. Stop. Think. Listen. Hear the roaring vastness of a great valley, or the sigh of wind in the treetops, or the eternal thunder of breakers on the shore. Then go back and speak to the world from your heart."

*Participants: Catrin Brown, Claire Ebendinger, and Judy Holm.*

## CERISE CREEK TO CASPER CREEK

*Doug McGhee*

'DEAR CAROL STEWART,

Nine of us Islanders met an ex-Rockies skier, Heather, for a three day ski in the Matier area. Do you remember climbing Matier solo 3 years ago? That was my first ACC trip and so it was a kind of reunion to be the Holms' trip hoping to ski in Cerise Creek and out Casper Creek. The snow didn't cooperate for climbing either Matier or Vantage but treed skiing off the ridge west of Keith's Hut was superb.

The day we arrived, we dug a rutschblock on a 33 degree slope and had a 15 cm slab slide as soon as Kaj stepped on it. It then released down to about a 35 cm crust when he jumped aggressively mid-block. I had been caught in an avalanche 2 weeks prior, so this sight sent my heart pitter-pattering.

Day two, the group skied up the shoulder on Vantage which was icy and windy, but later Greg shut down the mountain doing laps in the perfect powder near the hut while, in ones and twos, the rest of us opted to nurse our exhaustion in the cabin.

Easter Sunday was a day of intensity. We had intended to ski out early but the dawn revealed parting skies and quiet air. So it was that we headed to the Matier-Vantage Col in the light rising off the snow. New avalanches

overnight lit in the quiet dawn light convinced me to watch the gang from the bowl under Vantage as they skied up to the col. Again wind crust and awakening winds sent them back, but the route from the Vantage-Matier Col to Casper Creek proved not to be feasible anyway.

The winds continued to rally during our ski out Cerise Creek, and south of Squamish the wind-whipped seafoam hovered in screaming horizontal sheets over Howe Sound. Judy, Barb, Viggo, Russ and I caught what proved to be the last ferry crossing before all others were docked for the night.

The 3 hour ferry ride was memorable for its incessant announcements advising us to remain seated and the howl of the wind when we all held our breath for the captain to bring the boat about to head into the winds. Yet, I think the crowning moment found us tussled on the bow of the ferry heading into Nanaimo watching that surreal comet show itself in the night in an odd gesture of intimacy.

How was your Easter in New Zealand, Carol? Did the comet's winds visit you?"

## MT. MANZO NAGANO

*Tak Ogasawara*

August 21 - 25

In 1877 a young Japanese named Manzo Nagano decided to cross the Pacific to see the other side of the ocean. Three months later he arrived at New Westminster and became the first Japanese to set foot on Canadian soil. 1997 is the 120th anniversary of Manzo Nagano's arrival to Canada. On this special occasion the National Association of Japanese-Canadians organized a trip to the mountain that was named after him in 1977 by the Canadian Government. Mt. Manzo Nagano is 6,400 ft high and is located south of Bella Coola, a little south of the lower part of Owikeno Lake and about due east of the head of Rivers Inlet.

Seven of our 11 members of the trip were gathered at Randy's (President of NAJC trip leader) house on Aug. 21st and left Vancouver at 6:30 pm. We camped near Spences Bridge that night. Next day Karl and Eileen Willms from Kamloops joined our caravan at 100 Mile House. We drove to Williams Lake, then into the Chilcotin Plateau, and down to the coastal town of Bella Coola. We stayed at a bed and breakfast place near the airport. I was worried about the next day's

flight to base camp because the weather was poor that night.

On Aug. 23rd we met Amy and Rolf Mensch at the airport. They had come via ferry from Vancouver Island. All of the trip members were now gathered at the airport waiting for the flight to base camp. The weather was far from perfect but it was safe enough for an airplane to fly. Seven members of our team boarded on a fixed-wing plane to the logging camp at Owikeno Lake. Then the helicopter would pick them up and take them to our base camp on the mountain.

Meanwhile Randy and I with two others departed the airport by helicopter directly to the mountain in order to set up our base camp. We found a good place for it between Manzo Lake and Manzo Glacier. Soon the others joined us at base camp.

On Aug. 24th the weather was unsettled but the visibility was not bad, so all of the nine climbers roped up and started to climb up the lower glacier at 7:00 am. The lower glacier was exposed hard blue ice. We had to detour around crevasses onto the snow-covered upper glacier. Two hours later, we reached

the saddle between the main peak and the minor south peak.

We unroped and walked up the loose rocky slope to the summit. We reached the summit around 9:30 am. We took pictures and opened a bottle of champagne in front of the metal plaque which Jim Nagano and four others had left in 1979. Randy put the time capsule, which contained messages from various Japanese community organizations across Canada, in the cairn of stones above the plaque. We had accomplished our objective.

## ALPHA

*Jules Thomson*

August

Alpha of the Tantalus Range or Tantalize Range stemming from Greek mythology of Tantalus, King of Phrygia who was condemned to eternal thirst and hunger. Although practically submerged in water, the moment he tried to touch the water and drink, the water would vanish; somewhat like our weekend. We were immersed in, drenched by water, we hiked, climbed in it, we even canoed in it, and yet still the elusive Alpha, tantalizing us was just out of reach.

Our journey started via the Nanaimo route, canoes perched on top of our vehicles, raising our vehicle height along with the ferry fees. Our directions for access seemed simple enough, exit highway 99 while going north, turn left off the highway, across from the Alice Lake campground, Notice the Airport sign, road curves to a bridge, then left at the junction 2.3 km, after that junction (# 2 junction perhaps) then 3rd power pole hang a left 1.6 km and then to a cable car on left-but stick to the right if there is a junction in the bush. Too many junctions later, we did reach the vast flat swiftly flowing Squamish River. There we unloaded the canoes, debated whether or not to canoe in no boots, hiking boots, or wet boots; such are the endless

details one must address—knowing that whatever you decide, you know that everyone else will be covered in just as much muck as you will be. We paddled forth and back and forth again depositing eventually all gear and people on the same side of the Squamish river—that being the mountainside of course. Trudging up the trail almost 4 hours and many scrumptious, delicious blueberries, salmon berries later we arrived at a magnificent cabin on lovely Lake Lovely water.

Heading out next day we climbed north up to a rocky notch to access the East Ridge. Snow/rock options, not difficult, many ups and downs, very wet and windy-poor visibility - we ended in a clump, a rather soggy wet clump near the probably slimy wet headwall. Although some of us had our rock shoes, I certainly did, our group was too large, mixed experience, and time was running out, so in late afternoon we cooperatively agreed to about face and scrambled back down to warmth, dryness, food, comfort, etc. Selena and I took a short cut straight down the side of the ridge perfecting a new technique of bum sliding over cliffs via the vegetation, it certainly saved time and the knees, although I can't say too much about

the condition of the seat of my pants. We canoed the lake, ate more berries and ran down the mountain back to the Squamish River (in the rain). Selena and I hauled some canoes to the shore and entreated Jacqueline to come along with us. Jacqueline very tactfully declined and sent her pack with us instead, was it that look of novice on our faces that made her hesitate? Once across Selena and I dumped our load and paddled back to the other side. This time Kevin agreed to be our passenger, but his confidence in our steering abilities faltered with a fast approaching deadhead. I had no intention of hitting the log with the canoe; we were wet enough as it was. Selena and I gallantly deposited Kevin at the river's edge and we were all off for home. Lake Lovelywater would certainly afford lovely climbing amongst all the lovely peaks surrounding it, —summer camp anyone?

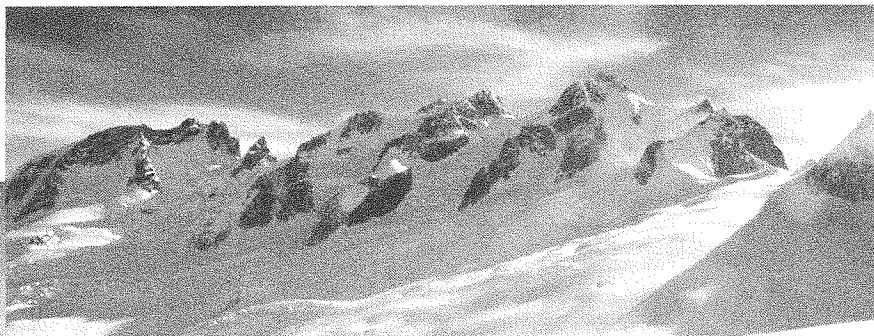
Hut key available from Ron Royston 921-8164 Van. P.S. Watch out for the wasps- but that's another story.

*Soggy participants were: Leader J. Holm, K. Bartlett, J. Cameron, R. Eldrid, D. Hurrell, C. Schreiber, S. Swets, J. Thomson*





Rudi Brugger, Ian Brown,  
and Brian Pinch lunching  
on Granite glacie. Mt.  
Austerity in background.  
Photo: Doug Hurrell.



Adamant Range across Granite glacier. Photograph: Kayla Stevenson.

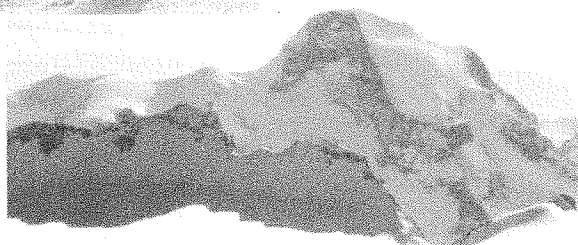
## FAIRY MEADOW

February 22 - March 1

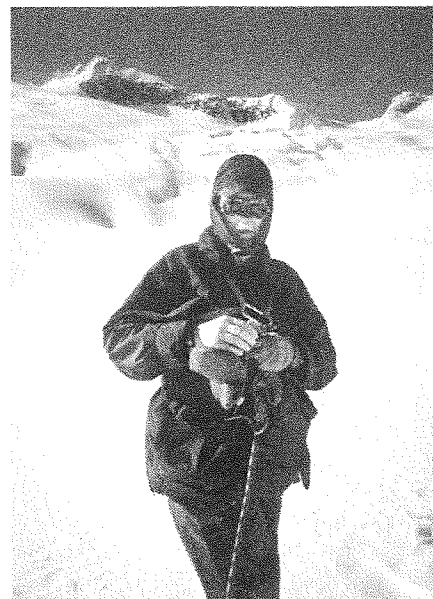
### WAITING FOR THE CHOPPER

The helicopter's 2 days late  
Our food is running low  
The helicopter's 5 days late  
Our ribs are starting to show  
The helicopter's 10 days late  
Everyone is moving slow  
The helicopter's 20 days late  
We're wondering who will be the first to go.

Shall we eat the old and wizened?  
I hear they are rather tasty  
With some pepper and some sauce.  
Shall we eat the young and tender  
Their life would be such a loss.  
Shall we eat someone  
In the middle of their life  
And put up with the wailing  
Of a husband or a wife?



Descending Sentinel Pk. with Mt. Sir Sanford in the  
background. Photograph: Doug Hurrell.



Albert Hestler on the Granite glacier.  
Photograph: Richard Keltie.



Pick up at Donald Station. Photograph: Kayla Stevenson.

You know I always wanted  
To help my fellow man  
So with the swing of a splitting maul  
I activate my plan.  
I cut off my right leg  
It makes a tasty stew  
I wrestle with my left leg  
Too bad it feeds so few.

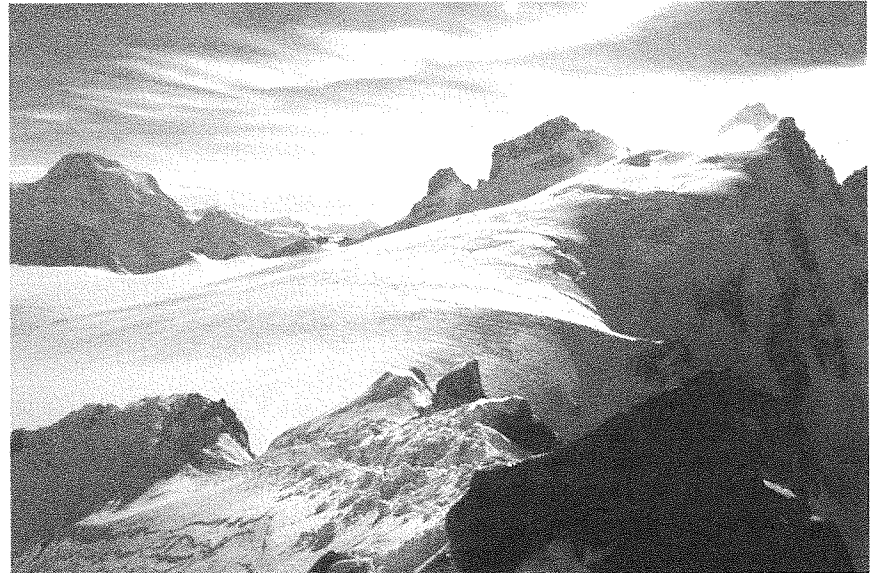
My blood is flowing freely  
For everyone to see.  
I am sorry my friends, no more....  
No more shall I ski.  
I am about to slice a fillet  
From the muscle on my back  
When I hear a familiar sound....  
Whack ... whack ... whack.

The skis are in the basket,  
The packs are in the hatch.  
The last load is leaving  
As I roll down the hill.  
Farewell my friend and thank you  
For taking up the slack  
And when we get to Golden  
We'll call the Medi-vac.

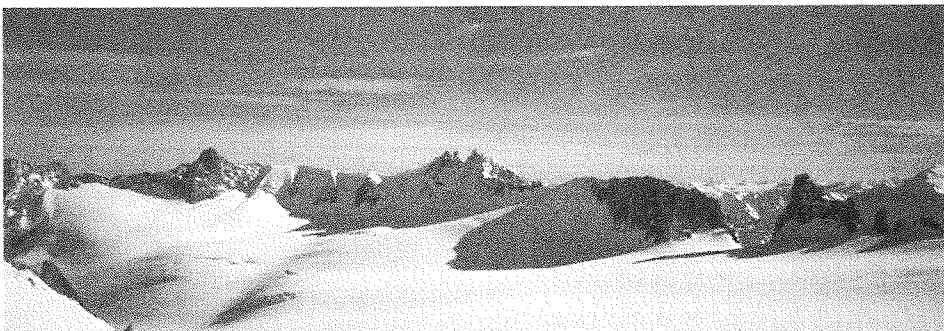
- *Gerhardt Lepp*



Charles Turner, Rick Eppler, and Rudi Brugger on summit of Pioneer Pk (10,700 ft). Mt. Adamant in the background. Photograph: Doug Hurrell.



Pioneer Pk. (R) and Mt. Sir Sanford (L) from summit of Sentinel Pk. Photograph: Richard Keltie.



Across the snowfield are Mts. Wolan, Fria, and Gibraltar. Photograph: Kayla Stevenson.

# SPEARHEAD TRAVERSE

Gerhardt Lepp

May 17 - 19

The Spearhead Traverse has a well-founded reputation as one of the classic ski traverses in the northwest. It also has a well-founded reputation for lousy weather. Almost everyone I talked to who had made the attempt had abandoned one or more trips or bailed out part way and skied down to Fitzsimmons Creek to escape from a whiteout.

The month of May often brings clear, sunny weather for ski touring on the coast, so I jumped at the opportunity when Claire put Spearhead on the schedule for the May long weekend. The trip turned out to be a skier's dream and a dermatologist's nightmare. We had three beautiful days of clear skies, fast easy touring, spectacular views and severe sunburn.

The trip started and ended at Whistler Village where I painted my face with red and green zinc oxide to entertain the yo-yo skiers. One of the biggest challenges of the trip was wrestling loaded packs on and off the chair lift on our way to the Horstman Glacier.

The Spearhead Traverse crosses 15 glaciers:

- 1 Horstman
- 2 Blackcomb
- 3 Spearhead (south)
- 4 Decker
- 5 Trorey
- 6 Tremor (camp)
- 7 Platform
- 8 Ripsaw
- 9 Naden
- 10 MacBeth
- 11 Iago
- 12 Diavolo
- 13 Benvolio
- 14 Overlord (camp)
- 15 Whistler

The trip is a series of trudges across glaciers, steep ascents to a col or arete and a steep descent on the other side. I took my skis off for the descents

onto Tremor, Diavolo and Overlord Glaciers. I have no interest in twisting a knee and losing precious years of fun just for the sake of a few extra lousy turns with a heavy pack. I'd prefer to save the turns for better conditions. Charles however, always seems to make great turns in 40 degree crud with a heavy pack. Life is obviously not fair.

The splendour and intensity of the landscape continued to rise to a new pitch with each glacier crossed and each ascent climbed. There was Wedge Mountain to the west, the McBride range to the southeast, Mount Carr and Castle Towers to the southwest and

Overlord and MacBeth along our route. By the time we reached MacBeth glacier, the symbols were crashing and the full orchestra was roaring by the time we reached the Overlord. Each glacier looked more impassable than the last but there was always a route.

I had heard that the route finding in the maze of glaciers and fog could be challenging but it was ridiculously easy. All we had to do was follow the trail broken by the half dozen skiers ahead of us. I've never had it easier.

There was an impressive set of black bear tracks on the Diavolo Glacier. It looked like he was crossing the glacier from Fitzsimmons Creek to the Cheakamus River. He reached a slope that was steep enough to provide exciting



Charles Turner and MacBeth and Overlord glaciers.  
Photograph: Gerhardt Lepp

skiing even for Charles. The tracks told us that he had boot-skied the slope with all four paws sliding down the same rut. His balance must have been good because he wasn't even dragging his bum. There were also wolf and wolverine tracks on the glaciers.

At the last camp, Claire serenaded the sunset with flute music. On the final day we skied through Singing Pass and the musical bumps - Oboe, Flute and Piccolo - each bump higher in elevation and each instrument higher in pitch.

The north bowl on Flute had perfect corn snow and the perfect pitch for telemarking. It would make a fine site for a weekend telemark camp sometime. The month of May turned

out to be an excellent time for doing the Spearhead Traverse. Next time I am going to apply "number 30 waterproof" every 2 hours; or maybe I'll just take a pillowcase and cut some eyeholes.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Charles Turner, and Gerhardt Lepp.*

## MT. DIONE

*Chris Odgers*  
July 19 - 22

### PRELUDE

John had Red Tusk on the sched-  
ule, and although I was suspicious  
of Red Tusk, there are things nearby  
that look good. So I phoned John and  
he said he would be at Maude's on  
Thursday with prints. John, Sandy and  
Don were there and I asked "So, what's  
Red Tusk like?"

"Choss heap", blurted Sandy helpfully.

My worst suspicions confirmed, I  
knew something had to be done, some-  
thing very subtle, so I casually said  
"Make it Tantalus/Dione or I'm not  
going", and by this delicate subter-  
fuge I managed to change our objec-  
tive.

### TRIP

We camped by the cable car that  
spans the Squamish River. Midges. I  
almost don't mind midges. Of all the  
bugs that suck your blood and spit  
in it before they go, midges aren't  
the worst. Next morning we crossed  
the Squamish River in canoes. I was  
paired up with John because Martin  
and Doug thought this arrangement  
offered the best potential for a "hu-  
mour award" photo. John and I have,  
between us, in total, about 15 min-  
utes of paddling experience, and the  
river was moving quite quickly, so  
we had an interesting crossing, but  
sadly no photo opportunity arose. Then  
we stowed canoes etcetera and hiked  
up to Lake Lovelywater. This hike is  
a good workout, and two of us were  
feeling a tad wilted when we got there.



Claire playing the flute on Overlord glacier. Photograph: Gerhardt Lepp.

We therefore decided to stop at the  
"Russian Army Basin" that day instead  
of going all the way to the Red Tit  
Hut. Nice evening at the basin, full  
moon, surrounded by the Lovelywater  
peaks.

Leaving the "Russian Army Basin"  
the next morning we had a choice of  
two routes. In spite of John's protests  
that his route was steeper, nastier and  
more dangerous, we chose Martin's  
route. Then we got to the notch be-  
tween Serratus and Ionia and started  
along the vast snowfield, easily vis-  
ible from lower Vancouver Island. When  
we got to the place where the old  
Red Tit Hut used to be, we found  
the Red Tit Hut, complete with floor,  
walls, roof and door. John was un-  
derstandably outraged. "What an abomi-  
nation!" he muttered. "What's the point  
of an excrescence like this when there's  
a perfectly good pile of large pointed  
rocks to camp on, right next door?"

The next morning it had clouded  
in quite a bit, high cloud above us  
and low grey clouds in the valleys.  
Tantalus and Dione had a cloud cap  
on them. We had the usual conver-  
sation, "Blither, snivel, moan, drone,  
platitude, curse, snivel, moan, blither"  
and when we finished that we agreed  
to follow Doug's suggestion, which  
was to go at least as far as the top of  
the gully below the S ridge of Dione,  
and then see what's up. This turned

out to be the right thing to do, be-  
cause when we were in the gully we  
forgot all about the weather, and ended  
up climbing Dione instead. Although  
what the point of that was, I have no  
idea.

We essentially climbed the East face,  
the one visible from the Whistler Highway,  
although when we climbed it, it wasn't  
even visible from the col. It's essen-  
tially 3 pitches of class 4 and 3, lots  
of good cracks for gear and stations.  
When we were on the summit, watching  
John trying to get his camera to work  
(an exposure problem?) it started to  
snow lightly. As the fog mist and clouds  
scudded by we could get intermit-  
tent glimpses of the peak just to our  
north, the highest one in the range,  
the one we'd come so far to climb,  
just 40 feet higher than we were-what's  
that word that means something you  
want, you can see, but is just out of  
reach? I've forgotten the name of the  
peak, too.

Three rappels took us back to the  
col. At times the visibility was less  
than 2 rope lengths. We roped down  
the gully and across the glacier. Back  
after the climb, John looked yearn-  
ingly at his heap of large pointed rocks,  
now glistening invitingly with melt-  
ing sleet, but he strode manfully by,  
into the stately pleasure dome called  
the Red Tit Hut. He cheered up a bit  
later when the ceiling started to drip



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onto the head of his sleeping bag.

That evening Doug and Martin had linguini with sun dried tomatoes, cashews, tarragon and a hint of garlic, while John and I had a real treat, Mr. Noodle, with monosodium glutamate, dextrose, cellulose, and just a hint of butylated hydroxy-toluene, added to the packaging material to preserve freshness. For dessert we ate the packaging material—there wasn't much in it.

After dinner we told jokes and then rated them. The best I did was a 4/10, with an admittedly lousy joke about several members of visible minority groups and a parrot; the clear win-

ner was John, who told a joke that we agreed rated 8.5/10. Considerations of space and propriety prevent my recounting the joke, but I can tell you that the punch line is: "Right, but first Kiki!" I realize I have now ruined the joke for you, but if you wanted to hear the whole thing, you had to haul a 65 lb pack from sea level to the Red Tit Hut at 7,000 ft, so nanaboo. Very funny joke, though. You should have been there.

That night we listened to the wind and various forms of precipitation on the outside of our hut and speculated on the grisliness of the descent. However,

the next day the weather actually was fine for descent, but the snow was a bit treacherous, necessitating face in step kicking for parts of the traverse. The glissades were fast. We got back to the canoes without incident, canoed the river, packed the car (with two canoes on top it looked a bit like a stealth attack beetle on wheels) and got to Horseshoe Bay at 7:02, just in time to catch the 7 o'clock ferry. A fun time was had by all.

*Participants: Martin Davis, Doug Goodman, Chris Odgers, and John Pratt.*

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## THE SAGA OF THE STEIN DIVIDE

*Gerta Smythe*

Claire and Ian plotting,  
Glacier travel, contour lines;  
Margaret serving bread and cheese  
at their cabin made of pine.

We are trading cars and switching keys  
and travel up to Blowdown creek;  
but all our searching is in vain,  
we fail to find the promised trail!

With the moon so bright,  
we hike late at night,  
to the mountain top  
for a bivvy spot.

The sun comes up... we are dismayed,  
to find just how far we have strayed:  
that pretty lake, in a cirque-like space  
is surely not in its proper place!

But never fear, I am with Claire:  
a route findress extra-ordinaire.  
Her finger points and makes it plain,  
and fits the map to the terrain.

A long traverse to a sheltered col,  
a drop of water heals the soul,  
renews our confidence and pride,  
and now we find ... the right divide !

At last we stop, and it's still light,  
our camp spot offers a pretty sight.

But further on the cliffs so sheer,  
will be no place for us, we fear.

And sure enough, on the next day  
we quickly end our lofty stay;  
a better route for us we seek  
and plunge down into VanHorlick creek.

We slide down the meadows,  
on grizzly bear's whoosh,  
are bugged by mosquitoes,  
as we thrash through the bush.

The logging road on the other side  
leads us to a boulder slide.  
Hippety-hop ahead Claire floats,  
I swear she must be related to goats.

Our campsites get better and loftier yet,  
our yo-yo route follows a routinely set:  
up col and down gully, in scree and in snow,  
our packs getting lighter, our fitness does show.

And once, when I yodel to Claire up the slope,  
I hear a new voice, much deeper in score:  
It's Ian and Margaret! So we meet them at last,  
we laugh and we hug, and exchange our past.

At Storm Mountain the weather brings changes;  
our clothing from bra top to Gore-Tex ranges,  
we grind our teeth, ignore our pain,  
and camp by a lake, but don't swim in the rain.

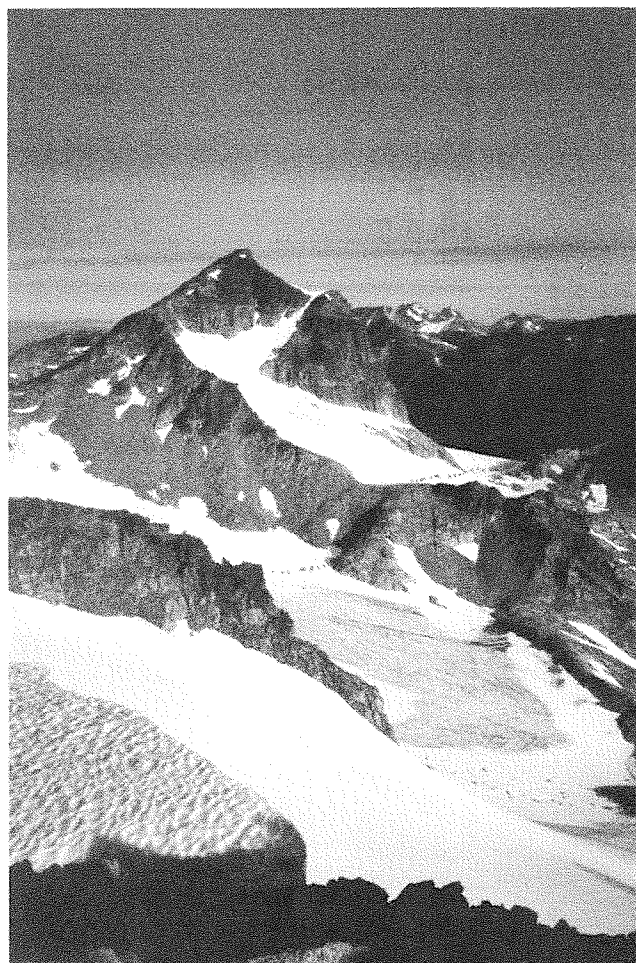


Thick fog and mist surround us at seven,  
with music and hope we wait till eleven;  
we find the odd Brown spur in snow or in grass,  
and set our course to the top by compass.

The scenery now is awesome indeed;  
we trek up the glaciers and scramble on rock,  
sunset finds us ounce more up high near a top,  
with icefalls close by, and flowers at our feet.

We climb Mt. Aurora soon after dawn,  
and gaze at the mountains, so many unknown;  
then climb up to Tundra, slip down to the lake,  
and out by the trail, with headlamps, and safe.

Route notes: this was an awesome traverse which followed more or less the divide line from... somewhere near Blowdown Creek (sure, it would have been simpler to start right at the Blowdown creek col, but in retrospect we agreed that it was more fun to discover a new route by night) and ended at Lizzie lake. The terrain changed slowly as we travelled south, from long steep ridges, mixed grassy and rocky slopes, to more rugged summits and impressive glaciers with lakes nestled here and there, and gentle creeks or playful torrents making their way down each side of the divide. We saw many goat tracks in the snow and the dirt, and bear whooshes down one gully, but the animals were nowhere to be seen... until we reached the marmot domain of Caltha Lake on our last day out. The switching of vehicles and keys at the beginning, with Ian and Margaret saved a fair bit of car shuttle.



Meditation Mtn. and glacier crossing. Photograph: Claire Ebendinger.

## JOFFRE LAKE TO LILLOOET LAKE

*Larry Borgerson*

August 30 – September 1

We likely all expected rain, which caused some original enrollees to say, “no, next time.” Those that did finally lace up their boots said “come rain or come shine, now’s the time.”

Our first night found us at Ian & Margaret’s cosy cabin on Lillooet Lake. Terry and I timed our arrival perfectly to share beer and dinner with the Browns. Being senior climbers and early risers, we were in bed by 9 pm. Just before we nodded off Wendy and Helen arrived so now we were six.

Two of our vehicles took us to the

Joffre Lakes parking lot Saturday morning. We were on the trail by 9 am. Ian’s long and fit legs meant he had to occasionally wait for the rest of us to catch up. Once past the turquoise-coloured Upper Joffre Lake, we saw no more people. Our first was to be beside a tarn that from afar looked unlikely to yield any tenting sites as we surveyed the boulder-strewn scene we walked across. Alas, three spots revealed themselves and we could concentrate our thoughts on dinner.

Ian had originally conceived of this trip on an earlier hike to this region.

Now, on our second day, we were about to find out if the ridge he’d seen previously covered in a wicked cornice was passable in the summer. It turned out to be a simple route and lead us to Duffy Peak where we lunched and enjoyed the vistas including the Pemberton Valley and all the surrounding peaks and icefields.

We descended to our second mountain lake and began setting up camp at 1:30. There was much shrieking as each of us took the plunge into the frigid water. Ian got in another 2 hours walk toward Twin Goat Peak before

his dip.

In the late afternoon the little glacier on the lake's edge calved and we got to see an alpine tsunami. With the three next tsunamis our interest gradually diminished. This phenomenon had become passe and we took for granted what was happening outside as we

D zipped in to our tents and sleeping bags for the night.

The rain that had been predicted for the weekend finally came during the night and we awoke to smile at

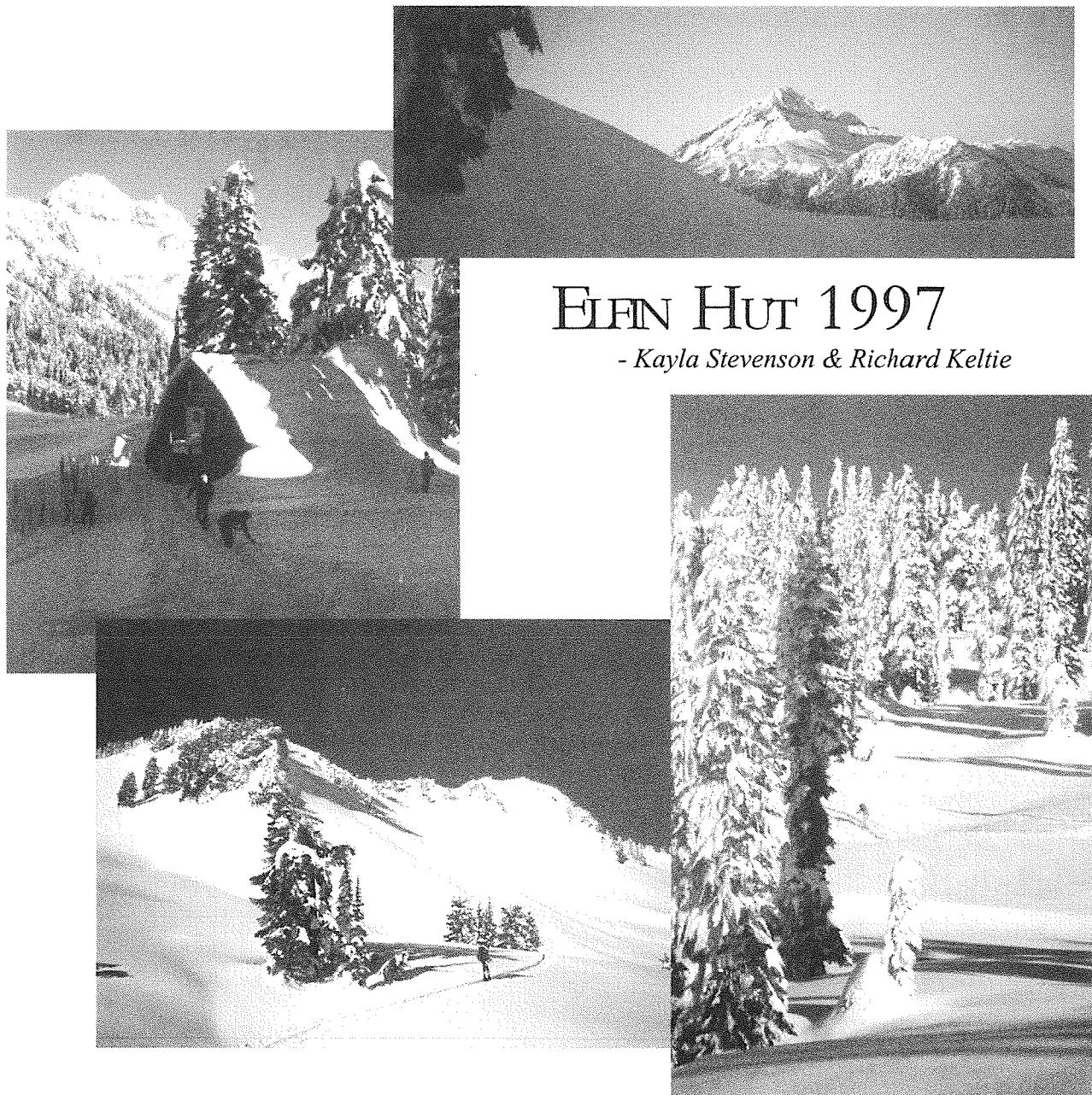
our "Camelot" fortune. Maybe it was "the luck o' the Irish." After all, we had Terry Lunn along.

If walking up a steep hill is a "bit of a grunt," is walking down a similar grade "a bit of a stunt?" It was our final day and Labour Day at that, so we did our share of labouring. In 4½ hours we descended 5,400 ft. At the bottom (Lillooet Lake and the Brown's cabin) our knees felt as if someone had been beating our knees with rubber mallets. No bruises, but for the next three days, the pain when sitting on

the throne reminded me of the abuse the legs had endured.

Thanks Ian for your low-key style of leadership. The way you went ahead to check out the route but stopped just at the right time to allow us a chance to catch up demonstrated a great sense of caring for your fellow hikers.

*Participants: Ian Brown (leader), Margaret Brown, Wendy Croft, Helen Pascoe (from England), Terry Lunn, and Larry Borgerson.*



## ELFIN HUT 1997

- Kayla Stevenson & Richard Keltie

# SOUTH OF THE BORDER

## VOLCANOES '97

*Tony Pugh*

June 7 - 14

The insistent beeping of my wrist watch indicated that it was 3:00 am and time to crawl out of a cosy sleeping bag and into the chilly night air at 6,000 ft in the parking lot of Timberline Lodge. Overhead the sky was wonderfully clear with a multitude of pinpricks of light coming from millions of stars. Looking to the north, the black bulk of Mount Hood's south side reared up into the sky with a line of amber dots scattered across its face as very early morning climbers continued on their way up towards the summit, obviously another crowded weekend on Mt. Hood was materializing.

Parked in the middle of the parking lot was Catrin's van, which was a relief, perhaps everything on this trip is going to turn out OK after all. This

was the beginning of day two of the Volcano '97 trip. Day one did not go as planned due to vehicle breakdown just over the U.S. border, but thanks to Rick and Catrin's determination, they caught up with us at midnight. After barely three hours sleep they were up and ready to join Mike, Gil, Charles, Joseph and myself on a climb of Mt. Hood. Catrin, having climbed Hood the year before, decided to spend the morning skiing instead of climbing.

The Mt. Hood portion of this trip was really Gil's scheduled club trip from the week before which was postponed due to weather conditions, so Charles and Joseph would only be with us for the Mt. Hood climb and then would return home.

Climbing Mt. Hood was accomplished under perfect conditions. Although the bergschrund had to be end-run as there was no longer a snowbridge to allow a direct approach up the Hog's

central Oregon's scenic highways 26 and 97. We stopped for lunch at Kenny Rogers Chicken House in Bend, and then visited underground down a mile long lava tube.

It was evening by the time we crossed into California, but the long days of June left us with plenty of daylight to reach our next objective - 14,164 ft Mt. Shasta. It wasn't long before Shasta came into view, standing white and magnificent, all alone with a cap

of cloud around its summit many miles away.

The town of Mt. Shasta produced a fine Bavarian restaurant with schnitzel and good bock beer for dinner that night. A rough parking area at the bunny flats trailhead at 7,000 feet provided a suitable camping spot.

Next morning after dutifully depositing our \$15 per



Rick and Catrin below summit of Mt. Shasta. Photograph: Tony Pugh.

person climbing fee into the self pay receptacle and collecting the required poop bags we headed up the mountain with full packs. The intention was to camp that night at Lake Helen 10,500 ft up on the avalanche gulch route that we reached without incident by early afternoon. Here we dug ourselves into the snow and made camp along with several other groups.

Lake Helen is not a lake; though I believe by late August it may occa-

person climbing fee into the self pay receptacle and collecting the required poop bags we headed up the mountain with full packs. The intention was to camp that night at Lake Helen 10,500 ft up on the avalanche gulch route that we reached without incident by early afternoon. Here we dug ourselves into the snow and made camp along with several other groups.

Lake Helen is not a lake; though I believe by late August it may occa-

sionally become one. According to the guidebook it is, "More often a large chunk of snow, rock and ice that struggles to melt, even in August". For us it was a fairly level bench of snow which made for a good camp spot, except for the odd chunk of frozen crap that showed up when digging in the snow.

During the night the weather began to change. The tent was buffeted by gusts of wind and hail. However, when we crawled out of the tent the stars showed through a light overcast. So after the usual climbers breakfast we took off for the summit.

By the time we reached the ridge below Thumb Rock, a prominent gendarme on Sergeant's Ridge, the weather had changed for the worse. Visibility was down to about 20 ft, the wind was screaming over the ridge and it was cold. Huddling behind some rocks for protection, we discussed whether to carry on or retreat when Rick, who had reached the ridge by climbing up a gully in the red banks and reached the ridge above us, appeared through the mist to announce that there were wands up ahead. Catrin and I followed Rick from wand to wand up the ridge, with Rick taking bearings at each one to ensure we could get back down. Mike and Gil, having greater wisdom, waited to see if the weather would clear.

Just as we reached the top of the last hill on the ridge, aptly named "Misery Hill", voila! The clouds parted, the sun appeared and across the summit plateau there was the summit rock pile. So away we went, snapping photos while we could on up to the top. Although

the summit was clear, all around the mountain were great masses of dark and ominous billowing clouds foaming upwards, so we knew this clear period wasn't going to last. Looking back down across the summit plateau we spotted two figures approaching. It was Mike and Gil who had decided to go for the summit when the weather cleared.

So we all made it, but only just. By the time we left the ridge we were in a complete white out. Eventually we reached the tents and crawled in for protection against a vicious hailstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning. At the next break in the weather we broke camp and went flat out for the bottom of the hill, finally getting to the vehicles in monsoon rains with everything saturated.

That night we slept in the Mt. Shasta Motel and celebrated our survival with a hot shower and a feast of Mexican food and beer.

Next morning after a hearty breakfast, we drove down to Lassen Peak (10,457 ft) to take care of the most southerly of the Cascade volcanoes. The weather was sunny and warm heading down 15 but by the time we reached Lassen Volcanic Park the clouds were starting to build. Against the advice of the Park Ranger we decided to climb up to the summit anyway. After all we had just climbed Hood and Shasta and this volcano had a trail up to the top which started from a parking lot at 8,500 ft.

This early in the season the trail was still snow covered but was easy enough to follow. The skiers, which was everyone except me, took skis

to the top and had a speedy descent back to the parking lot, only just in time too. We had just loaded up the vehicles when another of those late afternoon hailstorms hit us. By the time we got underway it was a full blown snow storm, leaving us to negotiate the road back down the mountain in a couple of inches of wet, slushy and slippery snow which naturally became rain on reaching the lowlands.

We headed back north on California's scenic byway route as the rain continued to come down in bucketfuls. It was Mike's contention that somewhere between the weather systems created by Lassen Peak and Mt. Shasta there would be a dry spot and that we should continue to drive until we found it, which we eventually did. This turned out to be a beautiful state park called McArthur Burney Falls Memorial Park.

The following day, being Friday, we drove on across Oregon and into Washington via the freeway with the intention of climbing Mt. St. Helens before returning home. However, this was not to be. St. Helens has a quota system and the weekend roster was already full, so we left it to wait for another day.

We camped that night at a campground named Volcano View (no view and shades of "Deliverance") and returned home the next day, well-contented after a really enjoyable week having travelled about 2,700 km and climbed an honest 14,500 ft.

*Participants: Catrin Brown, Rick Eppler, Gil Parker, Mike Hubbard and Tony Pugh, joined by Charles and Joseph Turner for Mt. Hood.*

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## THREE NOSES

September 13 - 15  
*Doug Goodman*

This was of the relaxed-stroll-in-the-alpine variety of trip—easy trail, not too far, lots of time, and no *need* for hardware. After an hour's hiking

in magnificent old growth, our destination showed itself from afar, through a window in the trees. Just discernible was the mountaintop hut, appearing very distant and elusive. I understood the amazement of some of our group. We would actually be on top of the peak on the morrow? But, as is typical in the North Cascades, so I've been told, the distance slipped by quickly

thanks to a well-groomed trail, even in the alpine. The fingers looked more like noses to me, but extremely handsome ones (I admire large pointy noses). The top of the middle nose was lopped many years ago, and a wooden shack built on the summit.

Alas Sunday morning, camped in the meadows at the edge of the alpine, the weather was wild, wet, and

windy, and there were extensive deliberations designed to either reach a consensus or to delay action, or both. We had hoped to spend our second night on the summit, but did not want to risk being blown away or packing all gear higher, only to be turned back by wind. Eventually Sylvia suggested we go there for the day, which proved a wise decision, as the weather was even more wild on night number 2 (major flapping). Three wooden ladders lead from the end of the trail up the summit piece to the shack. While the others happily scampered up the ladders, I stood and cursed at them (ladders), as they were blocking the easiest climbing route, and as much as I wished to join the others, I wanted more to come by this summit honestly. Of course by the time I'd hauled out the rope and climbed up, the group was ready to leave, so the beer waited till we were back in camp. The views from the top were magnificently missing, but wonderfully compensated for by glimpses of glacier and rocky peak-lets along the trail. Later, approaching camp, wildflowers and marmots gazed at us in an odd sunny break. Leader Pugh had assured us that there were no bears in the area, on account of there being too many people with guns. Nevertheless, and not entirely to our surprise, a bear was spotted below us. A large black one headed upslope directly for Tony and the others on the trail ahead of us, and out of shouting range. We raised our axes in readiness and proceeded cautiously, but did not see it again. More wildlife was seen on Monday morning. It dawned wild and even wetter. The trail turned into a veritable river, full of jumping salmon, which swam with us the last km to the autos.

*Participants: Tony Pugh (leader), Sylvia Moser, David Press, Norm Harrigan, Chris Schriber, Bruce Kennedy, Diane Kennedy, Doug Goodman*



Joseph descending Mt. Hood in fine style. Photograph: Tony Pugh.

## MT. HOOD

*Charles Turner*

Mt. Hood or Wy 'East (Son of the great spirit) stands at 11,237 ft above sea level a spectacular peak soaring straight up 5,237 ft from the parking lot.

My son, Joseph, and I left Friday night to avoid a 3:30 am start on Saturday. We slept in the vehicle at Tsawassen. The rest joined us from the 7 am ferry Saturday morning. I followed Catrin to the border then stopped for gas, after which I was speeding down the I5 wanting to catch Catrin and Co. It didn't take long. I found them a few miles south of the border on the side of the road. The vehicle had blown a frost plug and lost all the water. It was like *deja vu* only it was *my* vehicle *last year* on the way to Mt. Baker.

Catrin phoned for a tow truck to take her back to White Rock. We spent a most relaxing 2 hours on the side of the road lounging in the long green grass and eating chocolate chip cookies. Finally it was decided that I should continue with Joseph and Gill, while Catrin and Rick were to go back with the van and hopefully catch us up later.

We finally met Tony and Mike at Zig-Zags for dinner and received a

message that Catrin and Rick were on their way.

So off to the Mt. Hood parking lot for the night.

The day had been very overcast and didn't look too promising. But as we started to climb the weather improved and by the time we reached our destination it had cleared right up. We were treated to a spectacular view of Mt. Hood.

The time was now around 8:30 pm and very cold and windy. Gill anchored his tent between Tony's truck and mine and we all turned in, setting the alarm for 3 am.

The morning was clear and cold. Other than myself on Tele skies and Joseph carrying his snow board the rest opted to walk. Rick was up and ready to join us. They had arrived at 11:30 pm. The skis worked fine for a while, but soon it became too steep and icy and the skis were not holding. So into the pack with them. It was a long trudge up the first part of the mountain on a snow cat track. But after we passed the top of the ski area at 8,500 ft we were on our own.

Joseph and I stashed our skis and



snow board at about 10,400 ft in the Devil's Kitchen area. It became much steeper after that. With the extra weight off our packs there was no holding Joseph back.

We were soon on the summit enjoying the views and soaking up the sun. Many of the other volcanoes were visible. Mt. Adams, St. Helens, Rainier to the north. Jefferson, 3 Sisters, Shasta to the south. We descended very carefully as any step would have meant sliding very rapidly into the bergschrund.

We were soon back at our skis and snow board sweating in the hot sun. Time to take off crampons, rope, harness and glide the rest of the way down. Everyone looked on very enviously as we rapidly descended the mountain in excellent spring snow. Joseph had forgotten about the 4 ft drop as we approached the ski area. They have a cat road running across the mountain with a 4 ft wall on the top side of it. A lady was sitting against the wall when suddenly above her comes

an airborne snow boarder. They were both equally surprised. The ski patrol were definitely not amused. Then I came along and almost did the same thing.

From there it was down to Timberline lodge for beer. A great way to spend a morning. We were down by noon, approximately an 8 h round trip.

*Participants: Gil Parker (leader), Catrin Brown, Rick Eppler, Mike Hubbard, Tony Pugh, Joseph Turner, and Charles Turner.*

## BEACH BUMMING

*Doug Goodman*  
May 17 - 19

This was to be a scheduled family trip to the Olympic alpine, but somehow in November I forgot that young hikers might be impeded by the deep snow of May. So if the mountain life's too tough, let's find a beach.

Hot sunshine, wild forest, hungry racoons, crafty crows, fresh or salty swimming, big waves, free firewood, soft sandy camping, scrambling on pinnacles surrounded by the tidal weeds, endless beach hiking among rocks weeds, sand and driftwood, friends about the fire, a good book, and a good rest.

Well, OK, not all of us were quite as laid back as others. Mark, with little training, carried a 20 lb pack the 6 mile return trip. Myles performed a similar feat. Lisa and Deb hiked from Rialto to the arches, stopping over to camp with us on the beach by Ozette, and Larry went south from there for a solo day.

Julie and I traded off supervision of the littler beach bums, to wander here and there. And if the wilderness was a bit tame, there's always the bars of beautiful downtown Pt. Angeles.

*Participants: Deb, Lisa McBain, Julie Thomson, Myles Thomson, Larry Talarico, Doug Goodman (coordinator), and Mark Goodman.*

## GLACIER PEAK (10,541 ft)

*Rick Eppler*  
Sept 20 - 21

The immediate reaction when you tell people you want to do Logan in September, is scepticism - the weather, the time of year, the amount of time (3 day weekend!). When they find out the objective is a much smaller peak in the North Cascades (not the Yukon biggy) there is noticeable relief. In fact this peak is a perfect peak for a fall three-day weekend. The colours in the Thunder Creek valley, the smells of the sub-alpine at camp below Perfect Pass and the vistas from the top of the long snow plod and scramble would be worth it. It is a 16 mile plod however, and if the weather wasn't up to it, neither was I. In addition, 3 days at this time of year severely limited the number of interested participants.

Well, as all carefully thought out and overly ambitious ideas go, it got eroded by more modest thoughts of a two day trip - given the preceding month of cruddy weather. So Glacier Peak surfaced as Plan B. I figured if the conditions weren't right for summiting, at least we would get a consolation soak in the Kennedy Hot Springs, a modest five and a half mile hike in from the parking lot. (It was also on the 'to do' list of volcanoes by the 'Volcano Peak Bagging Club', most of whom were planning to join this trip).

So nine of us collected on the first ferry Saturday, and drove to Darrington under abnormally perfect weather. Lunch out of the way, we proceeded south to the White Chuck River Trail head by 1:50 pm - sans the necessary backcountry permit. (Somewhere in Darrington seems to be the place to get one) We never did.

The trail follows the White Chuck River for 5.5 miles to Kennedy Hot Springs (a primitive hot springs soaking area), gaining about 1,800 ft in the process - a mere third of the required elevation to Boulder Basin (high camp). The trail has been re-worked in several places, gaining and losing elevation to skirt slides in the unstable volcanic deposits along the banks of the river. This proved to be an annoying process. The tall forest canopy of hemlock and fir shielded us from the warm September sun, a welcome relief. Immediately after crossing Kennedy Creek, and almost within sight of the hot springs, an in-obvious sharp left turn, takes one 300' up the forested ridge directly in front of you, and then

through a boggy flat (I've missed this before, and some did again). Another left turn about 1 mile along, onto the Pacific Crest Trail takes you north for approx. 1 mile under the west side of Glacier Peak. At 4,100 ft elev. a poorly marked right turn leads out of confusing terrain and onto Glacier Trail. This trail ascends 1,500 ft directly up the steep Sitkum Ridge right (south) of Sitkum Creek with minimal switch backing. This dumps you out at 5,600 ft in the heather/ boulder field below the Sitkum Glacier. None of these turns and trails are marked well, if at all, so take a map.

Generations of climbers have levelled tent platforms from the rubble, creating a terraced tent village, with a comfortable biffy installed below the lowest terrace.

We needed all the available light to get to camp by 7:00 pm, and cooked supper in the dark after a classic September sunset. The wind came up, as it often seems to do, and blustered about, chasing us into the bags. The next day was going to be an early start anyway, so it was just as well.

Sunday we were up in partial moonlight at 2:00 am, and hiking up the moraines with headlamp by 3:00 am. Snowline was at about 6,800 ft. The crevasses in the Sitkum Glacier above were bridged over by a substantial layer of hard new snow, and the moon had risen high enough to be useful, so we continued

unroped and without headlamps. By the time our group reached Sitkum Spire and the frozen scree of Sitkum Ridge at 9,355 ft elev., everyone was on crampons, crunching uphill facing a Cascade sunrise.

The profile of Glacier Peak cast a corresponding shadow on the western horizon as the sun's glow warmed the sky in the east. Baker to the north, Rainier and others to the south came alive as the morning light painted their faces with orange. The last few hundred feet to the top were up steep frozen slopes. On top, our group collected in a sheltered hollow just east of the summit about 8:00 am, and enjoyed a well deserved mountain breakfast - complete with ginger wine!

Three quarters of an hour later we were in motion again and plunge-stepped down the softening slopes of the glacier to the lower moraines. A few of the group broke a foot through into crevasses in the process. Hmm - complacency CAN hurt you? Maybe we should have roped up to go down? The crevasses up on the Sitkum aren't real people eaters, like on Baker or Rainier, but could do some serious damage I suspect. You know - wrong place/wrong time.

Back at camp two hours later, we took an hour out to eat lunch and pack up. The four-and-a-half-hour plod out was tedious with sore muscles and lack of sleep noticeable. Once

again the cool forest canopy was appreciated.

Although we were on the road by 5:00 pm, US/Can. border delays plagued everyone, so the 9:00 pm ferry was our ride back to the Island.

In the words of John Damashke: "15 hours driving, 19 hours climbing, and all in a two day weekend". Fun stuff.

#### NOTABLE EVENTS:

Mike walking a gauntlet of applause after taking a wrong turn on the way out and showing up at the cars minutes before the search party was formed.

Claire's hot pink lip cream turning all the ladies in close proximity into a Cheri Tart and a Welsh Tart (they know who they are).

David Press attracting the wasp's attention once again. They like you David.

Five of the group stepping out into crevasses (unroped I might add). The ascent of the Glacier by the light of the Full Moon

Rick, Mike, and Claire chasing errant bits all over the Glacier including an ice axe and a mitt.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Catrin Brown, John Damaschke, Gil Parker, David Press, Mike Hubbard, Tony Pugh, Scott Pierce, and Rick Eppler (leader).*

## ECLECTIC OLYMPIANS PERAMBULATE MOUNT ANGELES

*Gil Parker*

September 7<sup>th</sup>, as a substitute for the scheduled 2 day B3 to Rainbow Mountain near Whistler, leader Mike Hubbard leaked the information that he would be going instead to Mount Angeles, an easy Sunday hike with a little bike riding thrown in. Twelve additional souls were taken in by this rumour and showed up on the Coho Ferry to Port Angeles at 6:00

am in the morning!

We were an eclectic bunch. While I promised Mike this would only run to three paragraphs, I must quote the simplified dictionary meaning of "eclectic", namely "selecting and using what seems best from various sources." In a stretch this may apply to the climbers, but not to the bikes, which varied from basement relic street jobbies to 21 speed

fat rubber mountain bikes. The 2,000 ft sweat on wheels definitely favoured the Lepps and the Pepples, recently returned from a cycling holiday in the south of Ireland. Those with insufficiently low gearing and/or inadequately trained quadriceps later suffered in the transition to normal climbing (on foot) with the result that the leader and your author were cramped up

and writhing on the ground at intervals.

Nevertheless, most of the party made the east summit, some both east and west (6,454 ft), and the remainder enjoyed the pleasant fall weather, loafing at the col. Through several quick changes in itinerary, Rick Eppler was tricked into lugging my pack to the summit (while I descended another route). My trip out to the bikes was therefore dry and hungry, but I was able to keep ahead of my pack and save my knees. Thanks, Rick. The true value

of wheels was realized on the road to Port Angeles, whisking us to the beer and Mexi-hots at the Chihuahua Restaurant, well before the 9:30 ferry home.

We were true Olympians, aged from 15 to 60, surviving a trip we have upgraded to a C2 in deference to Mike's cramps. And we were truly eclectic, having jetted or driven this way and that, tasting the best of the earth's fare in 1997. All had been outside of Canada's boundaries (surprise); that would be Tony Pugh, Krista Fuoco, David press

and leader Mike. Jo-Ann Draper and Gerhardt Lepp, Chris and Lynn Peppler had sampled the pubs of Ireland; Catrin Brown and Rick Eppler the drafts of the Alps and Wales. Sylvia Moser had been to Britain, as of course, had Mike's muscle-bound nephew, Tom Hubbard, here to sample the waters in Canada. And then there was me, trying to survive on a vodka-deficient diet after a month among the volcanoes of Kamchatka. I wonder what destruction of the ozone layer the remaining members of the Vancouver Island Section can claim?

## MT. BAKER

*Greg Gordon*



Climbers waiting for bus on Coleman glacier.  
Photograph: Greg Gordon.

The Labour Day weekend was nearly upon us. Todd Patton and I were planning a trip. But where? It would be nice to climb something big. Denali, K2, Aconcagua—the choices were many. Todd was afraid to leave the country in case they would not let him back in, so we settled on one of our local giants, Mt. Baker. (I didn't tell Todd it was in the U.S.)

So off we went to a big mountain with a gloomy weather forecast. After I convinced Todd the Sumas boarder crossing was just a tollbooth, we checked in at the ranger station in Glacier. They confirmed the bad weather forecast - thunderstorms. Oh well, a little lightning bolt up the butt never hurt anyone twice.

We chose the straightforward Coleman/Demming route. An easy hike brought us to the toe of the Coleman Glacier, where we planned to camp. There were already about twenty people there, but we discovered most of them were leaving the next morning.

The skies were mostly clear at this point but the summit was blanketed under a lenticular cloud. The cloud was streaming over the peak and constantly reshaping. Several people we talked to reported it was very windy and cold and most did not reach the summit.

We awoke the next morning to crystal clear skies. Wow what a treat! Where were the thunderstorms? Where was the lenticular cloud? We strapped on our crampons and Todd kicked the first steps onto the Coleman. I was a little upset because he had just destroyed my stove.

We followed three other parties already on their way up. The glacier at this time of year was very impressive. The crevasses were monsters, some big enough to easily swallow a city bus. Places I have skied over on a spring trip were impassable now. When we reached the Grant/Colfax col we found the other teams resting in the shelter of rocks from the wind. We took a short break and then passed the

other groups in the hopes of having the summit to ourselves for awhile. We ascended the Roman Wall through increasing cloud on a skiff of fresh August snow. We reached the very windy summit in whiteout conditions. Occasionally the cloud would part and fast-moving windows would offer us views of Mt. Shuksan and the surrounding

Cascades. Todd got really worried and confused because he thought it was the mountain that was moving and not the clouds. Twenty minutes later the other teams arrived and the chilly windswept summit was suddenly a very busy place.

It was a three-day weekend so we were in no hurry to catch a ferry. On the way down we took the time to

explore around crevasses and snow bridges, taking lots of pictures in the blazing sun. We had the entire camp to ourselves that evening and walked out the next day under a light rain.

*Participants: Greg Gordon and Todd Patton.*

## PRUSSIK PEAK

*Michael Kuzyk*

June 27 - July 2



The clouds part and afford of a glimpse of Prussik Peak. Photograph: Michael Kuzyk.

It was late June, and it was already quite apparent that El Niño wasn't going to be allowing us an early summer. I made plans with my climbing partner, Alex, in Seattle to climb Serpentine Arete on Dragontail Peak in the Enchantment Lakes region of the Cascades. The drive to Leavenworth brought us spectacular views of Index Pk. In Leavenworth the ranger on staff required a brief lesson in communica-

tion skills before we were able to obtain backcountry permits for the entire Enchantment Lakes area. On the way to the trailhead we passed the impressive Snow Creek Wall. Although I was assured by Alex that it wasn't as steep as it appeared (I must have been imagining it), I knew instantly that the classic seven pitch route Outer Space (5.7) was not plan B or C on my list.

A quick 3 h hike to Colchuk Lk provided stunning views of Mt. Stuart's N. ridge. We set up camp under Dragontail and Colchuk Pks. Colchuk Lk reminds me very much of Landslide Lk and Mt. Colonel Foster but on a larger scale. Dragontail tips the scales around 9,000 ft. The arete looked amazing, 11 pitches with two crux pitches of 5.9. We slept that night hoping for good weather and had aspirations for an early al-

pine start.

We awoke to our alarms and rain. Neither of us had to say a word. Sleep longer and see what happens.

As we ate breakfast, we tried to make sense of the swirling clouds and wondered how stiff the climbing on the route truly was. A quick and eerie\* conversation with our campsite neighbours quickly dashed any hopes we had of climbing this route in wet conditions. A quick jaunt up Colchuk Pk didn't entice Alex too much either. Colchuk is simply a scramble, and we were psyched for a more technical climb, and Alex had done Colchuk before. We decided to hike further south to Prussik Pk with hopes that it would be drier. Our neighbours had tackled the humbling south face of Prussik Pk (5.10a) two days earlier. We would settle for a shot at the classic west ridge, rated 5.7.

We were on the approach by 8 am and two hours of slogging brought us to the top of Asgard pass, 2,000 ft above camp. We commented earlier that it, "sure doesn't look like 2,000 ft." We were now entering the true Enchantment Lakes area. This is an amazing place, a plateau at 8,000 ft with dozens of alpine cirques scattered across several square miles. The traverse to Prussik Pk afforded us amazing views of Dragontail's backside and Prussik's jagged profile provided a striking contrast to the surrounding landscape.

After three hours of approach, we were at the base of the W. ridge stashing our boots and one of our packs. The route is 4 pitches and follows the ridge proper until just below the top. Prussik is composed of beautiful granite, with a yellow hue and the route reminded me of smaller scale of Pigeon Spire's W. ridge in the Bugaboos. Alex lead the crux pitch which contains a 5.7 face with no protection but an old piton at the beginning of the face. What an airy move, and Becky's description of the piton as "manky" is dead on. The final pitch slips onto the N. face, and after some laybacking and an awkward chimney (my personal crux and attempted lead) you pop onto the summit. A few glances

down the S. face and a quick survey of the huge fissures in this mountain make you wonder how this peak stays up. We have a snack, and take some photos and begin the descent. Four full length, double rope rappels bring you to the base of the N. face. Standing on snow in our rock shoes makes us wonder if maybe there wasn't some better place we could have stashed our boots.

The following day, the weather turned for the worse and we headed back to Leavenworth. We cragged out at the local Leavenworth crags and Peshastin Pinnacles farther to the east for a couple days and then headed back to Seattle. We made a quick stop in Index where Alex showed me the stiff routes he's been solo aiding lately. We also climbed the only two easy routes in Index (below 5.10 that is) and Great Western Slab was a classic indeed though. All in all though, this trip helped continue my love affair with the North Cascades.

\*POSTSCRIPT -

After talking with our tent neighbours for a while we discover that one of them has an uncanny ability to remember faces. It turned out that through completely unrelated events, he recognized both Alex and I. He remembered Alex from Bellingham when Alex was helping build a climbing gym. He also noticed that Alex was wearing his old snow pants that he sold through a used gear sale in Bellingham. If that isn't weird enough (which it definitely was for us), he followed up on a conversation from the night before with me. He asked, "Mike, exactly when were you in the Bugaboos?" Well, to make this already long story short, our respective trips to the Bugaboos in 1995 had overlapped. Both Alex and I were floored.

*Participants: Alex Krawarik and Michael Kuzyk.*

## CASCADE MOONSET

From high on planet Earth  
we are awed by night shows,  
myriad constellations of ours  
and other stars.

While still dark we strike upward  
for Glacier Peak's snowbound summit.  
Long hours plodding in frozen  
steps of earlier climbers  
over unknown crevasses,  
faceless dark hulks in silent motion.  
Moon shadow encloses each  
in a capsule of awareness.

The Dipper pours on north horizon.  
We labour up the dagger of Orion  
that fades as daylight  
scatters our stars,  
our solitude.

- Gil Parker



# DISTANT OBJECTIVES

## HUASCARAN

*Reinhard Illner*

A rattling of the tent wakes me from deep, dreamless sleep. My two tentmates and I need a few seconds to remember where we are and what we are about to do. We are camped at 5,800 m, in Camp 2 on Peru's highest mountain, and today is our summit attempt. It is June 21, 1997, the day of winter solstice here in the Southern Hemisphere, 1 am. It snowed a little last night, and the rattling was not only the wake-up call from our friendly neighbours, the Austrian guide Walter and his Peruvian partners, it was also to shake the fresh snow off our tent.

We bundle up like never before on this trip—extra underwear, turtle-

necks, sweaters, Gortex jackets, down jackets, mittens and wind gloves. In the meantime, hot tea is brewing in the vestibule (the lighting of the stove was the first act after the wake-up call), and after an invigorating cup of hot tea, we venture outside.

Full moon. An incredible southern sky. Biting cold. No wind. The conditions are perfect.

We form two teams. We three men, Bob, Tom and I, rope up with Helen, our guide, and Gerta, Diane and Marg form a second team to follow us. Slowly, incredulously, cautiously we begin to

traverse north under the huge, 30 m high, windblown and overhanging snow wall which protected us from the winds, but which must now be carefully circumvented. We need no headlamps; the moonlight is sufficient.

My mind wanders even as I pace myself to coordinate my breathing with my steps. 48 hours ago, stalled in Camp

All through this trip, now in its fourth week, Huascaran has been with us. We saw it like a mirage from the streets of Huaraz (there they are! minute twinkling of lights, 50 kilometres to the south and more than 3,000 m below us), we talked about it while climbing the peaks of Urus and Ishinca from the Ishinca Valley, and we took pictures

of Huascaran from the valley below, where the incredible beauty of the mountain belies the permanent danger which it creates for the inhabitants of the Callejon de Huaylas. Huge avalanches have repeatedly broken off this mountain and destroyed whole villages below. The largest such catastrophe, in



Huascaran from Yungay. Photograph: Reinhard Illner.

1 on the lower glacier after two days of bad weather, we had almost given up because we were concerned about breaking trail in the new snow, about avalanche danger, about the immensity of this mountain and our modest climbing skills. Just yesterday, the weather had cleared, and we had climbed through the steep and dangerous icefall beneath the west face of Huascaran Sur, the mountain's main line of defense. We had progressed with great caution and apprehension intimidated by the scale of the immense icescape around and still mostly above us.

1970, buried the entire village of Yungay and killed almost all of its 18,000 inhabitants.

We cross a few small crevasses and then have to traverse back towards the south along an enormous chasm, which the glacier has formed and which now blocks our access to the Garganta, the 6,010 m high Col separating the two summits of Huascaran. During the traverse, we pass some 50 metres above our tents. Eventually the chasm narrows, and we reach a precarious snow bridge where earlier parties (and Walter and the Peruvians, who

are breaking trail ahead) have crossed. We carefully belay; the chasm seems bottomless in the dark.

As we head now eastward on almost level ground into the Garganta, cautious optimism about our venture enters my mind. This is easy! We reach the high point in the Garganta and follow the previous party up the very steep slope to the south. The main summit, more than 700 m higher, is not visible from here. Instead, many icefalls block the way, but it looks like there should be a way around them. Step by step, we gain altitude.

I remember the emotions which I felt down on the Campo Santo, the field of debris that used to be Yungay; Straw flowers grow where children used to play; A huge Christ statue has been erected on top of the cemetery hill, which, ironically, was the only place that was not buried; the only survivors of the catastrophe were those who went to visit their dead on that fateful afternoon. I wonder what must have gone through their mind as they saw the monster avalanche, moving at 300 kilometres an hour, come down the west face of Huascarán Norte and bury their village. As I stood there, next to the Christ statue, struck by the unbelievable beauty of the ice-crowned nemesis towering to the east, I spoke a silent prayer for the victims.

All this is now almost 4 vertical kilometres below us, as we have to overcome some steep and icy sections. I am pleased that my crampons are new and pointy. We work hard and breathe hard; the biting cold tries to eat through the layers of gloves and shoes and socks, but our internal engines win. Only during brief rest stops is there the danger of chilling out, and we don't stop much.

Helen has always been talking about "keeping the momentum", and today this is more important than ever. This is our only chance to get to the summit. The day after tomorrow is the

scheduled departure day from Huaraz. Our plan is to descend to Camp 1 after the summit. The scenery around us is scenery of silver. Silver moon, silver ice, silver stars, silver snow, and a few silvery clouds. What a contrast to the otherwise overwhelming colours which this country has shown us! The powerful reds, blues and yellows which the local women like to wear; the subtle shades of deep green in the waters of the mountain lakes, contrasted with the red and brown of the bark of the quinoa trees, the highest growing trees in the world; the colours of the markets in Huaraz, where we have seen an unanticipated variety of crops.



The ladies on top. Photograph: Reinhard Illner.

The slopes below us are like a breadbasket, irrigated with the meltwaters from the same glaciers that threaten the villages in the valley.

Now we traverse to the right, below a vertical face of blank ice; the route demands full concentration. We turn the corner between the North and Northwest face of the summit pyramid and are suddenly on less steep ground. A rest stop brings both parties close together. We feel very confident that we will succeed.

The moon is in the western sky now, and the sky is not so dark anymore. The majestic summit of Huascarán Norte still looms above us, but we can see that we have gained much of the al-

titude. The broken south face of Huascarán Norte is a yardstick to measure our progress, and even when we will have reached the end of the yardstick, we won't be there, because ours is the higher summit. For a moment I wish we were going to Huascarán Norte; we wouldn't have to go so far... I smile at myself over the idea.

A week ago I was still sick, quite sick indeed, and I thought for a night that I would get to visit the hospital in Huaraz rather than this mountain. All of us had been affected by "Atahualpa's revenge", and all of us had fought it off fairly effectively with Cipro antibiotics. But I was the only one who

got it a second time, and worse than the first time. It cost me the summit on Pisco mountain (well, I didn't even try- I knew that in my condition I wasn't up to it. I gave my crampons and ice axe to Jorge, our faithful porter, and he summited in my place); for three days I lived off dry bread, beef jerky and other friendly foods. Maybe it was all for the better. I must have lost a lot of weight that I don't have to carry up here now.

The sky is not black anymore. It is blue, a blue so deep that you sense the closeness to outer space. The moon has become pale. We make a final traverse to the right to cross a big crevasse over a solid but steep and icy snowbridge. Above, the seemingly endless summit slope beckons, not very steep, and without further obstacles. But we are now at about 6,400 m and the going gets harder. We breathe, we breathe, and we step. The first rays of sunlight kiss the top of Huascarán Norte, and suddenly the colours are back, this time a surreal mix of yellows, oranges and pinks. The summits to the Northeast of Huascarán, among them Alpamayo, are still gray, but the sky above them is a fiery orange. Does this slope never end? And now it is windy. The wind blows right down from the summit and penetrates

our many layers with stratospheric cold. I put my down jacket over all the other layers. It helps.

We rest more frequently. It is about 8:30 in the morning, and the north summit is now not so high above us. Suddenly, voices. The strong party that so generously broke trail for us is descending. They have been to the summit! As they pass through the light pyramid formed by Huascaran Norte, I manage to get a photograph. Climbers in profile, at the edge of space. It turns into one of my best pictures from this trip.

We also ask: "How much longer?" and hear "Just twenty minutes." And we keep going. The wind drops, we warm up, but the minutes stretch. At 9:30, incredibly, amazingly, there is nowhere higher to go. We stand on the rounded, vast summit at an altitude of 6,768 m. The north summit is now really below us, and so are all the other giant mountains of the Cordillera Blanca, which have towered above us for these last weeks: Chopicalqui, Huandoy, Copa, Ranrapalca, Artesonraju, and Alpamayo. Names like poems.

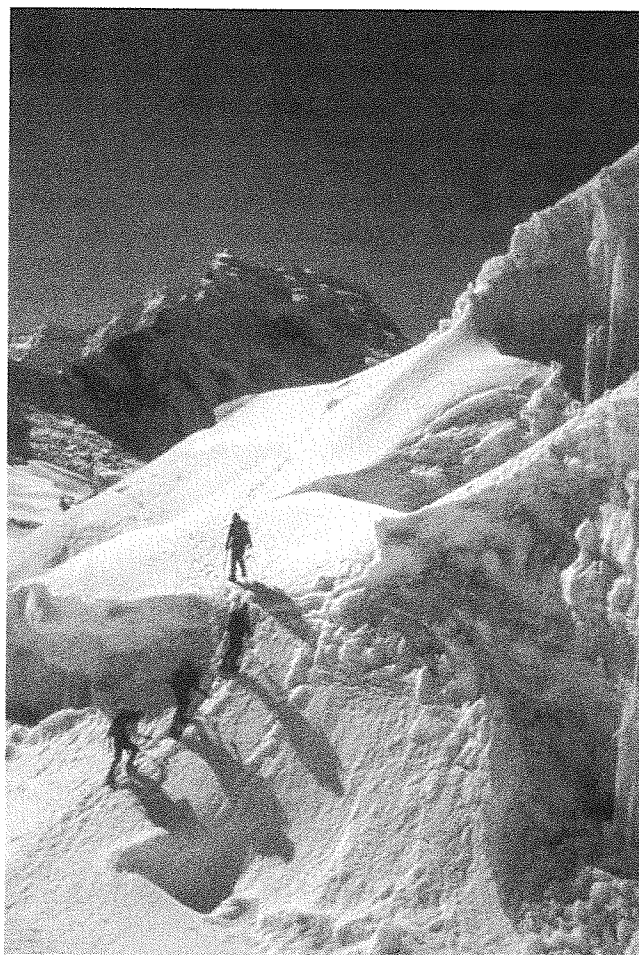
We struggle for breath in the thin air, but happiness and satisfaction enter our minds like drugs. The Amazon basin lies to the east like a toy land, and to the west we can see the mist above the pacific coast. We warm up

in the tropical sun, take photographs, hug and laugh. I see tears in the eyes of some of us, tears of exhaustion and tears of joy.

What else can I tell you? The de-

(our faithful porters had tea and soup waiting for us) and crawled into the sleeping bags, into the warmth and the comfort of this fragile home called camp 2. At 3 am the next morning, magically rejuvenated by sleep and rest, we broke camp and descended. That day, we descended a full 3,000 vertical meters to Musho, the closest village, where we celebrated with a first, intoxicating beer at 3 pm. The next day we were on the road to Lima, and another day later on the plane home.

The magic night on Huascaran is still with me, and I hope it will stay. The mountain was gentle with us. It came as a great shock to all of us when we heard, some of us months later, that only one week after our ascent a massive avalanche came down the west face of Huascaran Sur and buried both camps 1 and 2. These camps differ by about 700 m in altitude, but are also at least a mile apart in the horizontal sense; the avalanche must have been enormous. A number of climbers were killed (the exact number is unknown to me), and the Peruvian authorities closed the mountain.



On Ishinca. Photograph: Reinhard Illner.

scent was long and exhausting but uneventful. We only reached camp 2 at 4 in the afternoon and were much too exhausted to descend any further. We ate what little food was left

*Participants: Helen Sovdat (Guide), Marg Saul (Manager), Bob Brown, Diane Evans, Tom Haslam-Jones, Gerta Smythe and Reinhard Illner.*

## CLIMBING IN KAMCHATKA

*Gil Parker*

It's almost eleven when we reach the top of the ridge. Climbing through the final cliff below the summit glacier, I clear fresh snow from rocky footholds. Fedya lowers the rope to protect the final moves; I clip it into

my harness and stretch up the slabs to the snowfield. From here I just have to place one foot ahead of the other, kick in snowsteps up the long incline, and pump my lungs hard, sucking oxygen from the rarefied air high on

Kamchatka.

We glance across the valley, aware of the huge volcano opposite us issuing steam from its summit cone. At 15,380 ft, Kluchevskaya is the highest in new Russia east of the Cauca-

sus. It is a far cry from the exploding gas and "bombs" that occurred in 1993, but, like the Bezimeni crater beside our base camp, it erupts nearly every year.

Finally, our treadmill ends at the final dome and smooth snow drops off in all directions. We are on the 10,100 ft summit of Mount Zimina. Although Fedya Farberov has climbed in these mountains all his life, today yields his best weather day. The views are sparkling with towering Kluchevskaya and its rocky partner, Kamen (which means "rock") to the north. To the south we see Kronotskaya's prominent cone, halfway to the capital city of Petropavlovsk. Rising virtually from sea level, the impact of these huge and symmetrical cones is mysterious and godlike.

Tolbachik, a white hog's back with a narrow summit ridge rises to our west. In 1975, the earth split from the south ridge forming three craters, dumping sand and lava over the tundra, and blowing fire and ash seven and one half miles into the sky.

Fedya, a lad of fourteen, was there camping with his family in a tent while his vulcanologist father studied the ramifications of this crack in the earth's crust. One day, the two of them climbed to the summit plateau searching for evidence of possible eruptions. Nightfall caught them unprepared and Fedya spent his first bivouac sitting on a mountain ridge with only light clothes to protect him. It was this start in mountaineering that, for 22 years, has lead from the Caucasus and Tien Shan ranges in Central Asia of the former USSR to Denali in Alaska.

To avoid our own bivouac we plunge-step quickly down the steep snow, until the slope eases and we remove our crampons and glissade, skiing on our boots and using our ice axes as brakes. After a scree ridge, a meadow of tufted green provided a welcome reminder that the world is not all black and white. Fedya makes us tea and we lounge on the earth's softness, until failing light reminds us to hike the wide and dusty flood plain to the cabin.

True to form the weather provides us rest time, folding in upon us and

confining us to the cabin while rain and clouds blow by at speeds of 50 miles per hour. While the cabin walls creak and the windows leak, we bundle into our fleece and talk for hours about climbing, our North American Rockies, and the big walls in Alaska still on Fedya's wish list.

At the age of 36, climbing consumes Fedya's interest. He already has Khan-Tengri and Peak Pobeda to his credit (both over 23,000 ft) and Ushba, the "Matterhorn of the Caucasus". This is his first guiding trip this year, so he scratches out a living in the city, hanging from ropes on apartment block walls sealing failed joints in precast concrete flats against the wind and rain.

Like Fedya, my climbing partner, Patricia, (actually "Pat"), has summited on Denali. An academic from Ohio, she is a veteran climber/skier who has just completed her "double century", a 200 mile bike ride in one day. We are testimony to the electronic net, having become acquainted via twenty-plus e-mail messages. This expedition is our first together and I am impressed by her steady endurance on long treks carrying heavy loads.

The hours extend into days while we eat all the "heavy" food. A Russian has no faith in dried beans and lentils, so we had carried in processed cheese from Finland, Rumanian kolbassa sausage and, for Fedya only, salo (pig fat from Ukraine). From the viewpoints of the two world powers represented, we consider the cultural differences in food, climbing ethics, the economics of survival, and other problems of the world. As a Canadian businessman with fewer interventions to answer for, I act as a Socratic protagonist.

Fedya teaches us how to fold partyanki, the wool wraps for our feet stuffed snug inside hip-high rubber boots (sapogi). The uppers are folded down to knee height for damp treks across tundra or pulled up to full height for crossing the glacier-fed, volcano-black streams. Fedya tells us about his wintertime life alone in a cabin, working as a live-trapper of sables (for zoos and research institutes), how he survives

in his world, a land of tundra open to driving wind, snow and rain. We will need this, for Kamchatka is a huge, remote region, a land replete with the relics of volcanoes.

There are over 250 volcanoes on Kamchatka, 30 of them active. While Tolbachik may have been the most violent in recent times, one earthquake in 1996 opened fissures near Karimskaya, actually cooking all the fish in the adjacent lake! Every valley is an old caldera surrounded by new peaks and steaming craters. Here, a hill is not just a hill; you climb above only to find a crater concealed within.

Foreigners have been coming here for centuries. But businessmen proliferate since the 1991 revolution. Canadians are among the many mineral companies hoping to tap Kamchatka's wealth. The government has agreed to cyanide heap leach gold mining, but many locals have reservations about the heavy snow pack and possible release of dangerous chemicals into the headwaters of prolific fish rivers. These are difficult decisions for a country struggling to create wealth and eliminate crushing social problems. Russians would prefer that Kamchatka develop its resources of hunting and fishing into a broad tourist-based economy. But the mining is available now and tourism is just starting.

The military still controls large tracts of land and bases a large contingent of the Pacific Naval Fleet at Ribachik on Avacha Bay opposite Petropavlovsk. The submarine flotilla here was enough to cause Russian fighters to scramble when Korean Airlines Flight 007 flew over the peninsula in 1984. (They were too late; the Boeing 747 was intercepted and destroyed by jets over Sakhalin Island over an hour later).

The city itself crouches beneath two magnificent volcanoes. Koryakskaya Sopka, at 11,340 ft high, is named for the native peoples of north Kamchatka. Avachinskaya Sopka is lower, but continuously emits steam from its summit. (The designation, sopka, applies to the characteristic, uniformly shaped cone of a volcano, often small but sometimes as high as Kluchevskaya).

But the peaks, rising so close to this city of 250,000 people, continually remind visitors and citizens alike of the ephemeral nature of life here.

Petropavlovsk has a proliferation of dirty concrete apartment blocks common in Russia. But there is a rural flavour, with older family homes sprinkled along the hillsides. The linear shoreline avenues are simple to negotiate by bus or minivan. Fresh produce is available anywhere along the way in summer, as farmers bring eggs, milk and vegetables to the roadside. Local and foreign foods are offered in three main city markets. My friends insist that no one can afford bananas at \$1.15 US per pound or a German chocolate bar for \$1.00, but someone is buying them or the flood of goods from abroad would cease. A typical monthly salary for a teacher, scientist or even a doctor is 1.5 to 2.0 million rubles (\$250-330 US).

It is obvious that economies are needed. Many citizens have gardens, some find extra work at second jobs, or trade family heirlooms on the street. "This is Russia," they say. "It is not life, it is survival!"

On our rest day in the city Fedya hosts us to a slide show at his modest flat. His summits are impressive and so is his equipment. He buys quality or else makes his own clothes and tents. Obviously he would rather climb than eat. "Sometimes my friends feed me!" he laughs. We would all rather be on the tundra than in the city. Fedya offers a myriad of destinations, including the Ganalsky Range where he has recorded first ascents of several vertical rock spires. But we choose the south crater country.

After a shower and a shopping trip to the market, we pile three packs and ourselves into Valerie's Niva 1600. This little four-wheel-drive hatchback "jeep" defies the Lada's poor reputation for reliability. Valerie has nursed it through 17 years of bad road driving. Today it grinds up to the 3,000 ft high Mutnovsky plateau, much easier than our trip to Kluchevskaya. Of course the heater is either "on" or "off", nowhere in between, and the jeep crabs

left at every washboard.

Finally on the plateau we squeeze out the doors onto a snowfield still three feet deep in August. With feet encased in partyanki and sapogi Pat and I shoulder our packs, bid farewell to Valerie (who will return in four days) and follow Fedya south across a vast snowfield toward Mutnovskaya Sopka. Even from here we can see steam drifting above the summit. From the west this mountain resembles Mount St. Helen's in Washington State with its west rim burst open and the contents spread over a broad caldera.

Fedya finds a decrepit cabin after long hours and we dump our loads. Ignoring the clouds hanging west over the Sea of Okhotsk we dry our sweaty gear and relax in the meadow of flowers, mostly unique red Kamchatka Rhododendron. The silence is pervasive and wonderful. The evening is so complete we do not need to talk to acknowledge it or appreciate it. I leave my harmonica in my pack.

In the morning we climb to the portal of the crater. On a mound just outside is a memorial to a young man who approached a sulphur jet too close. The brittle earth had collapsed, hurtling him into molten rock before the eyes of his fiancé. The walls are a jumble of loose rocks and sand, a dangerous place to linger. Round the corner we come to an icefield drooping down toward a steam jet, the whole serac ready to collapse. Fedya steers us to safer viewpoints, then passes a sulphur blowtorch with the words, "hold your breath while you come through this, it can cause a spasm of the lungs!" We scamper through.

It's a wild place with boiling mud, steam and sulphur jets and dangerous side slopes. (I wonder what protection our Parks officials would require for such a tourist viewpoint, then I realize the question wouldn't be relevant because no one would be in here). We climb further on snow to an upper crater. Someone has anchored a frayed manila rope to an iron bar driven in the mud. I climb up hand-over-hand, only to find I am on the

edge of a drop of several hundred metres of steaming wall. I back down hand-over-hand. Quickly we plunge back down the snow slope, through the gauntlet of fumaroles toward the portal. Fedya urges speed under the threatening mud walls.

We are happy to comply. Once out, we climb to a promontory for a safer view and a relaxing lunch. Pat and I have our cheese and crackers, Fedya has that plus salo and chocolate. I concentrate on the scenery.

A shorter day brings us high on the slopes of Gorelaya Sopka, an unassuming black pile of cinders on the opposite rim of the wide caldera. We set tents among frozen lava dinosaurs then climb the loose and dirty side of the mountain. Clouds flit over the summit, allowing glimpses into the two craters. Fedya describes the obscured blue, acid lake in the upper one. He had been asked to down-climb the crumbling walls to take scientific samples, but had declined. A Swiss team finally did descend by rope, using a headframe that kept them away from the crater wall.

This night is our last on the tundra and we enjoy each other's company, watching the landscape turn pink and a half-moon rise over Mutnovskaya. We try to photograph one "magazine cover" shot that will capture the essence of Kamchatka. It is impossible.

#### POSTSCRIPT -

December 5/97, Bezimeni erupted after a 7.7 earthquake just off the coast, spewing ashes, etc., 8 km in the air, creating a downwind plume 100 km into the Pacific.



# THE ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

APRIL 1973

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MEMBERSHIP, ACC, structure			POETRY, by our members:				90/MAY .....	6
	92/SEPT .....	4	Sandy Briggs	95/ANNUAL .....	36		93/SEPT .....	2
	93/JAN .....	1		93/ANNUAL .....	9	WAXING SKIIS	94/SEPT .....	3
MEMORIAM, IN:			Brown, Margaret	96/ANNUAL .....	54		77/FEB .....	7
Ethne Gibson	97/SEPT .....	4	Claire Ebendinger	95/SEPT .....	6	WEB SITES:		
Karel Hartmann	93/SEPT .....	3		96/ANNUAL .....	22	Canadian Avalanche Centre		
Frank Moseley	95/OCT .....	2	Gerhardt Lepp	97/MAY .....	4	www.avalanche.ca/snow		
Roger Neave	91/FALL .....	37	Rob Macdonald	91/FALL .....	36		96/NOV	
MINING in Strathcona Park				93/ANNUAL .....	11	WILDERNESS FIRST AID		
	76/MARCH .....	7	Gil Parker	96/ANNUAL .....	42		92/SEPT .....	3
	76/SEPT .....	2	Gerta Smythe	96/ANNUAL .....	12	WINTER CAMPS	77/OCT .....	4
	78/AUG .....	4	By others:			WOMEN CLIMBERS, historical		
	86/WINTER .....	6	Darlow, Frank	96/ANNUAL .....	48		94/MARCH .....	2
MISCELLANEOUS Odds 'n Sodds			RENTAL OF CLUB GEAR			WORKSHOPS:		
	93/ANNUAL .....	51		84/SPR/SUMMER .....	4	See: Avalanche Awareness, Crevasse Rescue		
	95/MAY .....	6		85/SUMMER .....	1	and Glacier Travel, Mountaineering Courses		
MOUNTAINEERING COURSES				89/MARCH .....	3	(Rock and Snow Schools); Telemark Clin-		
	75/FEB .....	4		90/JANUARY .....	3	ics, Trip Leaders, Wilderness First Aid, Wil-		
ROCK AND SNOW SCHOOLS				91/MAY .....	6	derness First Aid Kit		
	77/AUG .....	6		94/SEPT .....	3	YOUTH CAMPS	78/AUGUST .....	6
These are: rock and/or	78/APRIL .....	7		95/FEB .....	4		90/FALL .....	3
snow basic courses in	78/JUNE .....	8		95/AUG .....	6		91/FALL .....	2
1970's & 80's assisted	79/FEB .....	6		96/FEB .....	7		93/ANNUAL .....	30
by the section and	79/OCT .....	5	ROCK*-CLASSIFYING CLIMBS				95/ANNUAL .....	43
administered by the	80/MAY/JUNE .....	4		78/JUNE .....	6			
YMCA, and in the 90's	80/MAY/JUNE .....	9	ROCK*-SCHOOLS - see Mountaineering Courses					
run by the section	81/FALL .....	2	ROCK*- TRAINING FOR					
under the title snow	82/OCTOBER .....	2		89/MARCH .....	4			
or rock school	83/SPRING .....	1	SAILING/MOUNTAINEERING					
	84/SPR/SUMMER .....	2		93/SEPT .....	5			
	85/SUMMER .....	1	CAMPS, NATIONAL ACC - SKI					
	90/FALL .....	10		73/APRIL .....	2			
	92/ANNUAL .....	13		79/OCT .....	6			
	92/ANNUAL .....	17		80/MAY/JUNE ...	10			
	93/ANNUAL .....	46		81/MAR/APR .....	4			
	95/MAY .....	7	CAMPS, SECTION - SKI					
MOUNTAIN TRIVIA Games				73/APRIL .....	2			
and Puzzles by Sandy Briggs				75/JUNE .....	2			
See: Armchair Mountaineering				90/MAY .....	3			
NAMES OF MTS., ORIGINS				90/FALL .....	8			
	90/JAN			91/MAY .....	2			
NATIONAL CLUB (A.C.C.) - many announce-				92/ANNUAL .....	8			
ments throughout the Bushwhackers				93/MAY .....	4			
NEWCOMBE SLIDE SHOW				93/ANNUAL .....	9			
	74/MAY			94/ANNUAL .....	11			
	75/JUNE			96/ANNUAL .....	31			
	76/MAY		CAMPS, SECTION - SUMMER					
	78/FEB			73/NOV .....	3			
OCCUPIERS' LIABILITY ACT				74/SEPT .....	3			
	95/MAY .....	1		87/FALL .....	4			
	95/NOV .....	1	SKI - COAST RANGE IDEAS					
	97/MAY .....	4		82/DEC .....	5			
ORIGINS OF V.I. MT. NAMES			SKI EXPEDITION IDEAS					
	90/JAN .....	2		82/DEC				
PERMITS in Rockies	91/FALL .....	23	SKINS- REGLUING	92/ANNUAL .....	3			
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS				79/FEB				
	85/WINTER .....	3	SNOW SCHOOLS - see Mountaineering Courses					
	88/FALL .....	1	SNOW SHELTER - QUINZY					
	92/ANNUAL .....	33		95/ANNUAL .....	12			