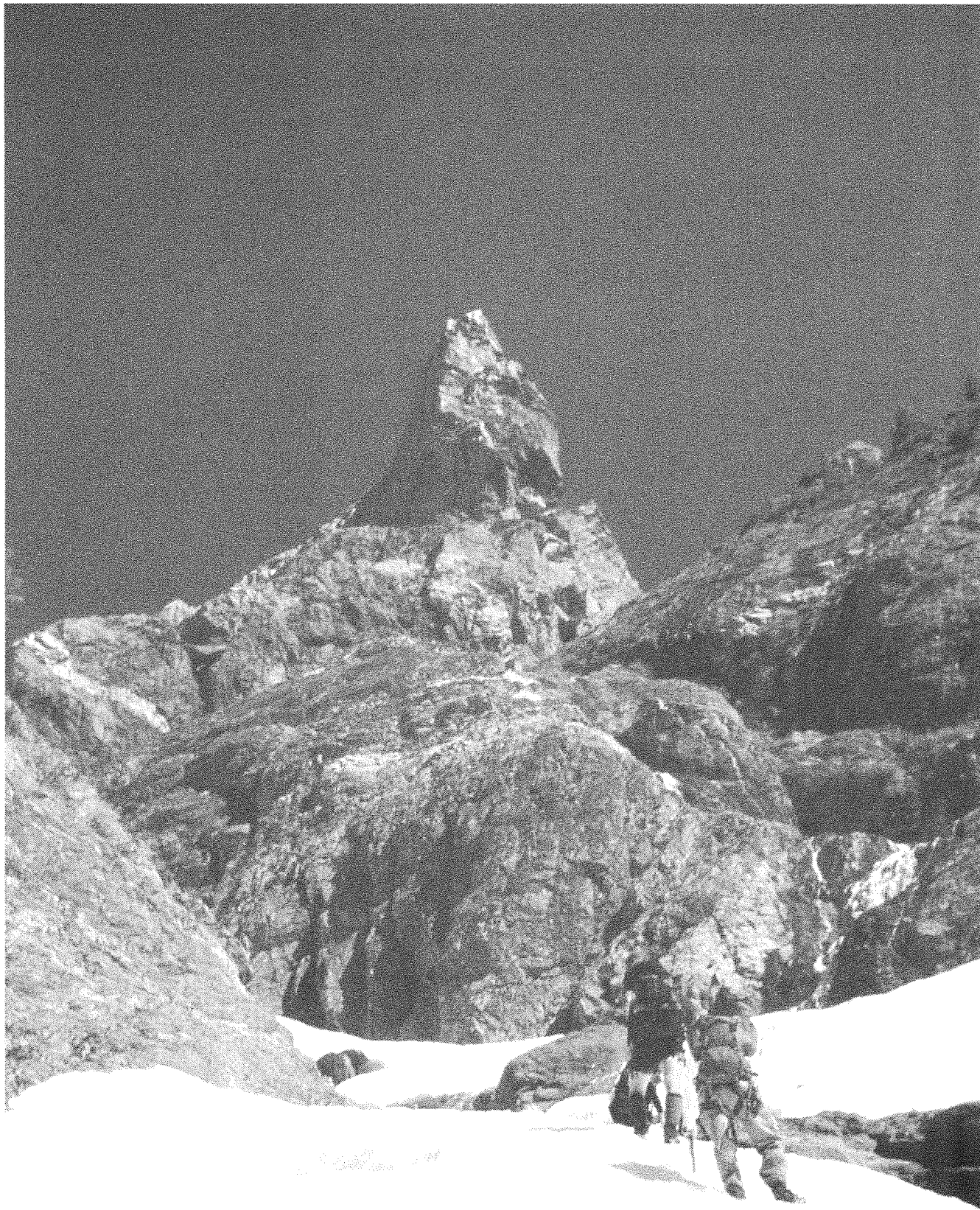




THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION

# ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

1998



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

**Front Cover:** January 1st, 1999 on top of one of Vancouver Island's most celebrated peaks, Mount Arrowsmith. Happy New Year! Photo: Peter Rothermel.

**Back Cover:** Richard Keltie admiring the view of Prestly Peak from Valhalla Lake in the Valhallas. Photo: Kayla Stevenson.

**Table of Contents:** Subsidiary peak of Mariner Mountain in perfect weather. Photo: Tak Ogasawara.

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# VANCOUVER ISLAND

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## THE ALAVA-BATE SANCTUARY

*Sandy Briggs*

I cannot improve on Rick Eppler's compelling description of this area in his earlier update in the 1995 *Island Bushwhacker* annual. References to the area as 'The Sanctuary' or 'Shangri La' are in my view entirely appropriate, as in summer it is a pass of beautiful flowers and crystal-clear water surrounded by amazing mountains. Rick's rhetorical query "Maybe Bate is day trip-able??" may now be answered in the affirmative. It's just that nobody, as far as I know, has actually done it yet.

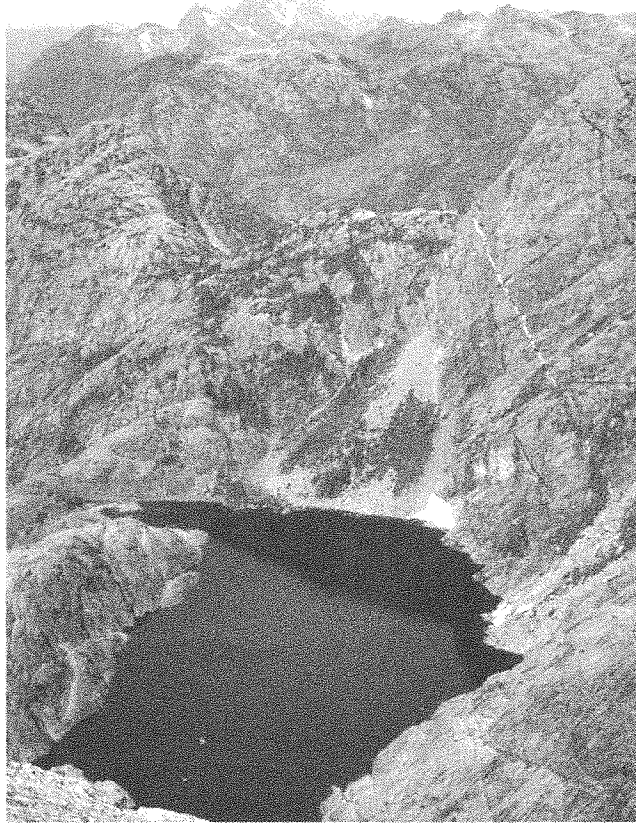
In January 1983, a couple of years before I joined the Alpine Club, I went to the meeting at which Rob MacDonald showed the slides of his and Paul Erickson's exploratory climb of Mt. Bate the preceding summer. I remember being impressed by their adventure, and Rob talked to me after the show, enthusiastically describing the area and recommending it to my immediate attention. Among a few regrets in this climber's life, one is that it took me sooo many years to act on this oft-repeated exhortation. (Thanks for trying, Rob.) What can be my excuses? Well, talk of 'the bushwhack' gave pause for thought. Among all the articles in the *Island Bushwhacker*, two that rank highest among the 'must-reads' about Island exploration and Island epics are certainly Rob's Mt. Bate article (Dec. '82, Vol.10: 3/4) and his and Paul's Mt. Alava report (March '81, Vol. 9:2). I had just finished my grad studies at UVic and was on the brink of a two-year sojourn in Switzerland, so any prospect of 'taking

the Bate' was immediately on hold. Then, in 1986, reports of easy access to Rugged Mountain lured Don Berryman, Wendy Richardson and me to the base of the west face (in the Subaru car I currently drive). We got rained out before step-

on a July '93 trip (which, alas, never got written up in the *Bushwhacker*) led by Claire Ebendinger. We climbed Mt. Alava and Alava Jr., and I saw first-hand what Rob had been talking about all those years. Still, events (and perhaps

a little delirium) conspired to prevent a revisit until the fall of 1997. I had become intrigued to investigate the possibility of a new and shorter approach to Mt. Bate than the historically important Perry River valley. A mid-August trip to Conuma Pk. with Valerio Faraoni (just before his departure to India) had revealed clear-cutting on the very flank of Mt. Bate and the accompanying valley highway to the upper Conuma River. Eager to pursue the idea, but with little time, I drove up the Conuma Main with John Pratt on Saturday September 20<sup>th</sup>, and we hiked up the ridge immediately east of the creek that drains the Sanctuary. This proved a good route to the alpine, except for a tricky little gap at about 900m. We bivvied at the top of the ridge and had a spectacular view of sunrise gilding the summit rocks and eastern glacier of Mt. Bate. Unfortunately, as thoughtful map reading would have told us, that ridge is kind of 'off-route' as an approach to Mt. Bate.

Besides, as we then learned, the descent to the Sanctuary, while certainly possible, appeared steep and non-trivial. We contented ourselves with a very pleasant scramble up a subsidiary summit (5184') east of Thumb Peak, which we took to calling "Tarn Pk." because of all the lovely little puddles of water



Peter Lake and the Haihte Range from the summit of Mt. Bate. Photo: Sandy Briggs.

ping out of the car, and returned with much improved results in June of 1987. This began a seven-year fixation with the Haihte range that involved at least a dozen trips and some of the most fun I have ever had.

I first visited the Alava-Bate group

scattered around. (Rob, Julie, Rick, Paul and son Karl exited over this bump to Sebalhall Ck. in July of 1995. See Rick's Update in the '95 annual.) Also, both the photographic and intelligence results of this 'rekky' were very gratifying.

Short of time but keen for the area I returned north in perfect weather with Charles Turner for a climb of Malaspina Pk. on October 18/19. We began with a ford of the Perry River and approached from an overgrown logging road spur to the NW. (See Don Berryman's VIAG Web Guide.) We had a great time scrambling up both peaks of Malaspina, and we had truly great views of the Alava-Bate group to the east and of the Island's rugged West Coast and the great Pacific stretching to the horizon.

The summer of 1998 offered an opportunity to pursue the eagerly anticipated further explorations into the Alava-Bate group. Accordingly I set off for the Conuma R. valley on August 6<sup>th</sup>

with my Kiwi grad-student friend Garth Irwin. We chose to approach the Sanctuary by following the east side (true left bank) of the creek draining it to the south, a tributary of the Conuma river. In order to avoid the clear-cut we began by hiking up the dry creek-bed as far as the old growth. At that point the creek had water in it, and we ascended into the forest to our right to find relatively open easy travel and the occasional bit of animal trail. Early on there were some bits of flagging tape on some of the trees, but these appeared to lead illogically into bush too near the creek, so we gave up trying to follow them, and they did not reappear higher in the valley. At about 600m

we emerged onto an open but overgrown rockslide in front of a fine waterfall that poured dramatically over the characteristic reddish rock of the region. As has been said, there is only one reason for tree line to occur at 600m on Vancouver Island, namely massive avalanches. This valley has walls that are not just steep; they are cliffs. The plummeting cornices must rip the place apart in winter and spring. Only one realistic route presents itself for access to the top of the waterfall, and that is a somewhat exposed traverse high to the right and up a small runoff gully into a bushy copse. Just as



Mount Gratton, Thumb, and Shangri La of the Alava-Bate group. Photo: Sandy Briggs.

one has been lulled into thinking that the scramble to this gully will be straightforward, a nasty v-shaped sluice of compacted gravel interposes in unwelcome fashion, so that one is quickly slapped into paying attention. The wandering eye is then cast upward at the looming cliff that overhangs this passage, while the head containing said eye suddenly feels very naked and vulnerable. What if chicken little were correct? Bush handholds secure the ascent into the gully on wet rock. Once there, a minor bit of thrashing spits one into the very enclosed basin we came to call 'Shangri La Level #1', or, later, 'Three Falls Basin'. I think it would be possible to 'scramble' (perhaps low class 5 moves) more or less

directly upward toward Mt. Bate from this basin, but we did not elect to attempt this.

The ascent of the stream from this basin begins on a lightly vegetated scree slope on the east bank and involves diving determinedly upward into the bush, or avoiding some bush by an ascending traverse of an exposed slab directly above the narrow canyon. The creek itself again becomes accessible, and a two-meter waterfall emerges from a rock cleft directly ahead. Because of low water volume, we decided to cross the creek (to the true right bank) and

scramble up and along the wall of the cleft. This proved very pleasant and surprisingly straightforward. A few minutes later we crested a rock ridge-let and emerged into the basin we called 'Shangri La Level #2'. We crossed the creek again and skirted the large tam on the right (east) to gain the inner flat part of the basin. At the farther end a jumble of large boulders complicates the passage. After the boulders one hikes past the waterfall that drains the main ponds above and ascends a slippery rock slope to gain, finally, the Sanctuary (Shangri La Level #3).

The near parts of this wonderful spot were a riot of yellow and purple flowers, and we searched carefully for a good flat tent site where our disturbance of them would be small. Having pitched camp, we decided to scramble up Thumb Pk., about the equivalent of a Mt. Finlayson from our camp. The day had gone cloudy, however, so that from the top of Thumb Pk. we could barely discern the otherwise prominent gendarme that gives the peak its name.

Notwithstanding the descending cloud, we felt truly privileged to be in this beautiful and dramatic location, and our ascent to the Sanctuary from the car had consumed only about five hours. The clouds were down the next morning (Aug 8), and we postponed our attempt on Mt. Bate to traverse steep snow to the right of the main tarn to gain the pass to the Perry R. drainage. The steep NW escarpment of Mt. Bate plunged toward Peter Lake, while the top of Mt. Alava hid shyly in the mists.

Late in the morning we set off optimistically along the eastern bench of Mt. Bate in an attempt to repeat the ascent described by Rick Eppler in the '95 Bushwhacker annual. The weather was warm and calm, and though visibility was poor, there seemed reasonable promise of a later clearing (a promise actually fulfilled). We idled along, waited until Nature vouchsafed us a view a further few hundred meters, and then idled along some more. Unable to say with certainty which rock was the true summit, we decided to halt our traverse of the eastern snowfield by a further pause on some rocks near a notch above. We soon discovered that the chosen rocks were steeper than anticipated and that they were guarded by a nasty deep moat (the crevasse-like gap between a rock face and a glacier).

Garth crossed the moat, and in returning had the serious misfortune to fall into the moat, landing hard on the rocks at the bottom about 10m below. Fortunately, in spite of multiple injuries, he was eventually able to move around, and fortunately I was able to enter the moat from an end passage further down, rather than having to rappel. Making slow progress, we were able to return to the tent by dark. The situation was clear. At 7:30 am I set off for the car, reaching it in 2 1/4 hours. I drove to Gold River and went to the RCMP office, which is near the main highway intersection. The officer

contacted the ambulance people, and they contacted the helicopter pilot from Vancouver Island Helicopters, and within about 35 minutes of my arrival we were in the air. Fortunately the pilot had landed at the Sanctuary numerous times and knew the area very well. His sense of awe and respect for the place was as evident as his incredible flying abilities. We flew upward through 300+m of mist and cloud, using the creek as a 'hand-

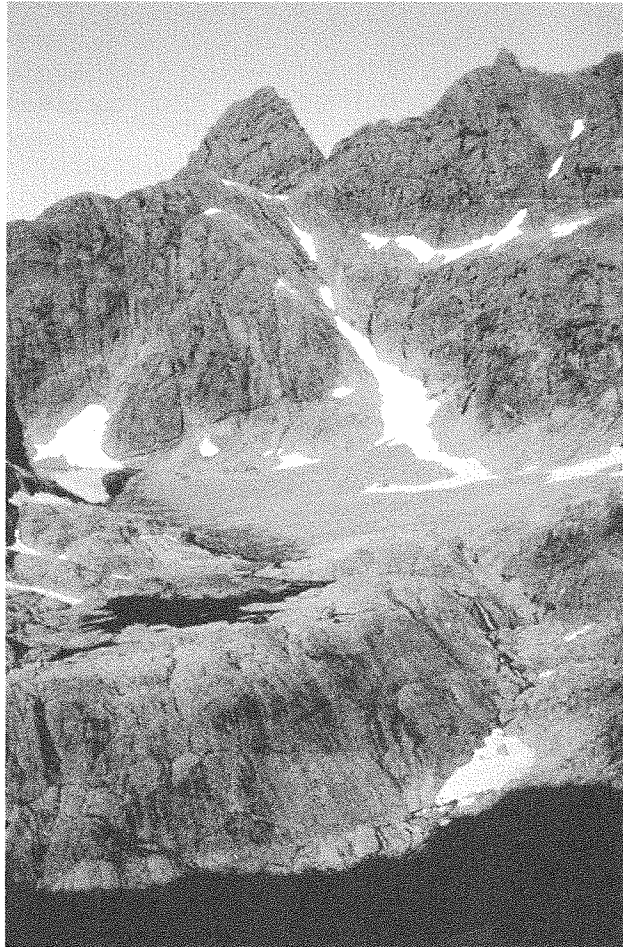
hospital, deserves the highest praise for their friendly, professional and caring service to us in our time of need. Heartfelt thanks to them all!

With Garth happily on the mend and Don Berryman itching for a trip, Mt. Bate again came to the top of the list. Don and I drove up the Conuma on Friday August 28 and repeated the approach of three weeks earlier, at least as far as Three Falls Basin, where we camped

with enough daylight left for dinner. Next morning we entered the upstream cleft as before but then scrambled upward (W) directly to the middle part of the eastern bench on Mt. Bate. The weather was perfect and we had no trouble sorting out the route to the base of the summit block. Rick's article refers to this latter as a 'scramble', proving again that he is a much better scrambler than I am. For Don and me it would have to be called a rock climb, and, as has been my habit (or just good luck), I got Don to lead all the hard parts. The first pitch, up an almost-chimney on the left, has a couple of moves of mid-fifth class (I'd have felt better with a helmet), and the last short pitch is the legendary 'hold-challenged' summit block. The summit is a fantastic place, where one tends to sit rather than stand, and from which more than the usual number of new mountaineering ideas rushes to one's brain.

We rappelled a couple of times, the first short, adding gear to an already interesting little nest left by the Heathens Club of Campbell River on their June visit. We descended by way of the Sanctuary, taking the time for a scramble up Thumb Pk. (no fog this time, but no film left) and a relaxing snack among the flowers of this special place.

In late June of 1998 a group of about a dozen from the Heathens Club spent a week in the Mt. Bate group as part of an ambitious program to celebrate their tenth anniversary as a club. They



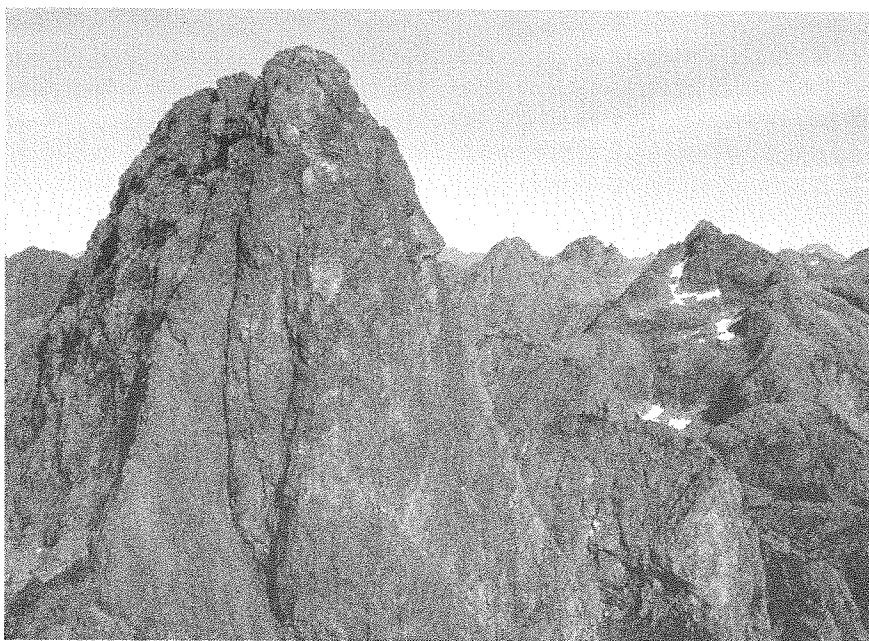
Mount Gratton and Thumb. Photo: Sandy Briggs.

rail', past ominous walls of rock, in a machine as stable as any car I ever rode in, and landed beside the tent at noon.

Late that evening, after five hours in the emergency department at Campbell River Hospital, we drove back to Victoria. The doctors had found nothing broken nor anything that wouldn't likely heal on its own, with time. Garth and I agreed that every person in the chain of events of our day, from the ambulance attendants and the pilot to the very busy nurses and doctors at the

did a variety of ascents, including a new rock climb on the complex NE ridge of Mt. Bate. The difficulties of the approach are the stuff of legend, but a main reason for their using helicopter access was so they could use a portable toilet and fly out all their human waste, which they did. The Sanctuary is a very confined site. There is little soil, and all the drainage leads to one spot - your camping spot. The fragility of the area is clear. If visitations here become frequent or if large parties are common, human waste will foul the waters now so impressive for their purity. It is a commendable example that the first large party in the area chose to fly out all its human waste.

As Charles Turner and I discovered in the fall of '97, the Perry River road has been deactivated, which means lots of deep cross-ditches. I do not know how far it is currently driveable, but it seems certain that it will quickly deteriorate. This may still be the preferred (one hesitates to use the term) approach to Mt. Alava, though more recent roads to upper Canton Creek merit consideration (Malaspina Pk. has been climbed from there.) The best, but still not trivial,



Malaspina Pk. and the Mt. Alava group from the South Pk. of Malaspina Pk.  
Photo: Sandy Briggs.

approach to Mt. Bate seems now to be our route up the creek draining the Sanctuary. The extension of the SE/S ridge of Mt. Bate itself has not to my knowledge been investigated. It bristles with intimidating bluffs in its middle section, but if it goes reasonably it has the advantage of being very direct.

There are many more fine routes to be climbed in the Alava/Bate group, and its summits are hard to match for views. Future visitors, please take care of this fragile area, and be careful for yourselves as well. As for Garth and I, we'll be back.

## MOUNT SPLENDOR

*Tak Ogasawara*  
September 4 - 7

In the morning, I woke up to find yesterday's blue sky replaced by grey at the 5000 foot level of Mt. Splendor's north ridge. After a quick breakfast, we scrambled up towards the summit hoping to make a quick ascent and come back before the weather closed in. From time to time I looked up towards the summit block, clouds were moving in and hiding the summit.

When we reached the bottom of the summit block, we put on crampons and went around to the east side of the mountain and up to the saddle of Splendor's south east ridge. We were hoping for an easy way up to the top from the south side but no routes up from that side were visible. I looked around and

saw a big gully that split the east face that looked climbable but was very loose and dirty. On the left side of that gully there were two slanted rock faces. The first one was immediately on the left of the gully and connected near the summit and the second one was further left than the first one. It looked much cleaner than the first one but connects to the southeast ridge which was quite far down from the summit. Because of the weather I chose the first face, hoping to make a quick ascent to the top. The first 150 feet of the face had big steps with lots of loose rock. The rest of the face was a little steeper with many small holds. It was much cleaner than I had first thought from bottom. I asked Ken

if he wanted to use a rope, but he did not say much and I felt that since the face was not really that steep and there were plenty of holds, we would progress much faster without a rope. I told Ken that the climb would probably be easy and to follow me. Actually, I found the climb was quite enjoyable. At the top of the face there was a scree slope about 10 feet wide. I stopped there and waited for Ken to catch up with me. He was half way up the face and told me it was too difficult for him to follow and he would wait for me under chockstone in the gully.

From the scree slope, I traversed to the right about 10 feet and straight up 30 feet; the slope was loose. In fact it



was so loose that under each step that I took, everything moved. I tiptoed through this 40 feet to a more stable scree slope above and continued on up to the top. Clouds were all around me and since there was no view from the summit I did not stay long. I simply touched the small cairn on the top, took a couple pictures and I was off, down to the dangerous mine field below. As I looked down the loose portion of the slope, I told myself that if I were careful, I would be all right. I have done many similar descents before so I was confident as I started down. It went slowly, step by step, everything was all right so far. Ever so carefully, I put another foot forward and put some weight on that foot. I felt a slight movement beneath my foot and then all of a sudden everything around me started moving. I shouted to Ken, "Rock! Rock!" The big rocks were piling up behind me as I tried to hold on as long as possible. Unfortunately, the pressure behind me was so strong that I had no choice but to let everything go. I shouted to Ken again, "Rock, BIG ROCK!" hoping that I had given him enough time to find a safe place to hide. I was almost carried along with that slide but I managed to hang on to a small hold attached to a sidewall. With a big, banging noise, small and big rocks fell down to the bottom.

I shouted Ken's name about three or four times but he did not answer.

The thought that I might have killed Ken went through my mind. I shouted one more time to Ken and this time he responded. He was all right. The whole thing lasted maybe three or four seconds but it felt like an eternity.

I was so relieved that I had not killed Ken. I quickly climbed down to flat spot below and looked down where Ken could have been hiding. I saw him under the chockstone. I quickly set up the station for a rappel, after a couple of steps of rappelling, pain shot up my right foot. I ignored the pain and continued to rappel down. After a couple of rappels I joined up with Ken. There were two more rappels down to the snowfield. When I got to the bottom, my foot was quite painful. I tried to remember what happened to my right foot, it could have been a big rock that rolled over my foot during the rockslide but I could not be sure.

During the descent to the campsite, the weather deteriorated and visibility was down to around 50 feet. I was trying to go as fast as I could; however, every step was painful and slow. Once we reached the campsite, we rearranged our packs and descended to the Burman River. We tried to follow the route that we came up but about 1000 feet down from campsite we lost the route. I did not want to waste any time looking for the route so we continue downward wherever we could find an easy

way down. That day we could not make it to Burman River as we had planned.

The next day we started down as soon as the light allowed us to travel. When we got down to the Burman River it was already 12:00 noon. I knew we had missed the pick up time at the mouth of the river but Ken ran down the logging road just in case the boat was still waiting for us at pick up place. With my painful right foot I slowly walked along the old logging road to the mouth of the river and got there at 5:30 pm.

Ken told me when he got to the arranged pick up point, nobody was there, so we made a fire and set up a tent for the night hoping that someone would come along and pick us up the next day. Fortunately, early in the morning a beachcomber came along and took us back to Gold River. After I came home I went to hospital to take X-rays that revealed that I did not have a fracture. Actually, since a month has passed after the accident and I still have problems with my foot, the doctor now says that I might have had a hairline fracture. As I think back to the events that took place below the summit of Mt. Splendor, I realize that due to the weather I did not look hard enough for a safe route down. I also realize that I was overconfident. Whatever the reason, I should not have been in that loose gully in the first place.

## MOUNT ANALOGUE, VICTORIA

*Gil Parker*

If you have delved into the pages of the original non-Euclidean adventures of Rene Daumal and his fellow adventurers in trying to find and climb the elusive Mount Analogue, you might have some sympathy for Dave Tansley and me as we tried to follow what appeared to be conflicting directions from Katy Holm. Towards the end of the second trip up Veitch Creek in the non-catchment lands of the Victoria watershed, I started to have some sympathy with Daumal's search.

He was looking for a mountain that he considered to be higher than Mount Everest, probably in the South Pacific, had not been seen by anyone with a human frame of reference still living in the world we know, but one where the human condition had graduated to a true utopia, where man sought only his/her higher self. In fact he declared that "the area we seek must be able to exist in any region whatsoever of the earth's surface." Why not out towards Sooke?

Ever of adventurous spirit, Dave insisted that we discover this peak of wonderful view and with great climbing face, all according to a vague and abbreviated conversation with the seeker of the marble murrelet, Katy Holm. On our first sortie, we missed the turn off from the logging road, arrived beneath Mount Braden knowing we had come too far. Perhaps our peak was undetectable, enclosed within Daumal's "shell of curved space." We then returned to the correct side road, found the reported flagging,

but when it ran out, we climbed up into inconsequential bush and lumpy rock. Giving up, we returned dejected, me with a boot full of Veitch Creek.

With more instructions from the Holm household, we tried again, only to be turned back by a violent blizzard between Glen Lake and Sooke. On our third attempt, now in the correct valley, we again ran out of flags, but persevered in the known direction of what I now believed to be the real Mount Analogue. In the vague distance Dave spotted a spiky, but treed peak and

said, "Why don't we just follow the ridge to the summit?" What logic! Three valleys of bushwacking later we arrived at the 1100 foot summit above a very abrupt cliff face. According to Daumal, "the path to our highest desires often lies through the undesirable."

Another trip will be necessary to actually see that face, probably from Ragged Mountain or the other side of this unnamed creek (into Hutchinson Cove.) And another to find a more direct access. And another. But we had been

there! Descending now on a clearly flagged vertical trail that could only have been set by a climber, we now crossed our little creek and later crossed it again, finally linking up with the place we had run out of flags. Oh, she meant to actually *follow* the flags! Daumal must have been thinking of us: "isn't it better to walk with your head than to think with your feet?"

If you don't actually want to reach the summit of Mount Analogue, at least you might read the book.

---

## ARROWSMITH - YEAR ROUND FUN

*Peter Rothermel*

I kind of think of the Arrowsmith massif as my own personal playground - being close to where I live, I can easily do day trips to it.

I'll describe here some of the more popular routes, but my main reason for writing this is to bring to public attention just how valuable this crown jewel of the mid-island is, and its need for protection, and not so much as I want a bunch of you out-of-towners to come around and crowd me off my mountain playground.

The original hiking trail access to this massif is on Hwy 4 at the east end of Cameron Lake. This trail, now called the Cameron Lake Trail, was built as a pack trail in 1912 to ferry visitors and supplies up Cokely to a small cabin, from which they did day hikes to the peaks of Cokely and Arrowsmith. In recent years, the Island Mountain Ramblers and other volunteer groups have maintained this trail. Since there are easier access points to the Arrowsmith massif, and the trail now winds through recent logging

mess (September 1998) as well as the blight of a ski hill development, it's used less and less for accessing the peaks. Most that use this popular tourist trail go as far as the lookout and come back down. The future of this trail, since private logging companies own a large portion, remains to be seen.

Access to the next four routes is off Highway 4, about midway between Parksville and Port Alberni, just over the Alberni summit (the Hump). Turn left on Summit Main at the Arrowsmith Ski sign, then left on Cameron Main, over the Cameron River bridge and left up towards the ski hill.

First you come to the Judge's Route, an old logging road spur marked by a small cairn and maybe some flagging tape, with a pull-out on the left a bit further on. In the summer/fall, this is a popular route for hikers wanting to reach Arrowsmith peak. It's a steep but not technical climb with no real exposure, but it can be dusty and is a thigh burner. I prefer winter/spring, as the snow makes it an easier tromp, kick stepping up with fun glissades down. This is the route we chose last December (Dean Williams, Tom Carter, Bob Schroeder and myself),



Happy New Year! Mt. Arrowsmith on January 1st, 1999. Photo: Peter Rothermel.

and it may well become a Christmas tradition.

Next is the Snow Gully Route, an unmarked start from the last switch back but flagged up through first growth forest along a stream to a cirque and a 50° couloir that comes out just west of the summit. In summer/fall the cirque is bushy and the snow is mostly melted out of the couloir, exposing scree, lots of it. Greg Sorenson has bolted some climbs on the wall to the right at the cirque. Winter/spring is when this route really shines. Kicking up the couloir, in my mind, is the most aesthetic route on the whole massif, whether done in full on 'Scottish' conditions in May (with Dean) or one week later in sunny T-shirt weather (with Tom). The cirque drops to a frozen snow covered tarn that makes for an excellent run out and a great place to practice your self-arrest technique, backcountry ski or board.

The Saddle Route starts from a hairpin turn in the road, up a logging road spur that leads to a col between Mt. Cokely and Mt. Arrowsmith. In summer/fall this route is great for an easy climb up Cokely or a more exposed climb up Arrowsmith, the crux being an arête called the Nose, with 1000 foot drops over each shoulder and straight out views left and right of Parksville and Port Albemi. This last September Greg bolted in rappel anchors at the half way point and top on the two pitches, knocking out the old rusted pitons (one came out by hand). That same day Tom Carter, Darlene Lane, my ten-year-old nephew Bjorn Reider and myself climbed up and spent the night on the peak, in hopes of watching the sunset and the full moon rise simultaneously. Alas, we reached the peak just in time to be engulfed in cloud and we had a damp, windy night of it, but did have a beautiful sunrise with a great view of Mt. Baker through the broken clouds. This was Bjorn's second time up this way, last year belayed at age 9 and this year for his first big two-pitch rappel.

In winter the Nose is usually all cor-

niced, but in early spring when the snow consolidates it turns into a knife ridge that would be very grippy. I've never done this route in the spring. Hmm, maybe get some more snow stakes... maybe on a running belay... could always chicken out off the top down the Judge's Route... maybe next year! Hey, Dean... hey, Tom...

And finally the Rousseau Trail, an easy and popular route in the summer/fall, leading through old forest and an



Snow roses. Photo: Peter Rothermel.

alpine ridge to the peak of Cokely. I won't tell where the cabin is. In winter/spring, if you drag your skis or board up for a run down through the regional park, you run the risk of being kicked out by Big Bad Bilton, the ski developer, or one of his ski patrol thugs, and potentially a 4 km walk down the road, through a locked gate to your car (this is a public park!?!).

If we get a deep freeze, there are some possible ice climbs, on a weepy wall on the right at the start of the Saddle Route, and a very big, 120 metre popsicle in the park about 1.5 km past the gate, just off the road on your right. I don't know if these have been named, but I've heard they've been climbed. I

haven't climbed water fall ice (yet), what looks like a good place to learn is up the Snow Gully Route. There are a couple of spots along the creek that cascade over some small drops where you could easily hike up alongside and put in a top rope. If we get an Arctic front and I can beg, borrow or buy a second axe... hey, Tom... hey, Dean....

The third access to the southeast side of the massif is along logging roads off the Island Highway south of Parksville at MacMillan Bloedel's Northwest Bay Division. These roads take you to the Arrowsmith Lake dam site, an area that resembles ground zero after a nuclear blast, but once past this destruction at about 1000 meters elevation is a fairytale-like trail that leads along a creek through first growth forest up to Hidden Lake, where I found a wolf skull last June. Past this lake, over a ridge and a steep descent where you might want to fix a hand line, is Fishtail Lake. These two lakes are remote and pristine, in an area that is used winter/spring for backcountry skiing and in summer/fall for hiking and fishing. I've heard whispers that there's a way up Arrowsmith from this side.

The Northwest Bay logging road also accesses the northeast ridge on Mt. Moriarty, for a fabulous spring climb, but that's another story.

Well, I hope to see you on my playground. I'm easy to recognize, usually wearing red and a big grin.

P.S. My last trip up Mt. Arrowsmith in 1998 was on October 14. I wrote in the summit register:

"All I have to say,  
is this is my birthday.  
I just turned 48,  
and I feel great."

All route descriptions and distances are approximate, as conditions, snow pack and precipitation can change from day to day.



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# AMBITION CHEATING WISDOM: AN ACCIDENT ON MT. ARROWSMITH

*Chris Joseph*

I was calm throughout. Spinning. Incredible speed. The sounds of metal, nylon and the three of us striking snow, ice, rock and soaring through the air. Had Doug yelled throughout or was it a figment of a mind in shock? I remember being upside down, falling for a long time. Waiting for my head to crunch into my chest.

It was a fresh morning in late winter on Vancouver Island. We had struggled our way up through the thinning trees and deep snow to one of the many walls of Mt. Arrowsmith's north face. Doug was in search of technical challenge; Scott was ready to test himself on some local ice; myself, a rock climber, was looking for something other than a snow slog. Apparently a club group was also on the mountain that day, likely trudging its way up some other gully in one of the mountain's many recesses. The fog opened enough for the three of us to spy a steep gully of hard snow and ice leading upward into the clouds. What was up there? Snow quietly floated down from somewhere above.

The fog isolated us in its midst, shrouding the morning in silence. Echoes seemed to bounce off the tiny, suspended water droplets themselves. Leading the first pitch, I climbed through regular spindrift to lower angled snow. I was a bit nervous but excited to venture into the unknown. Scott led the next pitch, opting for a series of ice-draped benches instead of the narrow chimney to the right. I was impressed with the lead. The thick ice thinned to a fragile centimetre on top of rock. "Be delicate with your placements" Scott suggested from above. The tug of the rope above was a relief; the great depth of air below sucked balls of snow away from under my feet with every kick. The feeling of security from the top-rope in such an environment was undeniably strange to me. I couldn't help but

ask myself if this was cheating, or if we were getting away with something.

Arriving at the belay, I immediately saw why Scott had taken so much time setting up the anchor. He had excavated the snow and ice from the entire mountainside within his reach in search of gear placements. "Don't tell me that nut is the bomber piece." "Yah". "It sucks." Our transaction was nonchalant. The "iffy" nut was complemented by a couple of snow stakes in shallow snow. Nothing else was available. I put my axes into the snow and jammed in every snow stake I had on me into the strongest snow I could find and sucked in some cool air.

The anchor was garbage. But I didn't act on this knowledge. It was matter of fact, and though I recall concern, I just accepted it. I know now that had we been rock climbing there would not be any way that I would have continued with such crap.

Hungry. Perhaps it was my nervousness that allowed my Snickers bar to slip between my fingers and bounce its way out of sight, down through the fog that enveloped our world.

The next pitch looked tough. The grin Doug gave Scott and me before he set off for the next lead implied boyish naiveté. "Why not try the chimney with the ice?" "No, it looks like the angle eases just over there," said Doug as he stared up and left. He was the leader of the pitch, it was his neck he was sticking out - I let him decide.

He began to move from the belay. I focused on... nothing. I don't recall thinking much. I was staring at my anchors... but at nothing at all. WHERE WERE MY SURVIVAL INSTINCTS? Why wasn't my brain operating? I just chewed on my second and last chocolate bar and played a game of hope. Doug gingerly traversed upwards and left. He only dared to tap his picks into the friable

ice and rime. Time took so long to slither along, marked by the slow rhythm of the tap and bite of carefully placed tools and crampons. Suddenly Doug's metal claws released and then scraped themselves to a halt one foot lower than where they had been placed. My chest tightened. All of the world's knowledge and common sense doesn't mean anything unless one acts on it. I did not. I gave away my security to someone else. Were my two partners aware that my chest was so tight I barely breathed? I remember being really worried about Doug falling. No. I almost knew he would but didn't process the thought long enough. Maybe it was a tactic my brain was playing subconsciously so I wouldn't dwell on the consequences. But the image of the drop below is burned in my head. I must have understood the situation but somehow or for some reason held back and waited, accepting my fate as if my actions were not meant to interfere with what was planned for me.

After a few feeble moves horror struck: Doug looked our way and forced a definite "fuck" out of his tightened face. Then, as if in a trance, I watched his crampons skate, slide, and then with a yell he dropped out into the void. The rope tightened to Scott, who was belaying. Scott launched and then I felt a gargantuan tug at my waist as I too was yanked off the mountainside.

All I knew was sound and the irrepressible race of gravity. Things were crashing, metal was clanking, someone (me?) was yelling and everything was moving very, very fast. Waiting... waiting... accepting... no emotion, just waiting for an event that would determine what would or would not come next. The body has no ability to counter such forces, and so the brain digs itself in for the ride, waiting for a moment where it might make a move. With a slam I was sliding. I struggled to stay on top of

the snow that quickly built up around my face: please slope, don't avalanche! My senses roared as my brain tried to regain ground from the overload of the experience.

We came to a halt in the middle of the slope at the base of the gully after 300 feet in the vertical. Ropes tangled us, blood splotted us, and groans leaked out as shock showed its presence. Is everyone okay? Is my body in one piece? Holy fuck! My mind was saying over and over again holy fuck, holy fuck, find first aid kit, holy fuck, holy fuck, my face is numb, holy fuck, where the hell is the right bandage, holy fuck. Precise and methodical action was interspersed with amazement that I had not just survived but was able to get up and operate. But above all, my brain was about acceptance - we just catapulted two pitches and I basically felt okay; it was time to act and be amazed later. Tylenol 3, anyone? Yells of help were slung back empty-handed from the walls and mist surrounding us. The incessant fog became our barrier; only minutes ago it tempted us and now it held us.

Well... only one thing to do. With gear collected or stashed, we initiated the who-knows-how-long hobble and butt-slide out in the fading light. The scrunch of snow was broken only by intermittent screams as each of our bodies told us more and more clearly where

we had done them wrong. We flopped down through small bluffs, gullies and trees, reaching the car well into the evening. Security - let there be light! Darkness was soon illuminated by the car's lights as three figures slowly got themselves ready for the drive home.

Within a few days all of the injuries surfaced: puncture wounds, a knee with damaged cartilage and stretched ligaments, a sprained ankle, some compressed vertebrae, a re-broken rib and numerous bruised and sore muscles. Relatively little considering the tumble. The mental game was more tortuous. For days I hobbled around the university campus, mostly staring blankly, telling people the skiing was a little rough last weekend. These people passing me had no idea what I just went through. Most of them lead lives that never approach the edge. I was acutely aware that I had, in the name of fun, nearly crossed this edge. It took weeks to comprehend the event, to confront friends and family with the truth. Perhaps one never does understand such events and how they could let them happen to themselves.

Had this experience turned me into some sort of "real" climber now? Someone to be respected? No - it didn't take long to realize that I had been a stupid climber. There are no "real" climbers, just climbers that perceive themselves to be this or

that, climbers that make good decisions and climbers that make bad decisions.

I am left with questions. The age-old question: how could I let this happen to me? Had ambition blinded me? How did this different environment change my perception of danger? Did the blanket of snow surrounding us soften my concern? I think so - I can chalk this one up to inexperience. I also wonder whether blame can or should be assigned. The others did not address my concern for the anchor, but maybe it was my responsibility to heighten their awareness of my uneasiness. Since others can't read my mind, maybe it is my responsibility to make them understand how I feel. On the other hand, should it always be the "concerned" person's problem? My compliance was my approval; voices can only be voices when they are heard. We were a climbing team linked by a cord of nylon but not by the spoken word. Perhaps in the climbing game we can only be responsible for ourselves. I'd conclude that all three of us were to blame. Even so, it's hard not to narrow it down to me, me and me. I didn't act on what I knew in my heart. In the end, I can only ask myself why my brain was as foggy as the day.

*Participants: Chris Joseph, Doug Goodman and Scott Pearse.*

## THE SCHEDULED PEAK 5040 TRIP

*Sandy Briggs*

The weather crushed any plans for a reasonable trip to the intended Sutton Pass destination, and Plan B turned out to be a pleasant, though slightly wet, ski trip on the San Juan Ridge up from Jordan River. The pared-down group that ventured out consisted of the author, Judy and Viggo Holm, Gerta Smythe, and our Swiss visitor Sara. It was January 18<sup>th</sup>. We skied up to Tower Cabin (meeting a group from the UVic Outdoors Club as they emerged from the forest) in something over two hours,

having had to ski quite a lot of the road. There we had an enjoyable indoor lunch before emerging again into the elements for a descent along an intended westerly variation of our ascent route.

We swung 'round to Colwood to drop Gerta off at home, and she and Ken very kindly invited us all in for an impromptu dinner, which was most welcome, proving once again that sometimes Plan B can surpass expectations. Many thanks to Gerta and Ken for their hospitality!

## QUASAR HAIKU

Water falls behind,  
Freaked climber on winter ice.  
Frozen motion.

*-Gil Parker*

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# MOUNT MILNER

*Lindsay Elms*

July 17

For great views of Johnston Strait and the Coast Mountains - consider a trip into the Prince of Wales Range south of Sayward. Located in the middle of this range is a rarely visited peak called Mt. Milner, which is overshadowed by neighbouring Mt. Hkusam. Hkusam is the mountain with the bare rocky face studded with the ghostly remains of dead trees that a fire ravaged some-time ago. I hadn't been up Mt. Milner so I thought it was time that I visited its' summit.

Just after crossing Stowe Creek about 2-3 km before Sayward Junction I turned right into Dyers Logging yard and got

onto Dyers Main. This road was heavily overgrown with Alders which were trying their hardest to scratch the paint off my truck. After about 5 km I arrived at a major junction and turned right onto the branch road. This road continued to be overgrown all the way to where I parked just before Dalrymple Creek. I found an even more overgrown road to my left and began hiking up the switchbacks to the edge of the forest. One short horrible section of second growth and then I was in the old growth. It was fairly easy hiking through the forest all the way up to the alpine and then from there to the summit was an

easy stroll.

On the summit was a large cairn built by the surveyor Fred Nash back in 1949 when he set up a triangulation station. I sat on top for an hour watching the clouds rise and slowly expose the surrounding vistas. The clouds continued to rise as I was descending and by the time I got back down to my truck there was hardly a cloud in the blue summer sky. It was another enjoyable trip into the Prince of Wales Range, an area that I visit regularly in both summer and winter. It is an area with easy access and spectacular views that you only usually get from the higher island mountains.

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# QUEEN PEAK

*Sandy Briggs*

March 21 - 22

I put Queen Peak on the schedule partly because I really wanted to climb it (for the view west to Victoria Pk and Warden), and partly to give notice that Queen Pk is not the ridgy bump rambling NW off Kings Pk near Highway 28. However, this El Niño year must also have been the year of Plans B, since I recall only one weekend from January to April that experienced two days of nice weather. (I was in town all that weekend.)

My too-large list for plan A diminished substantially as the weather forecast deteriorated rapidly on the Thursday afternoon. In searching for suitable Plan B objectives one generally considers a mental list of relatively close and familiar destinations that one could reasonably expect to grovel blindly up in marginal or even crappy conditions without getting hypothermia. (I guess that's not a line that will see much use in brochures trying to entice newcomers to the sport of mountaineering.) John convinced me that Mt. Brunswick fell more or less

into this category. He praised it in other ways too, but I'll have to climb it again to experience the putative spectacular views.

Our group of eight caught the Nanaimo ferry to Horseshoe Bay at 10:30 am on the Saturday. We started hiking above Lions Bay at about 1:00 pm, and camped on snow at the end of the logging road at about 3470 ft. We had met a few others who were descending, but the trail could not have been described as crowded withal. We rationalized this observation by noting that nearly continuous rain had characterized the afternoon.

Continuous rain characterized the ensuing night. At about 7:30 am the rain relented, forcing us out of bed to engage the day. Following some tracks from the previous day and some pretty orange markers, we made our way steadily upward, traversing the summit ridge with due caution in the 50-100 m visibility and reaching the top at about 11:00. Some photos were taken in spite of the absence of an inspiring back-

drop, and we made our way uneventfully back to camp. There had even been one or two brief glimpses of blue sky and a short episode of direct solar photon impingement.

The weather became quite unambiguously pleasant as we hiked down to Lions Bay, but I seem to recall a vigorous cloudburst just as we were stashing the last of the gear in the cars for the ride home. One of the most pleasant ferry-waits ever was passed over a meal and concomitant potation in Horseshoe Bay, and the boat trip itself passed a calm and pleasant evening. I do not understand the reason for the new highspeed ferries. The current ones are fast enough for me.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs (leader), Reinhard Illner, Tony Pugh, John Pratt, Gary Quiring, Scott Garvin, John Damaschke and Chris Terot.*

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# CREST CREEK CRAGS

*Terry Lunn*

July 11 - 12

The Crest Creek Craggs are located between Buttle Narrows and Gold River on Highway 28, near the Kings Peak and Elk River trail heads. All bluffs are within walking distance of the parking lot. I would encourage non-rock climbers to visit the crags when they are in the vicinity. Apart from the beautiful setting the most striking aspect is the skill and dedication that has gone into the development and management of the area. Hundreds of hours must have gone into building stone and wooden steps on the trail to contain the impact of climbers. Routes have been meticulously cleaned and anchor stations are tidily bolted with good equipment. Occasional recreational users owe a debt of appreciation to the Heathens Outdoor Club and their sponsors. It is gratifying to

see time and money well spent. Many thanks.

I like the hours that rock climbers keep. Parties started arriving with us around 10:00 am. Ours was a diverse group in age and experience and other groups that arrived, including a young family of four climbers made for a very pleasant day of climbing.

Sunday started with a downpour. Larry, Viggo and I were sheltering under the overhang of the park map. We had enjoyed the buffet at the Lodge the night before and I was figuring that we would go there and enjoy some coffee and muffins before heading home. After all you can't go rock climbing in the rain, right? But Curtis and Judith were not to be stopped, an opportunity to practice setting up anchors and practising be-

lay techniques in cold wet, muddy conditions should not be missed.

Thanks to Judith and Curtis's tenacity we had an excellent session in the rain. Quite worthwhile. All seemed to enjoy and benefit from Curtis' instruction. It was mentioned that this would be a good session to repeat on a yearly basis. Along with transceiver and avalanche rescue, crevasse rescue, and ice axe arrests, it is of benefit to practice scenarios using different rope techniques. Thanks again to Curtis Lyon for a good weekend and excellent clinic.

*Participants: Rob and James Adams, Larry Borgerson, Judith & Viggo Holm, Norman Hourigan, Curtis Lyon, Terry Lunn and Jeff Stuart.*

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# MOUNT FEAR (AND OTHER RUMINATIONS)

*Peter Rothermel*

Last April 1<sup>st</sup> we were hiking and climbing in the Danger Range. You know, that's that group of mountains near Strathcona Park. You turn off Hwy. 28 on to a logging road, Trepidation Main. After about 35 km, go up Turnaround Spur for another 13 km, park at Scream Lake and hike across its creaking surface. Bushwhack up Apprehensive Creek for about 7 km until you reach Mortality Moraine, cross Grippy Glacier and gain the Adrenaline Snowfield leading to Anxious Col, then left onto Alarm Arete. Continue along Panic Ridge until you come to the summit blocks of Mt. Fear, summoning like a beckoning finger. This last bit is on loose conglomerate crud. In a cairn made from the bones of unknown creatures, we found the following essay:

Why do you climb? (or, sex in the mountains) - By C.O. Jones

Friends often ask me why, when in my mid-forties a few years ago, I took up rock climbing, and they usually end with something like, "not me - you're crazy!"

My pat answer is, "Because I like being up in the mountains and crag climbing gives me more confidence in my foot and hand holds, it's like playing a game of chess with rock, besides, it's so beautiful in the alpine, and blah de blah blah..."

Why do you climb? I'm sure you've heard it all, from 'because it's there,' to "because we're mad," to poetry and prose about the beauty... "Ah, the alpenglow!"

I have another reason for being attracted to the heights - FEAR! Remember watching horror movies as a kid? You couldn't look but had to anyway - spine-tingling!

It's like that for me at times in the mountains. Get on a peak, look out at the distant vistas and, oh, how beautiful. Then step to the edge and peer straight down a couple of thousand feet and WHAM! EXPOSURE! The hair on the back of my neck begins to prickle, I feel I'm being sucked into the vortex of vertigo, then the rising feeling in the pit of my stomach... except it hits a bit lower in an area I think is called... ahem... the cojones.

Better than sex you ask? Well, I guess that depends on the mountain, or maybe the woman. All I can say is it's a thrill... I mean both are.

But it begs the question, how and where does it hit a woman?

# MOUNT KOKUMMI

Lindsay Elms

June 22

On the North side of the White River surrounded by the spectacular peaks of Northern Vancouver Island is Mt. Kokummi. In the native Kwakwaka'wakw Sept., Kokummi translates into English as 'face', but it is not known how this name relates to the mountain. Maybe someone with a vivid imagination was able to depict a human face in the summit rocks. However, this native name doesn't correlate with the European name 'Cheese Mountain' which the mountain has sometimes been called. Where this name comes from is unknown but I have my own idea. I believe there was someone in a THC daze from smoking hooch while on the mountain's slopes who had the munchies and couldn't think of anything else but 'fromage', hence the name 'Cheese Mountain'. The famous cheeses such as Blue Vein, Gouda, Mozzarella and Edam (is Mt. Adam incorrectly pronounced) could very easily have become names for the surrounding mountains. But no matter where the name originates from it is still worth a visit and that is why three of us decided to go and wander up to its' summit on a fine June day.

The normal ascent route for the few people who have climbed Kokummi is via logging roads off the White River Main that give easy access to the East Ridge. We decided to go straight up the South Face to the summit. From below we could see rock bluffs and a deep ravine to the right of our proposed route so we knew to stay clear of them. At first we spent half an hour climbing through the Fireweed infested clear-cuts until we entered the old growth forest. Saprophytes were beginning to pop-up from the decaying ground matter and we tried to avoid crushing them under foot as we climbed up the steep slopes. Eventually the saprophytes gave way to huckleberries and copperbush: their slender stems angling downhill creating a veritable tangled web of branches that would attempt to flick back and poke

us in the eye, stomach or legs as we forced our way up through them.

At a little brook that the local population of Elk had used as a watering hole, we also stopped and drank. Here we thought was a nice place for lunch. However, the other locals (the mosquitoes) weren't in favour of us spending too much time enjoying the alpine serenity. With lunch devoured, we began moving up towards the summit. To our right was a snow filled basin but we decided to stay on the easy bluffs that we were quickly able to zig-zag up through. Finally, a short snow tongue brought us up onto the summit ridge and in a few minutes we were standing on the top.

The views were amazing — across the valley to the south stood Victoria and Warden Peak. We almost forgot we were on Vancouver Island as we looked across at them. With wispy clouds floating around the tops and teasing us with glimpses of airy buttresses and ridges, and broken glaciers, we could have been forgiven for thinking we were in the Italian Dolomites. To the southwest were Mt. Alston and its sharp satellite summit, then the imposing East Face of Mt. Sutton and eventually Watchtower Peak. To the north stood Mt. Adam, then Mt. Schoen and Mt. Nora. I took careful note of the logging roads and decided that I had to come back to this area soon. In the summit cairn was a Coke bottle with two names written on a slip of paper, one from Sept. '94 and the other Aug. '95, both locals from Sayward. Obviously not visited very often.

It was 4:00 pm when we left the summit. For the descent we boot skied down the snow basin and then entered the forest where we found our route up from earlier in the day. Two and a half hours later we were back down at the truck, hungry but happy.

*Participants: Lindsay Elms, Elaine Kerr and Sandy Doll.*

## WITH THANKS, SANDY BRIGGS

There's a leader in our section,  
He is quiet and he is strong,  
We all seek out his direction  
Cos' he knows what's right from wrong.

At the front he cuts a staircase  
Up the snow so deep and steep,  
It's not easy with the air white  
He thinks hard to find the peak.

At the back he helps us make it,  
Warm wool mitts he does provide,  
It's not he who wants to take charge  
Yet he's ended up our guide.

We still need him when he's not seen,  
When at home he's chosen to stay,  
Someone's asked his help,  
he's been there,  
On our map he's marked a way.

You may ask why we do love him,  
Why he receives a respect that's rare,  
He's our leader 'cos above his skills  
We know Sandy always cares.

*Judith Holm*

# ALBERT'S BIRTHDAY

Mike Hubbard

May 2

Hans Albert Hestler was born to Albert and Helene Hestler, 65 years ago, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1933 in Crailsheim, Germany. Mt. Albert Edward was named after Albert Edward, the first son of Queen Victoria and Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1841, and later to become King Edward VII. What better place could there be to celebrate Albert's birthday, and so, with Albert in blissful ignorance of our intentions, Jack Fisher organized a ski trip into Sid's Cabin on the weekend of May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1998.

The morning sky was grey leaving Victoria, but as we went north towards Strathcona we caught up with the high that had persisted all the previous week. After a strengthening breakfast in Courtenay, the party consisting of Jack Fisher, Richard Keltie, Perry Therien, David and Lois Thompson, Mike Hubbard and Albert Hestler, were soon on the trail crossing Paradise Meadows and on via Lake Helen McKenzie in brilliant sunshine. By the time we reached the ranger cabin, after being led by Jack on a time saving (so he claimed) route through the trees on the west side of the lake, the heavy snow pack, fortunately well consolidated, seemed more like the dunes of the Sahara.

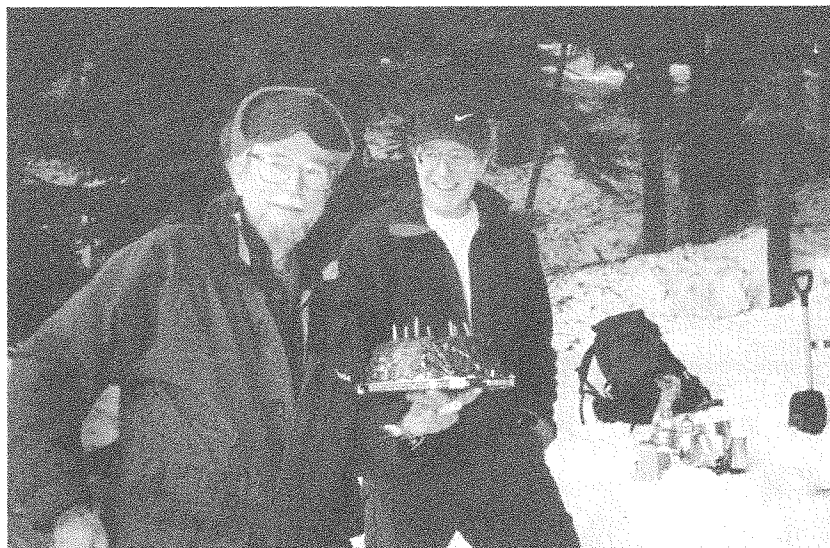
Sid's cabin was found by using a combination of ancient and modern techniques, the whiff of wood smoke and Jack's GPS, for a few feet of stove pipe and steps cut in the snow leading down into what felt like a meat cooler was all that could be seen. We decided to camp around it and eat in the positively balmy air and evening sun. Mike had the card and whilst keeping

an eye on Albert, who was looking suspicious, managed to garner everyone's signature and good wishes. Jack, who had manfully carried a large angel cake, made by Liz, in the top of his pack, was hiding behind Dave and Lois' tent putting on the chocolate icing and candles. Perry meanwhile, was chatting up Albert on the other side of the camp. Conversation after a long slog in the hot sun tends to flag and there was a moment of panic as Albert started to move towards Jack's tent, which three of us were sharing, and from which he would have had a full view of Jack at work. Mike suggested to Albert that it would be a good idea to light a fire in the cabin to

day, and intended that we should all have a drink with him. The smile that spread wider and wider on Albert's face as Mike presented the card, we all shook his hand and finally Jack emerged with the decorated cake, convinced us that the surprise was reversed. The final touch was a superb rendering of "Happy Birthday" led by the magnificent voice of Perry, late of the Montreal Opera and soon to be of the Vancouver Opera!

Albert's birthday sleep was somewhat disturbed by having Mike's rustling around looking for his hat, water bottle and other essentials at 5:00 am, not to mention earlier snoring, for the early start that the four of us who had to be out on Sunday night had decided to make.

Richard and Mike were on the summit by 10:15 am, soon followed by Dave and Lois. The ski down was in perfect conditions, soft but firm enough to parallel ski on our telemark gear. Below the notch we met Jack, Albert and Perry on the way up in the hot sun. Jack and Albert made the summit by 2:00 pm and had equally good



Happy 65th birthday Albert! Photo: Mike Hubbard.

melt snow and hovered close to Albert blocking his view of Jack. However, Albert ignored the suggestion and moved towards the tent forcing Jack to take the cake into Dave's tent to finish off the decoration. From the tent came giggles and the occasional glimpse of chocolate covered fingers being licked.

By now we were sure that Albert knew something was up. As we were finishing supper he pulled from his pack a bottle of Napoleon Brandy and announced that he wanted to surprise us, as he had just had a significant birth-

corn snow conditions coming down.

The four of us made it home that night, whilst Jack, Albert and Perry consumed what was left of the liquor and returned by satellite navigation via Kwai, Mariwood, Croteau and Helen McKenzie lakes the next day.

Many Happy Returns Albert - let's do it again next year!

*Participants: Jack Fisher (leader), Richard Keltie, Perry Therien, David and Lois Thompson, Mike Hubbard and Albert Hestler.*

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# GOLDEN HINDE SPEED RECORD

*Lindsay Elms*

August 8

Time to pull out the pack and load it up with goodies for the next trip. Destination - Golden Hinde. Everything I needed was in my pack - crampons, ice axe, 4 Mars bars, 2 Power bars, 3 bagel sandwiches, 2 bananas, 1 yogurt, fleece jacket, nylon wind breaker, long johns, nylon pants, polypro gloves, first aid kit, hat, sunscreen, map and compass, headlamp and 2 water-bottles. Yes that was all! None of those heavy items like tent, sleeping bag, multi-day food, stove or fuel this time. Keith Wakelin, my climbing companion, and I were in peak form having just recently run the North Shore Knee Knacker race from Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove via the Baden Powell Trail, a strenuous 30 miler. We were ready for another challenge, hence the idea of day tripping the Golden Hinde.

We left Courtenay at 10:30 pm and drove up to the parking lot at the start of the Phillips Ridge Trail. A bite to eat and a drink, on with the pack and headlamp, and by 12:50 am we were on our way under the light of a full moon. However, the moon soon disappeared when the mist rolled in.

Midnight is a time when any sensible person would be tucked away in bed sound asleep. But there we were hiking up to Arnica Lake. After half an hour we came across a tent (sensible people we thought) pitched on the trail. We were not able to give them a very wide berth, so we scuttled as quietly as possible passed their tent. No doubt the occupants, if they woke up, we thought would be quivering in their bag waiting for the lethal claws of these wild animals to rip through the nylon wall of their tent and gnaw them to death. But wait, wild animals with headlamps, what's going on, have we overslept and it's dawn already. A quick glance at their watch would confirm that it was still the middle of the night, but I can see them scratching their heads wondering who those late night hikers were

and what they were doing heading not down, but up hill.

Arnica Lake was passed in the blink of an eyelid and soon we were groping our way along Phillips Ridge towards Peak 1732. The misty conditions gave us about 50 feet in which we could make out the larger features such as trees or bluffs, but our headlamps only gave us 10 feet in which we were able to pick out the micro-terrain under foot. We had been hoping to do this section with the aid of the moon but atmospheric conditions dictated otherwise. We continued to pick our way along the ridge until we came to a steep buttress. Into the thinning mist we climbed. Overhead we could now see stars beginning to poke through and then suddenly we were above the mist. We were now looking down on a sea of soft fluffy clouds with all the bigger mountains silhouetted in the glow of the August moon, shooting stars whisking across the heavens like a late night fireworks show. Still looking a long way off, the Golden Hinde stood like a giant sailing ship with its canvas sails billowing on the horizon. It was a serene and beautiful place to be at this time of the night - a sight not to be forgotten. As yet there was still no sign of the impending dawn on the eastern horizon.

We traversed under Peak 1732 and continued along Phillips Ridge, at times disturbing Ptarmigan who were just waking up from their nocturnal slumber and beginning their morning forage for food. At the lowest point on Phillips Ridge, we dropped 100 metres down a gully and then entered the forest. We had to traverse at a low angle across to Carter Lake. In places the undergrowth was quite thick with copperbush and salal, and we had to be careful not to get whacked in the eyes by the branches so we slowed down a bit. Once at the lake we crossed the outlet on the logjam and picked up our pace again as we

traveled around on the open south shore. At 7:30 am we passed another tent. We snuck passed the occupants without them knowing and then began the ascent up to the North Ridge of Mt. Burman via a small creek that angled down. On the ridge we were 8 hours into the trip and estimated that we would be on the top of the Golden Hinde in another 3 to 4 hours.

We descended off the end of the ridge to the narrow chasm at Burman Lake. This was where B.C. Hydro back in the 1960's tried to divert the outlet of Burman Lake to the Wolf River by blasting a new creek. They wanted to divert water into Buttle Lake to create a larger catchment area for the new hydro dam at Upper Campbell Lake. Fortunately, Parks managed to halt their progress and the lake continues to drain into the Burman River.

We decided to take out of our packs what we didn't need for the final ascent and leave them hanging in a tree. For the last 1,000 metres we wanted to go as light as possible. We passed the base camp for the Hinde and ascended the scree and heather slopes to the bottom of the Southeast Gully. Here we found about 80 metres of snow in the gully so I strapped my crampons onto my trail shoes, pulled my ice axe out and climbed to the top while Keith decided to scramble up the rock. At 11:55 am I arrived at the familiar weathered cross on the top of the Golden Hinde and Keith arrived 15 minutes later. I had climbed the Golden Hinde 9 times before and I had always said that for the 10<sup>th</sup> time I would take a small bottle of Champagne in with me and drink it on the summit in celebration, however, it wasn't going to be the case this time (maybe next time). We had come a long way and were feeling quite jubilant, therefore we decided to stay on the summit and enjoy the view and take a well-deserved rest. The day had turned out to be beautiful and



as the morning progressed, the clouds in the valley had dissipated. It was one of those days one dreams about having in the mountains. I asked Keith if he was having fun and was this worth the effort, and in a Kiwi drawl that was fading due to living in Canada too long he said: "kin oath mate."

We lounged on the warm rocks soaking up their energy and experiencing the high of being somewhere special. While reading through the summit register we drank and ate our lunch, noticing an intense pleasure derived from such a simple and repetitive task. The view from the summit of the Golden Hinde never fails to hold me spellbound and I always find it hard to tear myself away but at 1:00 pm it was time to leave.

We were 12 hours in and still had another 11 to 12 hours to go to get back out. So why were we punishing ourselves? It wasn't like there was a big fat cheque waiting for us if we could do it, and there is no way we would be hailed as the Bonattis of Vancouver Island. So why were we doing it? For Keith it was very simple, he hadn't been up the Golden Hinde before and wanted to reach the summit. He was very fit and trusted my experience and judgement. For me this was the ultimate challenge on Vancouver Island - day tripping the Golden Hinde. Being in the centre of not only Strathcona Park but also Vancouver Island, it is probably one of the most inaccessible peaks and has the enticing distinction as the Island's highest peak.

Over the years I have been building up to the challenge. By becoming familiar with the Island's terrain through work as a mountaineering instructor and then by getting out on my own doing light, fast trips into the various peaks, I was able to see how my body would cope with the stress required for the endurance for such an excursion. The route from Arnica Lake to the Golden Hinde I knew like the back of my hand; where the short cuts were, how to avoid any unnecessary climbing and where to find water thus avoiding the burden of carry that extra weight. Conserving energy was my foremost concern. I had waited several years for everything to

be just right. I wanted to be in peak form, I needed a companion in the same condition, and a full moon coinciding with the longer daylight hours. Early August appeared to be the best time. Although the longest day had come and gone a month earlier, we could still expect it to be light from around 5:30 am to 9:30 pm. Starting just after midnight we could hike the B.C. Park's trail with headlights, thus putting us high on Phillips Ridge for first light. On the return trip we hoped to be able to get back to the Park's trail in the last light of the day. Penultimately, most of the snow would be gone from the ridges leaving the access terrain dry and bare. Finally, the ascent of the Hinde itself would be mostly on rock and we would be able to do this in trail shoes thus avoiding the need to wear heavy cumbersome climbing boots.

The descent off the Golden Hinde was straightforward and we avoided knocking the loose rocks down on each other by taking separate lines. A quick refreshing drink at the frigid *aqua pura* tarn at base camp and then on down to Burman Lake where we picked up our stashed belongings and began the long ascent back up the North Ridge of Mt. Burman. Along the way we passed the hikers who had camped by Carter Lake. First they asked us if we had climbed the Hinde and then they asked us where we were camped. Upon telling them we had come in from Westmin that morning, they just shook their heads and said "unbelievable." We gave them the information they asked about climbing the Hinde and then bid them adieu as we still had a long way to go. After dropping off of Mt. Burman, we found our way through the bush to the gully that led us back up onto Phillips Ridge. We were beginning to feel the strain but we knew we were on the home stretch. Before each climb along the ridge, we stopped and ate something to give us the energy boost to get to the top. Again we passed some more hikers camped in the little saddle next to Peak 1732. Were these the same people who had pitched their tent in the middle of the trail that we had passed 20 hours earlier? We didn't stop to find out.

The sun was dropping behind the western horizon with a fiery glow as we cruised that ridge. It would have been nice to sit somewhere and watch the *son et lumiere* show but we were in a hurry to get to the end of Phillips Ridge and reach the trail leading down to Arnica Lake. Unfortunately the ridge was longer then we had remembered and just seemed to go on and on. The darkness crept in and overtook us so we got our headlamps out, but still Phillips Ridge went on. Finally, at 10:30 pm we arrived at Arnica Lake and slumped down on a tent platform for a drink and a bite to eat. We knew now that nothing could stop us from getting back to the car.

The bottoms of my feet were beginning to feel tender, as I had not taken my shoes or socks off since I put them on 22 hours earlier. Every little pebble on the trail felt as though thumbtacks were being driven up through the soles of my shoes, which resulted in me cringing at every step. My knees were okay but Keith said his were beginning to ache, however, they weren't seizing up yet so he was able to ignore their pleas for him to stop. Also, it wasn't long before the batteries in Keith's lamp began to fade. But they managed to continue glimmering. On the rougher sections of the trail he needed the aid of my headlamp to help him from stumbling over rocks or tree roots that were waiting to ambush him.

We could feel ourselves slowing down and becoming weary. Our whole focus was on those few feet of trail in front of us, sending us into a state of light-headedness and causing our eyes to grow heavy with fatigue. The lights from Boliden Westmin (the name for the mine by its new Swedish owners) seemed awfully close but to our frustration they never seemed to get any closer. A couple of times we thought that we would be down in another 20 minutes but when another hour passed we realized we hadn't been where we thought we were. We began cursing the switchbacks and wished the trail would go straight down to the car park. Every now and then I would hear Keith mutter in a most inappropriate man-

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ner that this was the 40<sup>th</sup> f\*\*\*en switchback and then half an hour later the f\*\*\*en 60<sup>th</sup>. Finally the trail came out onto the mine road after 73 f\*\*\*en switchbacks. I think Keith was getting tired! A few minutes later at 12:48 am we took our packs, and shoes and socks off at the car and let out a big sigh of relief. It was over! We had gone in to the Golden Hinde, climbed it and returned in a 24 hr period. Our body and minds were not really in any fit state to acknowledge that we had accomplished what we had set out to do but we knew that would come later after rest. All that was left was the drive back to Courtenay. The temptation was there to sleep in the car but the lure of a warm soft bed was overpowering. Keith and I took turns at driving because in our brain-dead state we found this was the most dangerous part of the whole trip and we didn't want to end up in Buttle Lake.

At 3 am I dropped Keith off at his home and 15 minutes later I parked the car in my driveway. To shower or not to shower? That was the question I was asking myself, as all I really wanted to do was to climb into bed, but the call for a clean body led me to the shower. I'm sure that having the shower gave

me the few minutes I needed to wind down sufficiently from the trip because when my head hit the pillow, I was out to the count. Later that morning when I woke up I felt better but was still a long way from being fully refreshed. My body was telling me I needed food and refreshments but the thought of cooking wasn't all that appealing. A few minutes later Elaine called me from town and said to come in for brunch as she had been up on Mt. Beecher with a friend and also didn't feel like cooking.

Driving into town I was feeling really pleased with the trip and the way Keith and I had performed. I had learnt more about my body and what it could do. I realized I still had energy in reserve and I knew I could have pushed myself further if it was demanded. Secondly, my mind stayed sharp and focused throughout the 24 hours, as there was never a doubt that I wouldn't complete the goal I had set out for myself. Keith had performed exceptionally himself. He had continued to push himself throughout and never once said he couldn't go on. Later, Keith confided that he hadn't fully realized what he was in for but once he had started he was prepared to give

110 percent to the end. Keith claimed he was close to his limit but it was all a matter of overcoming the mental torture. This was something Keith was familiar with from running ultra-marathons.

My head was buzzing with intensity seldom experienced. I wasn't thinking about what to do next (yes, there are other challenges out there), instead I was thinking about what I could have done differently. There wasn't a lot I could change as the whole trip went very smoothly and the homework had been thoroughly done. The weather was cooperative and the mountains allowed us to pass through safely. The most important thing I could think of for the future, if I did something like this again, would be to carry some foot powder, a change of insoles and a couple of pairs of socks and change into them regularly. It was my feet that I ended up having the most aches from and not my knees as I had anticipated. I realized that to do a trip like this meant having happy feet, and happy feet are pampered feet!

*Participants: Lindsay Elms and Keith Wakelin.*

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## MT. MORIARTY TO MT. ARROWSMITH TRAVERSE PARTS I AND II

*Jon Damaschke*

Also titled: "Why mountaineers prefer 4x4s" or "The importance of a shovel in mountaineering" or just "The long driveway".

The idea was a winter traverse, giving the opportunity to spend a few days in the alpine, even in the wet island winter conditions. The weather even seemed to be cooperating, as the weekend before the scheduled trip was perfectly sunny.

Part I of the trip is a short story: On November 14, a group of 6 keen hikers, Dave Wood, Mike Rockwell, Shelly, Chris Harp, Fleming Sorvin and John

Damaschke, climbed to the top of Mt. Arrowsmith, spent about 5 minutes in a mixture of pouring horizontal rain, slush and hail, then turned back down.

On Friday evening, January 15, after a few weeks of rain and snow, one desperate mountain walker named "Johnny Walker" headed off for a second attempt. His Corolla seemed to be not as keen, and made it only half way from the Arrowsmith turn-off towards Labour Day Lake. At midnight, Johnny Walker started snowshoeing towards the trailhead. After two hours of stomping through the snow, and still sinking in at least half a foot

deep into the snow, his feet were sore so he stopped for the night.

Continuing the next morning, it took one hour to hike to the trailhead, and one more hour until the uphill started. Despite snowshoes, the snow went up over his gaiters, over his knees, and often enough up to his hip. Unstable snow conditions required him to choose a path through the bush and trees, fighting branches with his pack. Reaching Mt. Arrowsmith was out of question, and to get to the top of Moriarty, we had to gain 100 m each hour, which meant short breaks. Johnny's ankle confirmed

that there was too much fresh snow for hiking, but after adding cushioning around the sore spot, he went on. As a reward, the clouds lifted off just when he arrived on the top of Moriarty around sunset, after a total of 10 hr from the car. It was an amazing view of the snow-covered ridge and Mt. Arrowsmith, glowing red in the distance. With the clear night sky the temperatures also dropped enough to have the icicles which had formed on his pants freeze to the ones on his Gore-Tex jacket giving it the feel of a moonwalk in a space suit.

When it was time for dinner, his matches failed and his lighter wouldn't light and finally broke. Luckily one of the backup matches lit, almost like in slow motion. The match head first started glowing then caught fire on the tip, and it slowly spread over the rest of the head, until a wind gust blew it out. Oh well, that's what power bars are for.

The next day, Johnny continued his way back along the ridge, towards where his Corolla was parked, dropping down onto logging road about 1 1/2 hour away from it. Mt. Moriarty had turned into a 20 hr return trip. This could be a new time record in mountain climbing—for slowness. Being back at the car was like reaching civilization—with an almost unlimited supply of heat, and the possibility to move fast without much effort. Not quite! New snow had filled in the car tracks, and rain had consoli-

dated the snow. After driving for 20 m, enough snow had built up underneath the car that the tires had no traction on the road. It took close to an hour for Johnny to dig the vehicle free again. His second attempt to drive off moved the car as far as out of the shovelled hole, showing the previously shovelled spot just behind the trunk. The whole road needed to be shovelled. There actually were spots where only the top loose layer of snow had to be skimmed off, others where taking a run at it could get you a few meters further, but most of it just needed to be freed of the snow. At 9 pm on Sunday, after three hours of shovelling, it was bedtime. The back-seat probably never looked so good! At 1:30 am, to get warm, Johnny went for another 1 1/2 hours of shovelling his 'driveway', then went back to sleep.

The next day was Monday and Johnny was supposed to be at work. His cell phone wouldn't pick up a signal, so he decided to walk out. Just 50 m ahead of him, there were fresh tracks from a truck in the snow. Help was so close, if he had shovelled only a little bit further! Johnny turned back and kept shovelling, hoping to be able to drive on the tracks. It didn't work. Then just this little bit until it is a little bit less deep. Still not enough. Then just a little bit further and it's downhill for a while, that might help. It didn't. He tried different tech-

niques, leaving gaps and takes a run, shovelling the middle only, the sides, the top layer... And this way it continued one little section at a time, until Monday afternoon. In-between shovelling, Johnny had walked ahead, left a "HELP ME" in the snow, looked at the next hill, the next curve, hoping the road would drop down enough for the snow to stop...

Finally, being totally fed up, he decided to walk out and look for help, no more shovelling! After 100 m, the snow got less deep, then it continued downhill, then a corner, and then it dropped down onto a bigger logging road, with barely any snow on it. So the final stretch of shovelling started, the snow flying off in all directions. And indeed, he was free! 24 hr after getting back to the car, with 11 hours of shovelling, the car showed 2.8 km on the odometer, an average speed of 0.12 km/h!

This is why Johnny Walker is also known as Johnny Shoveller these days. He now knows why mountaineers take shovels on their trips, and bring along friends with shovels... When Johnny parked his car, his reasoning was, "If I can drive uphill without using chains, going downhill with chains will be easy." The next time the forecast calls for only a slight chance of precipitation, you will understand why Johnny will park at the bottom of the road.

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## THE STAG HIKE (OR, THE GAME OF STONES)

*Peter Rothermel*

August 14 - 16

This is a true story. Last names have been omitted to protect the guilty, and it may very well be that this was written with an "old guy" slant.

A young friend of mine was getting married and instead of having a stag party, he said he'd rather go on a hike to Della Falls. I thought aloud, "Jesus, Ed, you've been to Della Falls more than half a dozen times. Don't you ever hike anywhere else?" But it was his party, so I agreed to go, thinking maybe I

could do a side trip to Nine Peaks or Mt. Septimus.

After the borrowed boat, to get us up Great Central Lake, failed to materialize and all of us being too cheap to shell out seventy bucks each for the water taxi, I suggested we drive up to Strathcona Park, hike up to Bedwell Lakes and maybe climb Big Interior Mtn., to a resounding, "OK, let's go!"

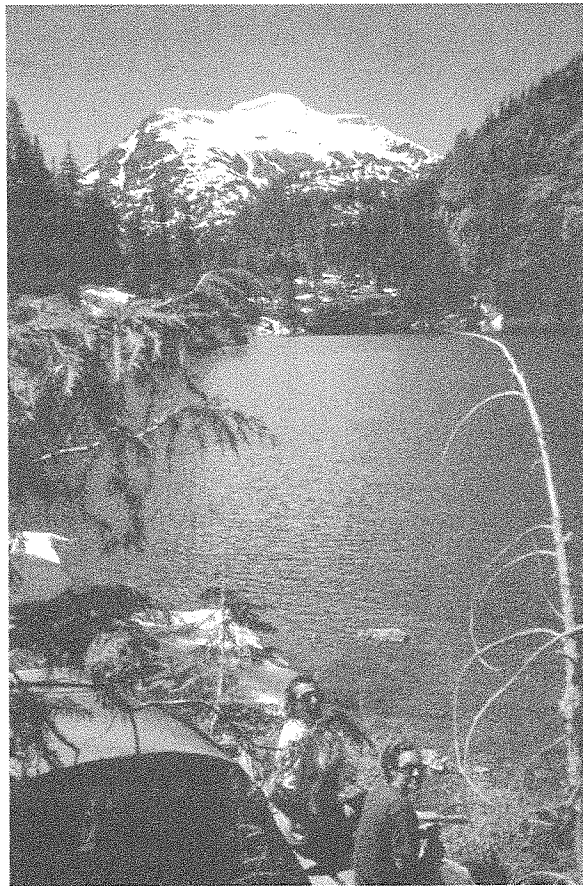
Somehow, one of our vehicles got lost going through Courtenay - I know,

I know, how can anybody get lost in Courtenay? By a fluke, we got back together in Campbell River. One of the young guys needed to call his boss to let him know he'd be sick for the next three days, and the other vehicle, with an overheated radiator, pulled into the same gas station, how cosmic!

The party consisted of Ed, 25 (the intended groom), Chris, 25 (very quiet, maybe too quiet), Ron, 25 (with about 30 lbs. of camera equipment), Markus,

25 (other than me, the only one with any mountaineering experience), Yash, 35 (of good English humour), and myself, at 47 (the old guy). The only one missing was the best man, my nephew David, who is an expert at getting out of anything that smacks of physical exertion.

As work had been pretty slow this spring and summer, I had done a lot of alpine hiking and felt confident about keeping up with the younger guys. At the trail head they all shot ahead, while I trudged behind, muttering to myself,



Bedwell Lake in better weather with Mt. Tom Taylor in the background. Photo: John Damaschke.

'God, what have I gotten myself into? I can't keep up this pace for three days!' I caught up with them resting at a creek where we filled up our water bottles. While we rested, I thought to myself, 'You'd better get going, old boy.' I said to them, 'I'll hike ahead, you'll catch up with me in no time at all,' and plodded off in my slow but steady fashion.

At the lookout above Bedwell Lake, I waited for about half an hour for the young guys to catch up, and talked with

a park ranger about the route up Big Interior Mtn. He told me, "A better way to avoid the first bump is when you get to the base of the falls coming from Little Jim Lake, drop down a couple of hundred feet (or was that metres?) and gain a ledge that traverses around the bump and leads to a perfect campsite in the col between the bump and the mountain. Just look for a bit of yellow (or was it blue) flagging."

After a prolonged rest at the lookout, I said to the guys, "We'll meet at the end of Bedwell Lake, where Cream Lake trail starts," and shuffled off down the trail. Part way down I ran into the ranger and a work party repairing a bridge, chatted for a while and hiked on. As I waited and waited at the Cream Lake trail, the young guys passed the ranger and he said to them, "The old guy is way ahead of you, he passed by here about 45 minutes ago."

After yet another long rest break, we headed up the Cream Lake trail, with frequent stops for the youth to catch up. I was starting to feel pretty good about being a tortoise and not a hare.

At the base of the falls and after another prescribed long break (or what Ron called a photo-op), we dropped down through the heather and gained a sort of ledge. After bushwhacking and bluffing out for a couple

of hours, I said, "We can either go on and probably spend a near vertical night in the bush, or turn around and camp at Little Jim Lake." Amid the groans of protest and cursing of all park rangers, it was decided to turn back.

We reached the lake as it was getting dark, set up camp, had dinner and watched the stars as the clouds finally broke. Now Yash doesn't want what happened next to be spoken of, so I must. The young guys all saw a UFO,

a "light, moving slowly along the crest of a ridge, pausing behind the trees and then streaking off." I didn't see it, so I figure it might have had something to do with what they were putting into their pipes.

Another phenomenon I should mention is my talent as a rainmaker and, yes, it started to rain. 1998 being the driest summer in memory, every overnight trip I've been on this year, it's rained. Come to think of it, I can't remember any trip I've ever been on that didn't have some precipitation. My other hiking partners have had clear conditions without me, but wet weather with me, therefore, I figure I'm the rainmaker. Maybe I should move to the desert and make some money.

We snuggled into our tents for the night, Ron and Yash in an ancient, sagging pup tent covered with black plastic that still leaked, Ed and Chris in what resembled a two-person bivvy bag, and Markus and me in my roomy, two-door, two-vestibule, dry, home away from home. It rained and blew all night long, but I was snug and smug as the proverbial bug in a rug.

The next day showed a bit of promise with sun streaking through the clouds. Ron and Yash decided to hang out at the lake, to give their blisters a break, while the other four of us headed up Big Interior on the regular route. When we reached the col between the bump and the mountain, the clouds descended, giving 50 ft. visibility, the rain started and the wind picked up. Out came the rain gear, but when I saw Ed put on a plastic bag, I thought, 'This is not going to go. We can't bring the groom back to the bride, hypothermic with pneumonia.'

After a very quick discussion, it was decided to turn back, and a good thing we did. As we reached the tents, about two o'clock in the afternoon, it started to pour and didn't let up. One by one, the guys gravitated towards my place until all six of us were cozied up in my two-man tent, with at least sitting room for everybody. With all the wet gear in the entry vestibule, I set up the kitchen in the back vestibule and we got down to some serious eating.

Now time goes slowly when you're tent-bound, ... r-e-a-l s-l-o-w. After reading the cooking instructions and lists of ingredients on the food packages for the umpteenth time, Yash suggested we play a game of stones.

Stones, you say? What's that? Well, it's just about the best tent-bound game there is! It takes no cards, chips or board to play, just three pebbles per person, and that's what this story is all about.

Each person picks up three small stones and keeps them hidden, then holds out a closed fist that contains from none to three rocks. In turn each player guesses the total in all hands. The person who guesses the correct number is out and safe, continuing until the last one not out. He's the loser. There's room in this game to mess with each other's minds, such as you're down to two hands with the possibility of zero to six rocks, it's your guess and you have an empty hand. So you guess five, just to throw the other person off for the next round. To sweeten the deal, the loser has to do something, such as go out in the rain to fetch more cooking water, do the dishes or give up some tent space.

We had many hilarious games that night. I'm sure if a hiker happened by and heard us laughing and cheering, they would have thought us either nuts or from some kind of cult. Maybe it was the fumes from what the young guys were smoking or maybe the flask of moonshine being passed around (after all, it was a bachelor party), but I swear I've never had so much fun being tent-bound. We played late into the night, until everybody reluctantly went back to his own soggy home.

The next day was still poor weather, so between squalls, we packed up and headed out, with me plodding along, one foot in front of the other. And guess what? I reached the car half an hour ahead of the much younger guys. Not bad for an old guy, eh?

Then off to Campbell River for burgers and a beer. Of course I had to ask the waitress, "Have you ever seen a UFO?" Her reply was, "No, and I don't want to!"

*Postscript: Ed and Alidha are now happily married, and Yash still won't talk about the UFO.*

## MOUNT KLITSA

Alan Danesh

August 16

It is a long day along the highway, then the trails, and finally up the slopes and to the summit of Klitsa (1643M), and back to Victoria. But it is a unique setting worth the experience, both in the spring and the late summer.

On my first trip in early spring several years ago to climb the avalanche-prone gully with a Legion of 24 and Mojo, we never made it beyond the first saddle as we ran out of daylight. So last June Larry Talarico and I decided to go for it in the style of the Parthians, rather than the Roman Legion. Parthians, as you may recall, were history's earliest "easy riders"—riding a bareback horse, and equipped with a mere bow and arrow, they wreaked havoc among the heavily armoured Roman Legions.

We followed the route described below without any great adventures, and nearly reached the summit. "Nearly," because by 4 pm, rapidly losing daylight and in intense fog and howling winds, we decided to return from within 10 minutes of the summit.

Last August I returned to the mountain with a group of six. By then the snow was mostly gone and the alpine meadows were magnificent. But as I scouted my way up the summit accompanied by Mike Rockwell, heavy fog rolled in followed by rain. We quickly signed the brand new summit register, ran down the summit slope and called on others to come up. But, alas, they were already heading down—having decided they had seen enough fog and rain already.

Here is how to get there:

Pass Port Alberni via Highway No. 4. Drive along Sproat Lake; watch for "Sproat Lake Provincial Park" sign on the right side of the highway by Central Lake Road. From the Park sign drive 23.8 km on the highway to Taylor Arm, which is the end of the water. As you drive, watch out on the left of the highway for a logging road that runs parallel to the highway. Then as you come down

a slight bend, the road starts to drop down and you see a straight stretch of road in front of you. Immediately on the left, the logging road comes close to the highway and there is a gravel entrance to it, which drops down from the highway. Enter the logging road, then turn right on it and drive along it for 1.4 km until you reach a bridge, which is over Taylor River. Immediately after going over the bridge you come across a junction; turn right and drive 0.2 km to the junction of a logging road on the left. This is the start of the trail; park here off the main logging road.

From the car, follow a long stretch of the old road, first crossing a (seasonal) creek. Then at a fork in the road, take the left, not 552 to the right, then 2 long switchbacks. As the brush thickens, look for the trail going up the slope to the right. Numerous bear droppings along this road, some still warm!

Hike along the creek with waterfalls, always to the right of it, until you reach the beginning of a lake. If you continue along the trail for ten more minutes, you will drop down to a beautiful campsite on a little peninsula on the lake where you will find signs of civilization, some of which I packed out in the interest of preserving the nature. If you do not have the time to visit this campsite, then drop down to the left at the beginning of the lake, find your way to the left where you can cross over the log jam and up the trail which may be under thick layer of compacted snow and hard to locate in parts. Work your way up the slope along it, then go up a steep, unstable slope with caution, then along a fixed rope, and continue toward the ridge.

Soon the forest begins to open up, but heavy, compacted snow can be expected even in late June. Work your way over the ridge, go through a cluster

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of trees, down the saddle, and start the uphill climb on the right side of the summit ridge, which is less steep. Ice axe is a requirement and, in compacted snow, crampons would greatly help—saving one from having to kick steps all the way. By mid-August there can still be some large patches of snow on the slopes below the summit. Be careful when crossing without ice axe.

Once below the summit, you see a narrow gully going up straight to the top. This is quite usable, though a little exposed in one part. You can avoid this gully entirely since there is a good trail to the left, which you can find by hiking up some loose gravel. The trail curves around the rock slope that is to the left of the gully and passes above the gully on its way to the summit. There

is a rock cairn at the summit partially hiding a tube. It contains a waterproof register put there on July 26, 1998. Expect heavy fog at the summit in cloudy days, otherwise “this is where you get the most fantastic views!”

*Participants: Alan Danesh (leader), Bev Fletcher, Mike Rockwell, Larry Talarico, Tony Talarico, and David Wood.*

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## TORMENTED: BY TITUS, YES.

*Lindsay Elms*  
September 2

The best way to catch up on what Sandy has been doing for the summer is to do a climbing trip with him. We hadn't done anything together for a while so I suggested Mt. Titus. Sandy mentioned that he had never heard of it before so I told him if he pulled out the Buttle Lake map and then went about 5 to 6 kilometres SSW of Buttle Lake Campground, he would find it. Again this was one of those mountains that I hadn't heard anyone climbing since the surveyors from the 1930's. In those days the surveyors stayed at a lodge owned by a Mrs. Titus which was located near the Wolf River. The head surveyor, Norman Stewart, decided to name the mountain behind the lodge in her honour after her hospitality.

Wednesday morning we parked at the end of the campgrounds and then walked down to the lake shore. The lake level was low so we didn't get wet feet as we hiked across the flats through the old trees stumps to the base of a treed gully that led up to a rocky ridge. It was a hot muggy morning even at 7:30, so by the time we arrived at the top of the gully there was a fair bit of sweat dripping off of us. The ridge was reasonably open with only the odd thicket of pine or fir to thrash through. After an hour and a half we had climbed 1,500 feet and were at the high point I had climbed to six years ago on an abortive attempt so we stopped for a snack and a drink.

So far we had not come across any

pools of water and I doubted if we would find any at all on the climb. Sandy was concerned about dehydration as he only had two bottles of water with him and the way he was going through it, he would be empty in a couple of hours. Sandy then began to recount a story he had recently heard. I wasn't sure how the story was connected to where we were but I guess it was the mountain lake with cool clear water that triggered the thought.

Recently, Sandy had talked to Tyson Gallagher about his trip into the Golden Hinde and Tyson had said how on one of the days they had surprised two female Buddhists who were reclining beside a small mountain lake. Sandy's brain was in overdrive as he was wondering how Tyson knew they were Buddhists. He was thinking maybe they were wearing orange robes or sitting crossed legged in the Buddha position, but then the marbles dropped. It was not Buddhists that Tyson was talking about but Nudists. I think Sandy was beginning to hallucinate: too much sun already and not enough water. Sandy's eyes became glazed and he went on to lament how situations like that never happened on any of his trips.

We continued along the ridge avoiding the odd bluff, walking through dry ponds and cursing the needles from the young fir trees as they fell into our clothing and down our backs. It was an interesting ridge and kept us on our toes as we tried to guess the best route. As

we got higher the views got better but my mind was on the gap that was just below the summit. I had seen this gap from Westmin Road so I knew that we couldn't climb straight down into it and it wasn't possible to angle across the east face into it. According to the map it looked like there might be a route across the west face into the gap and then it would be an easy climb to the summit.

As we approached the high point on the ridge that the gap was behind, I could see a good slope leading across the west face so we decided to traverse across it. After we crossed the slope and scrambled up through some trees, a sheer wall confronted us. I waited for Sandy to arrive and then we had a look around. Obviously it scared Sandy, as he had to go into the bushes before he shit himself. While Sandy was performing the deed, I found a narrow gully so climbed down thirty feet to a small tree. Here I pulled the rope out and draped it around its trunk so that we could rappel down the rest of the gully. I went down first. While Sandy was rappelling, I had a look around and found another gully that would take us further down. After Sandy retrieved the rope I again down climbed to a tree and set up another rappel. Again it was looking hopeful but I was soon to be fooled. There was just no way of getting up to the gap in the ridge which was only about fifty feet up and off to my left. I dropped a rock over the trees on the edge ex-



pecting it to soon hit the bottom but it was about ten-second before it landed. The gully from the gap obviously dropped down to the valley below at a very steep angle. I took my pack off and climbed over the trees to see if I could find a way down but our luck had run out. We were snookered! That hospitable Mrs. Titus was tormenting us just when the summit was within our grasp.

There was nothing to do but ascend the gullies and then climb up through the trees to the top of the ridge overlooking the gap. Here we sat down and in the words of Winnie the Pooh: "we had a little something to eat." The summit of Mt. Titus was just there; we could see the easy heather slopes leading up the last two hundred and fifty feet to the top. However, today there was just no way we were going to get there. I looked around for an alternative route and saw a big gully that came up from Buttle Lake. To climb this gully we would have to wait until it was full of spring snow and that wouldn't be until next year. I guess that is just the nature of the mountains. We ate a slice of humble pie and started the descent.

On the way down Sandy said that since we didn't reach the summit, a consolation would be to see some wildlife as there was a lot of deer sign along the ridge. Fifteen minutes later, we heard a rustle in the bushes ahead and then a deer leaped into the air and took off down the ridge. I turned to Sandy and asked him whether he caught a glimpse of it. Sandy said he didn't see it that well and then he muttered something into his beard. I wasn't certain what he said but I could have sworn I heard him say, "tan me hide when I'm dead." Is Sandy stating his last wish, I thought? Was he really that dehydrated? I pondered things for a minute trying to make sense of it and then I realized he must have been referring to the colour of the deer's hide and at the same time singing the words from the last verse of Rolf Harris's classic Australian song 'Tie me Kangaroo down sport'. Whew! Close call I thought.

Water was still high on the priority list and Sandy said he was still hoping to find some pools on the ridge but I really had my doubts. I thought about it then said to Sandy that his chances

of finding water on this ridge were about the same as finding two mountain Buddhists. We may have been somewhat dehydrated but at least we could still laugh.

Eventually we made it down the gully and back to the lake shore. A short walk through the old stumps and down the Beach Access Trail to the car where the first thing we did was fill up our water bottles from the pump. It didn't take long to empty them plus a couple of cans of coke. After resting for fifteen minutes it was time to head home.

On the drive back Sandy appeared to be better having knocked back a few litres of water but I decided to test him. I asked him if he wanted to eat somewhere in Courtenay and did he have any preferences. He said anywhere was fine so I suggested the Courtenay House where he could get to see his female Buddhists. Sandy just laughed and said not this time. I think he was rehydrated and feeling better and was happy to wait for another day to see his Buddhists.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs and Lindsay Elms.*

## MARINER MOUNTAIN

*Tak Ogasawara*

June 26 - 28

We were all gathered at the Bedwell Lake trailhead at 8:30 am on Friday morning. People from Victoria had camped there the previous night. We talked about our plans for the day and everybody was eager to hike up except for John who had caught cold and lost his voice. I asked him what he wanted to do and he said he would go to Bedwell Lake and then decide whether to continue on or to camp there. I agreed with him and started up the trail.

Two and half hours later we were at Bedwell Lake preparing for the long descent to Bedwell River. Somehow Dave was not feeling well and was quite a ways behind us. When he arrived at the lake I asked about his condition. He said that he felt sick but wanted to

continue. John also said he wanted to continue after I asked him the same question. During the descent they asked me so many times how much longer it would take to arrive at the campsite. Each time I said, "Three more hours!" After quite a few "Only three more hours!" we finally arrived at the Nobel Creek campsite. During supper, I asked John what his next day's plans were. He said that Sue and himself would head back to Bedwell Lake and Dave said that he would also go back with them. I told the remaining four to be ready at 6:30 am for the summit climb.

The next morning at 6:30 am, the weather was perfect and we were off to summit on time as we had planned the previous night. At 100 m from the

campsite we were following an overgrown prospector trail. This we followed on and off until the open upper reaches of Nobel Creek. We then followed the creek to the bottom of a snow gully. There we put on our crampons and continued on up. Halfway up from the timber edge, the standard route goes to the right, however, we decided to follow the main gully rather than the simple snow hike of the standard route. After snow, loose scree and a couple of steep steps, we were at the edge of the upper plateau. Several peaks stood on the other side of the snowfield. The second peak to the right looked higher than the rest of the peaks. We crossed the snowfield, hiked up a snow  
*(continued on page 28)*





## BEST PRINT

JULES THOMSON RAPELLING OFF OF REDWALL - GREG GORDON



## MOUNTAIN PICTORIAL

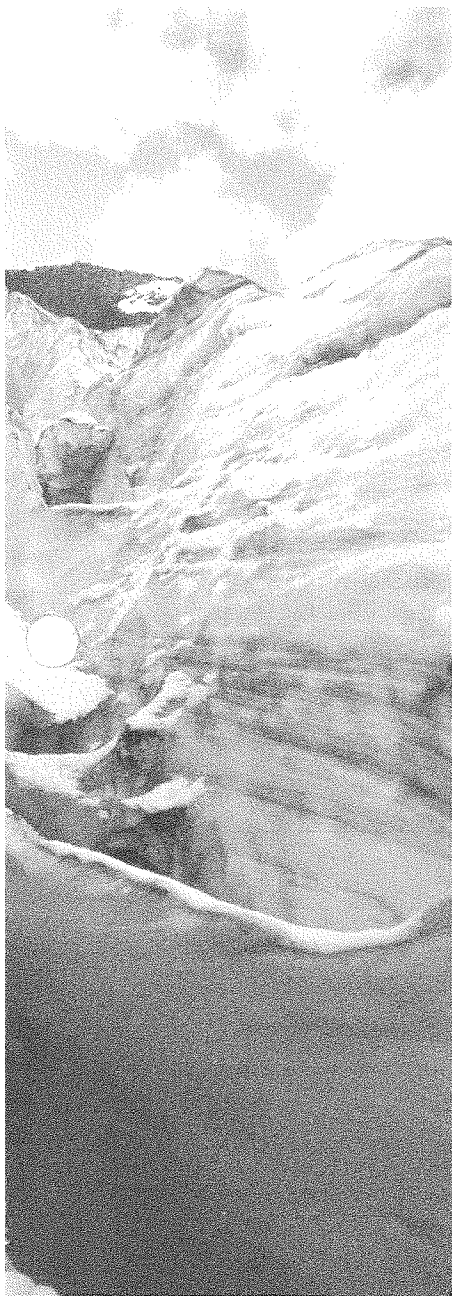
SUNRISE, WADDINGTON RANGE - UNNAMED 3320 M PEAK NORTH OF  
MOUNT MUNDAY - GRAHAM BENNETT

# 1998 PHOTO C



N  
TONQUIN VALLEY C

# CONTEST WINNERS



ATURE  
ASSE - GERTA SMYTHE



MOUNTAIN ACTIVITY  
GEOFFERY WONG ON APPROACH TO MOUNT WADDINGTON ABOVE  
BRAVO GLACIER - GRAHAM BENNETT



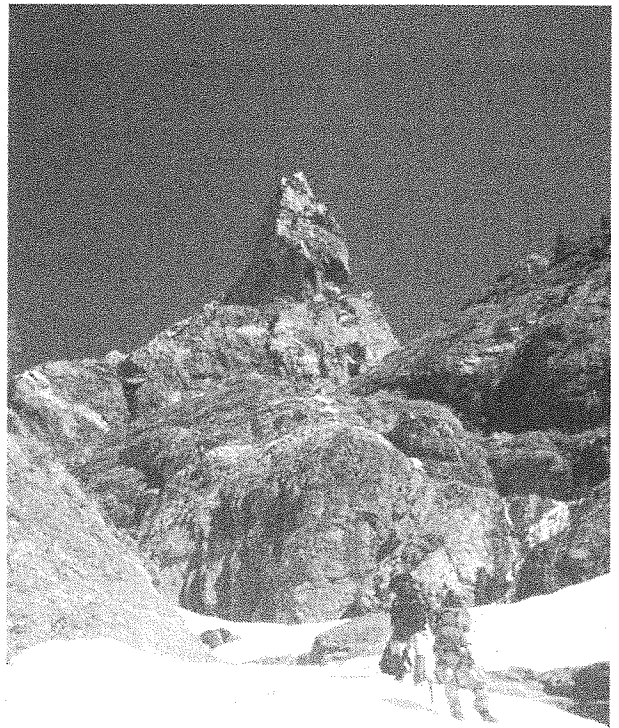
HUMOUR  
RUDY BRUGGER'S NOSE - CLAIRE EBENDINGER

gully and a rock face heading towards the top, all the while hoping that we were headed for the main summit.

Near the summit I saw a big cairn on the top and told the rest of the guys that we were on the right peak. We reached the summit at 3:30 pm, stayed there for about a half an hour then headed down. We climbed down the South Face and rappelled once beside a waterfall, then crossed the snowfield to the edge of the plateau. We then climbed down the steep snow and rappelled down to the main gully of Nobel Creek. Slowly and carefully we descended the loose scree slope. During this descent, Don stepped on a large, loose rock. With a big noise, the rock moved and Don cartwheeled down the slope about 10 feet. Randy was just below him and body checked him. This stopped Don's fall and despite the rough ground he escaped any serious injury other than some cuts and bruises. We were all shaken up by the incident. By the time we reached the edge of timber it was quite late and we all knew that we would not be able to get back to camp. We settled in at a flat spot in the timber for the night. Luckily, the night was warm and there was no rain so, we slept quite nicely.

At 4:00 am the next morning, we set off down to the campsite. By 5:30 am, we were at the campsite and were eating breakfast. After breakfast, we headed back up to Bedwell Lake and onto the familiar trail to the parking lot. We arrived there at 5:00 pm.

*Participants: Rob Eldrid, Don Morton, John Elliot, John Damaschke, Sue, Randy, Dave, (I am sorry I forgot your last names), and Tak Ogasawara (leader).*



Subsidiary peak on Mt. Mariner. Photo: Tak

## HA! BEAT THIS, LINDSAY ELMS!

### *Su Castle*

24 hour traverse of Mount Maguire and Babbington Hill. It was the weekend of October 3 & 4, 1998. The weather was poor but this determined group of two decided to risk the elements anyway and hike East Sooke Park in a rainstorm. Don't be fooled by the apparent ease of East Sooke. Park literature specifically states that these "challenging hikes in a wilderness setting" can be a danger and a hazard. We took the warnings seriously, so planned ahead, and geared-up to be most prepared to meet any forthcoming danger.

Day 1: The traverse started at Pike Road parking lot—we hiked to Mount Maguire as the rain came in torrents. It was hard to see, to breath, to walk, then we couldn't find the summit! It must be near the park bench at the top— but

where? As we descended we realized we only had 20 hours left, so we decided to make a hasty retreat to our dry East Sooke cabin. (Stopping en-route only to save the little fire belly lizards from becoming road kill, as they too, crawled along in the downpour in search of dry land).

We were really 'roughing it' in East Sooke—the cabin has no running water, and we had to chop our own firewood for the old fashioned wood stove. No maid service, either. The downpour continued.

Day 2: Feeling a little pressured for time, we needed to tackle Babbington Hill. John drove us to the Anderson Cove parking lot as I watched out for lizards. We figured Babbington Hill would be the easier summit, being 44 m less el-

elevation than 'Maguire'. (After some debate about the Alpinist Code, we agreed that since we had conquered it, we were allowed to address the mountain without her formal title 'Mt.')

Luckily, the sun shone briefly on us on that tiring day. John tried to bring levity and joy to our second tough climb in under 24 hours, but I am not sure that having to chase my clothes to the top of the hill made me any more joyful!

At least I was still wearing my boots! We summited Babbington Hill damp, but in great spirits!

An exhausting trip, done solely so someone could beat that quick guy, Lindsay Elms at his own game. If only there were summit registries in East Sooke Park to record our arduous feat!

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# ZEBALLOS PEAK (YEAH, RIGHT!)

*Sandy Briggs*

October 3

The weather forecast smoked another one. There was no question of driving seven hours each way to get hypothermia in a wet white-out when we could do that much more conveniently in the familiar hills of the upper Cottonwood. Another Plan B! The gate key worked and we were able to drive the east Cottonwood spur to the start of the re-sloped portion of the old road (ca. 2000 ft.).

We set off in rain at 9:10 am noticing, to our surprise, new snow on the upper mountain. Hmmmm? The rain let up a bit later. We reached meaningful snow in the basin behind Lomas Lake. Some folk had not brought appropriate clothing in the form of hats and mittens (and a few were dressed in nice absorbent cotton trousers or their equivalent). However, by offering spare mitts and socks around, we were able to sort-of solve these shortages. The problem was the wet slush hanging on every bush and the fact that the little

scramble to the ridge, normally relatively straightforward in summer or buried in winter snow, was covered in two inches of wet snow.

Fortunately there was hardly any wind on the ridge, with the result that a certain resolve to continue to the top prevailed, and we summited at about 1:00 pm (I think). On top there was a breeze, so we stopped only for a moment before descending to the shelter of some trees on the ridge below. Here I was amazed at how difficult it was to give away Oreo cookies, of which I had brought a significant supply. Some seemed bent on exercising their dietary will power as well as their legs that day.

The slushy bushes caused a few cold hands on down-climbing the gully to get off the ridge, but warmth was restored and we had a further snack at the lake. The reluctant sun made a welcome appearance as we approached the cars. We had dinner at the famed Restau-

rant Maison du Chien in Duncan, a warming end to a cool day.

I really hope our newer participants were not unduly put off by their occasionally cool experience this day. I had thought I had mentioned hat and mittens to everyone on the phone. I usually carry some kind of warm hat and mitts even in summer, which helps explain why even my 'day-pack' always looks so big. Anyway, I hope to see you all on other trips in the future.

Once back in Victoria I rushed out to Tony Pugh's place to drop off the key, and advise about the early season snow. He would be going to El Capitan the next day with an even larger group.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs (leader), Judy Holm, Dale Nicoll, Scott Pearse, Chantelle Giroday, Julie Dixon, John Pratt, Daniel Donnecke, Shannon Gelean, and Rob Gowan.*

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# ELKHORN

*Paul Clark*

September 18 - 20

## DAY I

6 am saw this group come together under overcast skies at the Saanich municipal hall. Showers were forecast today for most of the island, with clearer weather promised for Saturday. A promise we hoped would be kept, as a clear dry day just might help us succeed in our attempt to nail the Elkhorn - at 2195 metres, the second highest peak on Vancouver Island.

After a high calorie brekky in Courtenay and negotiating the new interspace bypass around Campbell River, we arrived at the Elk River trailhead at about 11 am. Soon gear was strewn all over the parking lot. Ropes, helmets, harnesses etc. were all fine tuned and redistributed as to

weight. Off we went for the very pleasant stroll up the Elk River valley. 1 hour had us crossing to the east side of the river on a rather shaky log. We immediately found the well-flagged trail that would lead to the NW ridge, but not before Doug discovered a nurse log with an amazing colony of oyster mushrooms. These were ferociously harvested by some.

Now, I had read in Hiking Trails III a note by Syd Watts stating an approximate time to good camping by a tarn to be 6-7 hours for hikers with full packs. Well I'll be darned if he wasn't bang on. 7 hours had us setting up camp on the edge of the ridge with a view of our objective as well as Kings Peak to the

east and Victoria Peak to the north.

The trail had come up through beautiful, lush forest, but the elevation gain was substantial and I had personally reached the brink of total exhaustion at hour 6. This was reminiscent of some of the earlier Jones and Clark expeditions. After a bowl of cappeletti with spicy red pesto, washed down with a nice Chianti however, I was feeling my old self again.

## DAY II

The alarm was set for 6 am and we were hiking at 8. While the trail up through the forest was extremely well flagged, the ridge route was brutally lacking in signage and I counted few cairns. The sky was clear though, so route finding





Su Castle on Elkhorn with Mt. Colonel Foster as backdrop. Photo: Angelico Lopez.

wasn't difficult and we were treated to views of Landslide and Iceberg Lakes, Mt. Colonel Foster, Rambler Peak and the Golden Hinde. We got into some good scrambling and the rope came out for my benefit about a half-hour from the summit on a particularly exposed spot under the gendarme. Here, Su had to talk me through the moves - thanks Su. Just past this, there was a small chimney to negotiate. From there it was 5 minutes to the summit which we reached at 1:30 pm. Smiles, handshakes and hugs went all around, followed by lunch and snapshots. One of the notes in the summit register read "Lindsay Elms, 4 hours from the parking lot"???

Selena and Ange were kind enough to do a clinic on rappelling, mainly for my benefit. In a short while I would be very glad they did. The route down was via the west gully that Doug had been up once in winter when it had been a straight snow ascent. We would now find ourselves dropping into an abyss to the tune of 3 - 50 metre staggered pitches. Mist began to fill in the lower gully as Doug was the first to disappear over the edge, after slinging onto a 1000 lb. boulder. Michael would counter. I dropped over the edge

second, after saying only the smallest of prayers. I only suffered from a bit of pendulumming and soon was off rappel with Doug already setting up station two on a small ledge 15 metres to my left and above. Michael followed, then Su, Selena and Ange.

The second station ledge being small, demanded that Doug and Michael rap down and wait for rope 1 in order to set up station 3. Ange, being last, had the unenviable task of freeing rope 1. He had to twice, climb back up and disengage the rope from cracks in the rock. Su, Selena and I hauled his pack up to our ledge to help a bit. Finally, the third attempt succeeded and the four of us now prepared for the second 50 metre rap and to get the rope to Doug and Michael who were by now chilled out.

Just to pump the drama meter up another notch, it was now headlamp time. The horizon was a brilliant red and below it was black. When I arrived at station 3, Michael was already down on the scree at the bottom of the gully. I was next, with Michael shouting a warning of a double whammy chockstone section that should be respected. Since I had now nothing but respect for this mountain, I proceeded cautiously. As I

got myself around the first chockstone and let a bit too much rope through my eight, I placed all my weight on a small football sized rock jammed between gully wall and the big chockstone. It blew out and I went down a couple of feet with a jerk, letting out a grunt of surprise. Just at this precise moment, Selena and Ange, still rapping on section 2, kicked a rockslide down which echoed for what seemed like forever between the gully walls. I hung like a puppet in the chasm of blackness. Slowly regaining my composure,

I kicked off the rock face and got myself around the second chockstone, soon to be standing beside Michael at the gully bottom. We sat watching satellites and shooting stars while waiting for the rest of the party. At 10:20 pm we were assembled. It had taken since 3 pm to descend 150 metres. 3 1/2 hours later, at 2 am we would arrive back at the tent, after the most beautiful starlit hike down the ridge. Most opted for the sleeping bag. I opted for food. The red chili nightmare and a Guinness capped off one great day.

### DAY III

Sunshine greeted us on Sunday morning. We were all feeling the effects of the 18 hour marathon from the day before. It was a slow plod back down to the Elk River and much-needed dunk. Stops were made at an unnamed creek for water and views of a multi-cascading falls. Also, of course, at the oyster mushroom farm. Thank you to my companions - Su, Michael, Doug, Ange and Selena, for a great outing.

*Participants: Su Castle, Paul Clark, Michael Dillistone, Doug Goodman, Angelico Lopez, and Selena Swets.*

# ZEBALLOS PEAK

Lindsay Elms

June 28 - 30

The weather had returned to normal and just in time for our weekend. Driving up Island Sunday morning, Elaine and I were able to see all the surrounding mountains that were becoming more and more familiar to us with each new climb. This weekend we had our eye on Zeballos Peak. Now I know that the peak is only a hop, skip and a jump from the Zeballos road but I had been studying the topo map and had seen what looked like a beautiful ridge walk from Woss Lake to the peak. I phoned up Tak Ogasawara at Canfor in Woss and he sent me a copy of the logging roads on the west side of Woss Lake. There appeared to be a road in-between Clint and Fiddle Creek that went to about 3,000 ft. thus giving us easy access to the ridge we wanted to gain.

An early lunch at the Kawasa Cafe and then around Woss Lake to our logging road. The road climbed for about 15 kilometres and I'm sure there were cross-ditches every few hundred metres but we didn't mind — every foot gained by driving saved us a foot of bush-bashing. We parked at the end of the road and admired the surrounding mountains. Behind us we only had to walk 10 metres through the clear-cut and we were in the old growth. We picked up game trails leading up a broad spur through huckleberries and salal and after an hour and a half we were on top of the ridge. In the distance we could see Zeballos Peak and it sure looked a long way off. Continuing along the ridge in a southwest direction for another three and a half hours we finally arrived at a picturesque campsite. The average elevation of the ridge was about 4,200 ft. and our campsite was located roughly one third of the way to Zeballos Peak. It looked like tomorrow was going to be a long day. As the sun set we had an incredible view of the Haihte Range; from Rugged Mountain to the unnamed, unclimbed (?), north-

ern peaks with their huge rock faces.

Next morning we weren't in too much of a hurry to get going as the weather was beautiful and it would be light until late. We left camp at 8:40 and dropped down 200 feet to a col, studded with half frozen lakes. Following this there was an easy snow climb to top of the highest point along the ridge. From here we could see that over the next 3 kilometres we would have to descend 1,500 ft. to a pass that divided Kaipit Lake from Zeballos Lake. From the pass we would then have 1,900 ft. to climb over 3-4 kilometres to get to the top of the peak. The ridge continued to be easy until we were overlooking the pass. Here a vertical rock wall blocked our descent. We climbed back up a short way and then traversed to our right for a bit until we gained a forested slope that dropped into the pass. The climb out of the pass and up to the base of the peak reminded me of the climb up from Burman Lake onto the open rocky carriageway leading up to base camp on the Golden Hinde. At 12:45 we stopped at a small pond for lunch. We stopped just long enough to dry off the sweat, eat our bagels, air our feet and take on some fluids.

The ridge was a pleasant stroll and we gained elevation rapidly. Finally we arrived at the base of the last 600 feet of the climb. We left everything behind except for the camera and 2 Mars bars for the summit. The climbing became exposed but nothing more than stiff 4<sup>th</sup> class rock and heather. At 2:10 we stepped on to the airy summit ridge and snuck along the last 30 feet to the summit cairn. It was beautiful up there and we wanted to stay longer but it had taken us 5 and a half hours to get to the top. It was going to be a long way back therefore we only spent 15 minutes basking on the summit eating our chocolate bars.

We down climbed to our packs and lashed them to our backs again and got ready for the long haul back. The car-

riageway descended steadily away under our feet and we were soon down at the pass psyching ourselves up for the long uphill climb. The sun was still beating down and we stopped numerous times to quench our thirst in the little tarns. As we topped out onto the ridge we got our first glimpse of dark clouds building up to the south. We didn't need to be meteorologists to know that rain was on its way, and what do you know — we'd gone and left our rain gear back at camp. So the race was on; those dark clouds weren't the only ones trying to be first back to our tent. The kilometres passed by as the salt laden sweat dripped into our eyes but we weren't quick enough. An hour before we got back, Thor began hitting the steel drums with his hammer and the drizzle turned into rain. Our bodies stood up to the challenge and didn't miss a beat as we raced up the last major rise before we had to descend to the half-frozen lakes. We boot skied down the snow to the col and then pulled out all the stops as we sprinted the last 200 feet up to the tent. We threw off the packs and dived into the tents after having covered the return trip in just less than 4 hours. Off with the wet clothes, on with the dry, and then we dozed for the next hour until the rain passed and the skies cleared again. We got out of the tent, stretched our tired muscles and cooked up dinner, but unfortunately our eyes were bigger than our bellies.

Again, the next day was clear without a cloud in the sky. We packed up camp and climbed back along the ridge, but we couldn't help constantly looking back over our shoulder at the spectacular spire of Zeballos Peak and all those kilometres we had covered. It was a long way to climb the peak but it was a beautiful ridge walk and one highly recommended for anyone in the future.

*Participants: Elaine Kerr and Lindsay Elms.*

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# TRIP LEADER BARES ALL AFTER SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT BID

*Michael Dillistone*

(Vancouver Island Press Syndicate)

A seven person team, led by Catrin Brown and Rick Eppler, reached the summit of Rugged Mountain, in perfect weather, at approximately 2:00 pm IST (Island Standard Time), August 30<sup>th</sup>.

After a long up-island drive and a 4 ½ hour bushwhack on August 29th, the team decided to camp on a rocky promontory on the ridge leading to the north col. Sources indicate that there was a spirited discussion around the benefits of camping higher or "staying put". In

A refreshed team (except for Brent, who, wrapped like a burrito in a tent fly, spent the night battling mosquitoes) began the ascent of the ridge leading to the north col at just after 6:00 am (IST) August 30th. Reaching the col the team enjoyed distant views to Mount Waddington, Tahsis Inlet and the West Coast. One member overcome by the vistas was heard to exclaim "Awesome Dude!"

While ominous clouds gathered over

team followed, trying not to enter the debate. By now the cloud cover had burned off and team members sought relief in shady spots, eking out their precious supply of water.

Following the leader, by crawling and shuffling over an exposed knife-edge section, team members noted the rappel slings on the relatively sheer southeast face. "I wonder who was %\$^&#\* crazy enough to be out there" one team member muttered. According to the leaders, once the team was over the gendarme, the summit was easily gained at 2:00 pm IST. There was a short celebration with handshakes and a drink (thanks to Catrin). Several members of the team confirm recent reports of a strange creature inhabiting the summit register. Time limitations prevented team experts from further investigation.

After summit photos, in perfect weather, the elated team descended the ridge to the glacier. Brent "Burritoman" Mickelson, leading the first rope, bypassed the final short exposed section by climbing down to the north side of the ridge near its low point. Hiking in the moat between the snow and rock, the team returned to the place where they had stashed their gear and

roped up.

According to reliable witnesses the following exchange took place between the two, recently married, leaders: (as Catrin climbed up over the lip of the snow onto the glacier and Rick belayed from behind)

Catrin: That would make a nice picture!!!

Rick: What, the glacier or your derriere???

Reportedly, after this exchange, team members followed the leaders onto the glacier speaking in hushed tones. Except for a few minor route-finding er-



Rugged Mountain basking in summer sunlight. Photo: John Damschke.

a statement issued by Rick Eppler's press secretary, Rick said, "We could have gone on but we decided to stay put and enjoy the evening". An unidentified source suggested that "It was an interesting personal growth experience in consensual decision making". The team was treated to a spectacular view of the summit and west face of Rugged Mountain, bathed by the ever-changing light of the late August sun traveling on its path to distant lands. Team member Scott Pearse described that "At times the rock had an indescribable, iridescent quality".

the peak, the ever-hopeful team roped up and silently ascended the glacier (on the north east side of Rugged) to the low point in the East Ridge. Eppler, (who is reported to have said, "I don't remember it being like this") led up the first relatively exposed section and set up a belay station. After this first hurdle, the team progressed slowly up the ridge, with running belays, on mostly solid rock. In one reported incident, John appeared to be having a one-sided discussion on the merits of trusting ones life to tenuous holds while hanging from a rock loosely wedged in a notch. The remaining



rors (for some of the group) and blueberry binges, the thrash to the vehicles was uneventful.

In anticipation of the long drive home team members quickly changed their clothes and rushed to thank their intrepid leaders. "What happened next was a complete shock," said Gary Sutton, a Port Alberni resident. Rounding the vehicle to say goodbye, several team members found leader Eppler "in all his glory". Sutton, not a member of the Alpine Club at the time, inquired, "Is this some sort of weird ritual or something?" After a rushed thanks to the leaders, the first vehicle left at just after 7:00 PM IST, its occupants vowing that this event was certainly going to end up in the trip report. Rick Eppler's office had "*No comment*" as of press time.

According to all reports this was a very satisfying trip with new acquaintances, good weather and a summit achieved.

Thanks Catrin and Rick.

*Participants: Catrin Brown/Rick Eppler (leaders), John Damaschke, Gary Sutton, Scott Pearse, Brent Mickelson, and Michael Dillistone.*

## MOUNTAIN REGGAE TUNE

*Michael Dillistone*

Inspired by a descent of Elkhorn Mountain and Doug Goodman (you have to imagine the appropriate accent and the rhythm section)

Rappin' off of nothin'  
Rappin' down below  
Rappin' down to nowhere  
Don't know where to go

One foot movin' after de other  
Followin' de footsteps  
Of my sisters  
And my brothers  
Got no headlight  
Got no moon  
Only got de stars  
An' dis crazy tune

Rappin' off of nothin'  
Rappin' down below  
Rappin' down to nowhere  
Don't know where to go

Rocks come a-fallin'  
Whip'n on by  
Rocks come a-fallin'  
Like out o' de sky

Repeat as many times as you like...  
Rappin' off of nothin'  
Rappin' down below  
Rappin' down to nowhere  
Don't know where to go

Got no ganja  
Got no smoke  
Only got myself  
An' de friction on de rope

Finally on de scree slope  
Finally down below  
Feel like I'm sleep walk'n  
Crossin' de snow

Rappin off of nothin'  
Rappin down below  
Rapping down to nowhere  
Don't know where to go

So many hours  
To get off of de mountain  
So many hours  
But who's countin'

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# COAST MOUNTAINS & THE ROCKIES

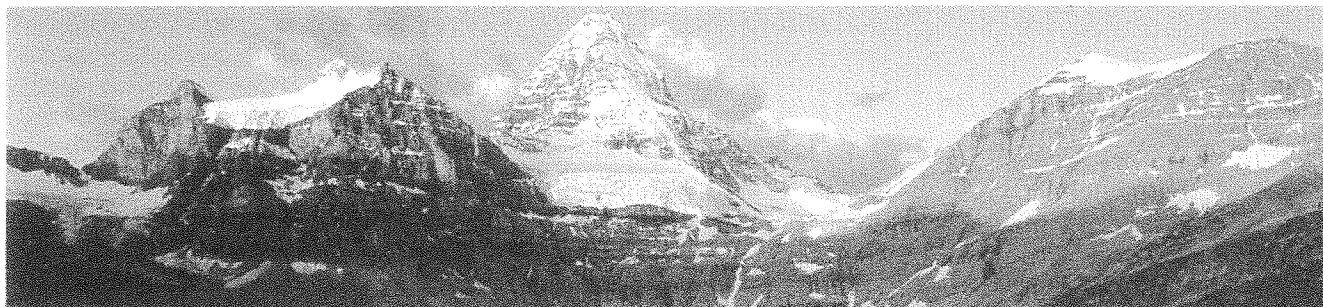


Photo: Bob Hart

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## ON A SILVER PLATTER: BUGABOO SPIRE, NORTHEAST RIDGE

*Reinhard Illner*

This trip was my idea, but it wasn't very hard to talk Ian into it. I had visited the Bugaboos once before and climbed the Kain route on Bugaboo Spire with our friend and Club member Bruce MacNab. However, no other climbs happened in that long ago summer of 1988. Bruce died tragically a few days later after falling out of a rappel on Snowpatch, presumably in diabetic shock. Even though I had not been on that particular climb, the tragedy lingered in my mind and surrounded the Bugs with an aura of sadness and danger. Only now, ten years later, did I feel ready to go back.

The summer of 1998 was a model summer for rock climbing, and the first week of August spoilt us with endless sunshine and lack of rain. Sunday saw us carry inhuman loads up to the fairytale campsite on top of Applebee Dome, a stone's throw from the towering east faces of Bugaboo and Snowpatch. Monday, all four of us (Gerta, Margaret, Ian and myself) negotiated the treacherous Bugaboo-Snowpatch Col (which this year involved two pitches of class 3 ice-climbing) to gain the upper Vowell Glacier and ascend Pigeon Spire via the exposed but

easy West Ridge. A great start for the week! After a rest day, which saw us only scramble to the top of Eastpost Spire, Ian and I headed for the big prize, the NE ridge on Bugaboo.

This ridge, as most of you will know, is listed among the fifty classics in North America. Rated 5.7, I felt confident that old-timers like us could still do this, but I had not done a rock-climb on that scale in a long time and was hiding my nervousness as best I could. So did Ian, but he had never done a real multi-pitch rock climb, so he had much better excuses for nervousness than I did. Anyway, we had plenty of practice from the rock-climbing gym and from Fleming Beach, and I felt in good form. Besides, one can always back off, right?

We left the tents at dawn and reached the ridge connecting Bugaboo and MacTech Arete unroped and without problems. The guidebook says: "Ascend easy cracks to intersection of white dike/ledge that girdles ridge and east side of E face." We continued to climb unroped and felt the sun warm our backs as the rock shoes gripped the fantastically solid and rough granite. And then we sat on the

rope-up ledge.

"Layback crack left of small pinnacle/flake 40 feet, then move right and stem/chimney left side of hollow detached flake." Wow. I see the crack and the pinnacle, they go straight up, and above the ridge continues unbroken and scarily steep into the azure sky. Are we really up to this? I do my utmost to project calm and confidence to Ian, and seem to succeed. And I tell myself that we can always back off if necessary. I sort our selection of friends, chocks and slings as carefully as possible, rope up and start the layback. Immediately, I feel more confident. Ah, finally the physical challenge! The worrying is over, only action is now called for. After 15 feet I place the first piece of protection, and it fits just like in a textbook picture.

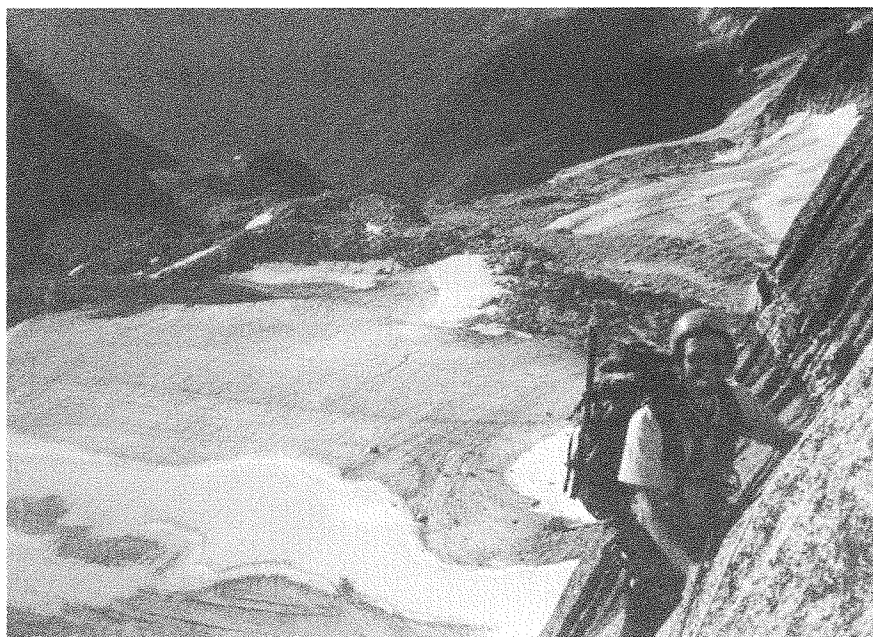
The move to the right and the subsequent stemming are wonderful climbing, and already I understand why this is such a famous climb. Handholds are plentiful and solid, every few meters I find excellent possibilities for protection, and the incredible exposure lifts my spirits. On top of the flake I find a

small belay station. While I belay Ian up and hear him rave about the climbing, I study the next pitch.

"...down-climb 6 feet, traverse left to flake system that angles towards E face, and climb to small ledge at top of flakes." The traverse is a matter of good balance but not really a problem, and the rest of this pitch turns out to be fairly easy. On top, we are almost 100 meters up from the white dike. The one party ahead of us is already out of sight, and the party of three that follows us is just beginning the first pitch. We will have the ridge to ourselves and not a cloud in the sky! We climb in T-shirts, and only the backpacks with ice axes, heavy boots (for the glacier descent) and plenty of water take some of the climbing joy away. As Ian joins me, I point out to him that the first four pitches are the hard ones, and that we have already done half of them.

"Down-climb onto E face until it is possible to double back (above belay), climbing flakes to white quartz dike and ridge crest." Very confident now, I move up rapidly, but I still place protection every few meters. And about thirty meters up this pitch, I hit the one spot on the climb that I remember as hard; maybe I missed some handholds or made a mistake, but suddenly I find myself off balance and hanging on to much smaller handholds than before. Fortunately, I am only a few feet above the last piece of protection, and after carefully shifting my weight and standing up I reach the next solid crack to hang on to. After a short rest, I climb on and reach the comfortable belay spot without further problems. Ian passes the spot-of-my-problems easily and without hesitation. Is it because of his extra height, or was I just stupid?

We are at the beginning of the big dihedral, which forms the fourth pitch and is located at the very edge of the ridge. The dihedral is done partly as a layback and partly by stemming, and the finger-sized crack offers good handholds and fantastic protection at the same time. Halfway up, I take a rest while standing on one foot on a little foothold on the very edge of the NE ridge. I am completely happy, knowing that it is



Top: Second pitch on the NE ridge of Bugaboo Spire. Photo: Ian Brown. Bottom: Rest day in the Bugaboos. Photo: Margaret Brown.

not going to get any harder, and knowing that we are going to succeed. On top of this pitch I arrive at a comfortable platform. Ian follows rapidly and emerges from the dihedral with the smile of a whale, a smile now recorded in a photograph on top of their piano.

The fifth pitch can be done by an easier or harder variation, a crack and stem chimney (5.6) or a hand crack (5.8). We choose the easier variation, which turns out to be extremely en-

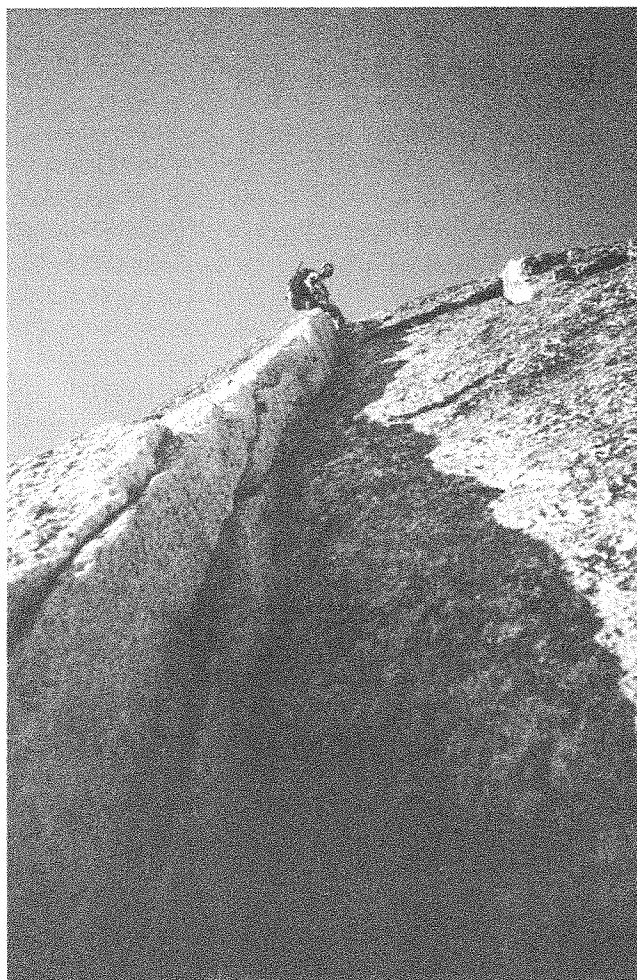
joyable. After an easier pitch we take a long break.

The rest of the ridge is not as distinctly recorded in my memory, probably because we were getting tired. The climbing is spectacular but strenuous throughout. Much higher, maybe in the 9<sup>th</sup> pitch, there is another layback in a wide chimney, off a very sharp crack in the left wall, while the feet walk up the vertical and partly overhanging edge of a huge slab. My arms cramp up dur-

ing this layback, but, of course, I can't let go! The north face of Bugaboo drops some 600 meters below me as I pull myself up the crack.

We reached the top of the ridge just before noon, after 12 full pitches of climbing. Knowing that we had the long and complicated traverse to the south summit ahead of us, I pushed ahead, even though there was still barely a cloud in the sky. The guidebook warns: "Bugaboo is the chief lightning rod in the area, and even these easy routes can turn quickly into hair-raising epics." I would indeed not want to be caught on this summit ridge in a lightning storm, and I knew that it would take hours to make the traverse. We moved simultaneously for some of the way and belayed where the exposure became overwhelming. In the early afternoon, exhausted, we arrived on top of the gendarme on the Kain route, a place where I had been ten years earlier with Bruce.

Rappels... We had already rappelled three times traversing the summit ridge. Now there are 5 more rappels to be done down the technical part of the Kain route, and then we scramble over the easy lower part of this classic route. Three more rappels are needed to negotiate the Bugaboo-Snowpatch Col, then all we have to do is walk along the little trail over to Applebee Dome, where Margaret and Gerta expect us with big smiles. It is seven o'clock as we enter our tents, tired like dogs, but deeply satisfied. Seconds after we stretch out in the tents, the threatening lightning-storm hits with hail, thunder and dramatic lightning bolts. I am pleased that we made it off the exposed ridge before this weather hit. The party that followed us was not so lucky, they had to wait out the storm in the lower part of the Kain route, and had to make the rest of the descent with headlamps. We really were handed the NE ridge on a silver platter.



The dihedral on the NE ridge of Bugaboo Spire.  
Photo: Ian Brown.

## BOOTING UP BRUNSWICK

*Judith Holm*

January 16 - 17 (1999)

In various ways, the subject of boots played a role in our weekend.

John had a pair of fine new boots to initiate, which possibly was a factor in his decision to stay with "Plan A, variation 'c'" despite the wet weather forecast. I was grateful, for it was a good chance to explore an area new to me with someone who knows it well, have a play in the snow and get some exercise. The short drive (by Victoria standards) and 10:30 am ferry was an unaccustomed luxury.

A snowy logging road enabled easy passage up through rather impenetra-

ble coastal second growth forest to about 3000 ft. We wound our way upward through the trees to a relatively level area about 1000 ft. higher, which enabled a most pleasant high camp. It felt just great to be out there - so peaceful, uncomplicated and beautiful.

Sunday morning, Su drove her poor feet into hard, frozen leather hiking boots, and sat down in the tent to wait. The others were still finishing their eggs Benedict and croissants, which had taken longer to prepare than our squashed bags of cereal, left over from previous trips. Su's plans were to buy her Christmas/

Graduation present - new plastic mountaineering boots - in Vancouver, the day after this trip. Su's aching feet must have been increasingly anticipating the new, warm, dry boots, as she gamely broke trail to speed up the warming up process.

We floundered up a rounded ridge. It was great exercise, good fun to play in the soft snow, it didn't really matter because we were pretty sure the poor snow stability would stop us anyway, and it did. However, as a means of getting somewhere! I find myself quite regularly in this position now that I live in Victoria. When I grew up back east,

we only booted it in the salty, slushy downtown daily life - in the country it wouldn't have occurred to walk - we skied and snowshoed. Once again I found myself quietly musing as to "why?" There are marvellous snowshoes nowadays, designed for our terrain, excellent where skiing is impractical or as an alternative. In unstable conditions, they disturb the snow less than boots. Snowshoes are light and easy to strap to the pack for climbing. Sandy had a French Canadian quote to the effect of: "mon pays n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver" - my

country is not a country, it is winter. There is quite a Canadian cultural heritage of snowshoe travel (i.e. there is more to this than efficiency), backcountry skiing was a later introduction by people like Jack Rabbit Johannesen, a legendary figure in Quebec whom I once had the privilege of meeting. I'm getting close to adding snowshoes to my wish list.

Later on Sunday, and immediately on the heels of our initial elation at squeaking onto the ferry, there was a glum moment of realization that there was no

food service. With spirits psyched in anticipation of a hot dinner, it was somewhat anticlimactic to return to the bowels of the ferry and dig out snack food from deep inside sodden packs.

However, it was a most enjoyable weekend, and I liked Sandy's and John's exchange of word plays and shaggy dog stories.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs, Su Castle, John Pratt (leader) and Judy Holm.*

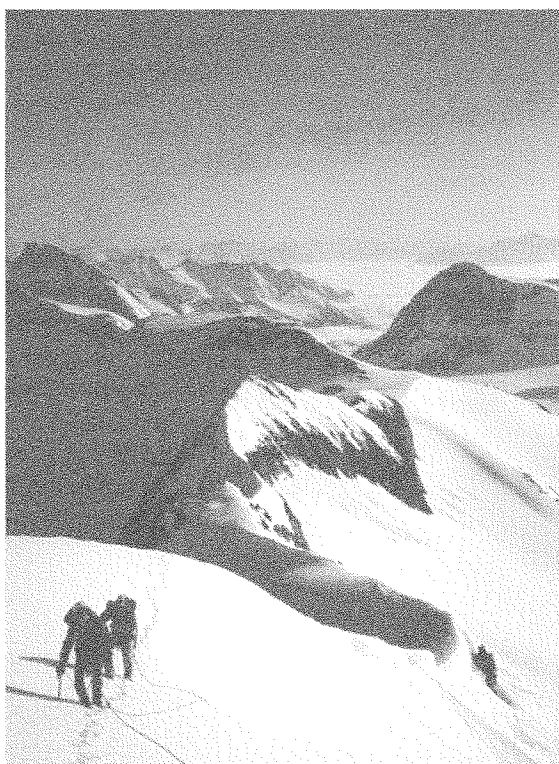
## MT. WEDGE, ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY

Claire Ebendinger

May 2 - 3

We arrived at the trailhead parking lot at dusk on Friday evening and set up for a quiet night in the company of the newly hatched wildlife... it was mild and the mosquitoes were enjoying the early season. It was a leisurely hike up to Wedgemount Lake in pleasant weather and nice morning temperature. Russ had planned it that way so we could relax at the cabin in the afternoon and get an early start the next morning. He knew from experience that the snow would be better for climbing and that the timing to return to camp was important due to the extremely high avalanche hazard on route. Soon a lone skier came up, briefly exchanged greetings and went on to climb Wedge as a day trip. We were concerned about his safety as we watched him ski up the glacier and disappear around a snow ridge.

The hot afternoon turned out to be very low key and confirmed the dangers ahead. As we loafed around after lunch, the first avalanche coming down the north slopes startled us; it stopped short of the ski track going along the edge of the lake. Within ten minutes another one came down, again from the same slopes, this time reach-



Tony Pugh and Doug Goodman approaching the summit of Wedge Mtn. Photo: Claire Ebendinger.

ing the lake. In the meanwhile, a couple of avalanches had also come down from the slopes on the south side of the lake. What a show!!

It wasn't long before the skier came back down the glacier and crossed the avalanche path quickly; he was on his

way up towards the cabin when another avalanche tumbled down the slopes he had just passed under. He looked back and stopped for a minute, watching it... we breathed a sigh of relief. I was sitting higher up above the cabin and called to him as he passed nearby. He had skied to the base of the NW ridge and climbed to the summit on foot; it was his first trip in the area... and lucky it wasn't his last trip! He was just heading down to the trees when another roaring avalanche came down the deadly slope, starting way up high in a small gully, grabbing every bit of snow left on the slope, chunks of ice, rocks, and speeding as it increased in size on the way down. Its ingredients were flying around and bouncing on ledges, then landed as a huge mass of mixed debris at the base of the slope and continued into the lake with a crushing sound as the ice underneath was breaking.

Everyone had rushed to the higher rocks to watch and those who had cameras on hand took photos. We stood in awe for a while, feeling thankful that we hadn't watched a tragic accident.

The rest of the afternoon was quiet, watching a group of young snowboarders



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whooshing down the nearby slopes. We settled for the night; it was mild and some of us were gazing at the stars as we fell asleep on the rocks. By 2:00 am we woke up to a soft dance of northern lights; we were off shortly and headed down towards the lake by headlamp. Crossing the avalanche debris was a bit tricky but we didn't waste time and moved on to the glacier where we roped up. Soon the first light appeared in the horizon and we were climbing up towards the beautiful northeast ridge where the sun greeted us. Russ led the first rope, making good tracks along the exposed ridge. Our group was a bit slower but

quite happy to do a running belay as we climbed and took time to enjoy the awesome views and to take photos. It was truly a perfect, classic ridge climb, in great conditions. After a few summit shots (I think it was brandy), birthday greetings to Guy, and a bite to eat, we started our descent via the NW ridge. The snow was getting soft and we were sinking inconsistently, slogging along, and aware of the time of danger approaching. Once we reached the glacier travelling was easier, and we even enjoyed a bit of glissading on the steeper sections. We noticed the snowboarders having great fun on the slopes ahead;

they had followed our footprints in the morning. They decided to head back to the cabin when they saw us, and we all travelled through the avalanche path again quickly and safely, glancing up with concerned and hopeful looks. Back at camp we rested and refueled, and admired the view and felt thankful for a truly rewarding and enjoyable climb. The return to the cars was easy going and we caught a ferry in reasonable time.

*Participants: Linda MacKay, Guy Parent, Tony Pugh, Doug Goodman, Todd Patton, Claire Ebendinger, and Russ Moir.*

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## ELAHO ASHLU SKI TRAVERSE

*Brian Pinch*  
May 1997

**P**reamble: When I wrote up this trip, I thought I was doing it about 8 months late. However, when checking with Martin re some details, I realized that I had written up the 1997 attempt and was a year and 8 months late. Oh well, it is a good story (or at least written brilliantly), so here it is anyway. Regarding the proposed 1998 trip, it failed for lack of participants.

A week of holiday was booked and I looked forward to this trip with great anticipation. After numerous failed trips in the area, led by someone who will remain nameless (hint: starts with "M" an rhymes with "borough"), it seemed time to grasp the bull by the horns and lead a proper trip. Visions of tanning on glaciers, linking turns on virgin corn snow and bagging elusive peaks danced in my head.

As the crucial week approached, the weather was COLD and RAINY so we delayed our departure until Sunday. We were three intrepid souls; Martin Davis and Doug Hurrell, and myself.

Anyway, back to the exciting tale! Upon arrival in Squamish, it was still COLD and RAINY. Indeed, fresh snow extended down to within a thousand feet or so above us. We reconnoitred the access road, ripping the muffler off my car in the process, then settled down to await better weather. Monday, dawned COLD and RAINY yet again and we began to have our first doubts about Squamish's reputation as a spring paradise. Undaunted, we made the best of it by going lift skiing at Whistler where we confirmed that there had been many feet of fresh snow the previous week. About another foot fell during the day. The next day saw another lift pass and another foot of snow.

We now faced a conundrum. The weather forecast was looking up but our time was running short. Of greater concern, the planned traverse is quite high and we really didn't want to be there unless the weather cleared. But if the weather cleared, it would get warm (being May) and did we really want to

be out there when the sun hit all that fresh snow? After, much deliberation, we decided that it would be much safer to be back in Victoria and, hence, returned.

I have always told myself that I would not go back country if the avalanche hazard was high. However, this was the first time I had ever actually backed off and, let me tell you, it was a tough decision. I had been looking forward to this trip for months and the time was all set aside. Backing off seemed like the right thing to do but you can't help but wonder if you are just being a wimp.

Postscript: The weather did turn and Pemberton was the hot spot in Canada on Friday. Had we screwed up by leaving? I found out the answer a few days later while running with a friend who is an Air B.C. pilot. He flies over the coast range more days than not and said that he had never seen so many avalanches. Just about every slope had released. You can't imagine how much better this made me feel!

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# MT. ATHABASCA NORTH FACE

*Tak Ogasawara*

August 6

Step by step I trained, hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, backcountry skiing, snow and ice climbing and finally the North Face of Mt. Athabasca. This was the final leg of training that I had set as a goal when I started climbing again in 1989.

At 5:00 am, we were at a familiar trail on the moraine towards the bottom of the North Face. By 8:00 am we were at the bergschrund that signified the start of the North Face route. Dave and Mark were already one pitch above and one more party was several pitches above them. As they progressed, small rocks and ice showered down below. We started to climb a bit farther left of their route to try and avoid the resulting ice shower.

Phil who was in the lead front pointed up. Following him, I soon found out that I could not front point the full 150 ft. pitch. The angle was about 45 degrees and the ice was soft, so I used the three-o'clock position (one front point and one flat point), every 50 feet I alternated with each leg.

As we climbed higher, the ice became harder and steeper. We caught



North face of Mount Athabasca. Photo: Tak Ogasawara.

up with Dave and Mark at a rock step a couple of pitches below the summit. We waited there until they disappeared behind summit ridge. The rock step was about 10 feet high and there was quite a bit of water running over it. I put one foot on the sloping step and placed two ice tools into the ice above. Then as quickly as possible I pulled my body up to the ice slope above the step. Above the rock step, the slope

angle steepened to about 65 degrees and had much harder ice than below. Front pointing up the last two pitches was a superb and enjoyable climb, truly a Canadian Rockies classic.

I spent one week around Mt. Athabasca this summer; practising ice climbing and glacier travel techniques so that now I am confident enough to tackle even higher and more challenging mountains.

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## MT. MAMQUAM... AND ALTERNATE DESTINATIONS

*Linda MacKay*

April 11 - 13

Easter is a special time of year: traditionally a time to spend with good friends, and to enjoy the gift of nature. The destination for this Easter—or, Plan A—was Mt. Mamquam; however, an update from the Internet made us wiser and led to alternate plans. In addition, Rick's skin tone was a shade of grey. But, despite the fact that he had the flu, he was

willing to lead us wherever we wanted to go! So, Plan B was to head towards Garibaldi Park, the Sphinx hut, and possibly a peak beyond. At the trailhead we were heavily loaded with our packs, tents, and skis, *hoping* that there would be some snow on the trail up ahead. Once we reached the snow I was encouraged to carry my skis instead of wearing

them; after all, a one pound weight on your back is equivalent to a 4 lb. weight on your feet. And what about the extra weight of tramping with a platform of snow glued to the bottom of your skins? (we'll let Pat and Murrough sort that one out). We arrived at Garibaldi Lake shortly after 5 pm, and there was the answer to my wishes—a snowcapped

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cabin. Somehow the discussion pursued—should we press on to cross the lake this evening and chance arriving at the Sphinx Hut, or tent it in the snow, or; we could spend the night here in the cabin. Somehow, there was no question in my mind, and fortunately after a limited discussion everyone agreed that it would be wiser to stay in the cabin. Ah yes, it was much nicer to prepare our meals on a dry counter, and to eat off picnic tables, than to cook our food in the snow. In addition, we dozed off to the sweet drone of the mice, as they

gnawed at the wood and our feedbags. However, we were safe from their intrusions because we had wisely pitched our tents inside the cabin. On Saturday morning, more snow was falling, but it cleared long enough to get a bearing across the lake. The lightly falling snow thickened, and we took a meandering route across the lake. The Sphinx hut was filled to capacity with another group who was also suffering from cabin fever. And so, we said our adieus, and headed back across the lake. On returning the sky cleared enough for us

to find a few slopes that we could trash. Well, as I mentioned, the best part of Easter is to share the outdoors with good company. Huddled around a picnic table, Don became the master storyteller. Thanks Catrin, for asking Don how he acquired such a nice new pack! Easter morning arrived, and the mystery Easter bunny managed to find us. And so with our buccal cavities stuffed with chocolate kisses, we made our descent.

*Participants: Pat and Murrrough O'Brien, Don Morton, Rick Eppler, Catrin Brown, and Linda MacKay.*

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## THE DAY WE CLIMBED MOUNT ALLEN

Chris Peppler  
August

Lynne and I were fortunate to participate in this year's Rockies Panorama Traverse, a National Club annual event, conceived and led again this year by Peter Fuhrmann. Peter has a well-earned reputation as a knowledgeable, safety conscious mountaineering guide with a great sense of humour (as put to the test by our group) and a seemingly endless supply of colourful tales.

Our always cheerful camp manager, excellent cook and great climbing companion, Shelley McKinlay, one of the leading lights of the ACC's recently revived Saskatchewan Section, was on the Canadian team that climbed Broad Peak in 1995.

The eight of us along for the ride were all Canadians – from four provinces. Everyone had done some climbing (does Carrantuo Hill count?), but most of us had little experience climbing in anything like the terrain we now faced. And so it was with a tremendous sense of anticipation, and some trepidation, that we set off in fine weather on Part 1 of the week's adventure from Marble Canyon, bound for Moraine Lake via the Fay and Neil Colgan Huts, the Fay Glacier and the Schiesser/Lomas route.

When we arrived on the second day at the Neil Colgan hut, located on a

narrow col between Mounts Bowlen and Little, we found a dog-eared copy of the 1995 *Canadian Alpine Journal*. That being the only reading material in the hut library, it wasn't long before someone spotted Kayla Stevenson's entertaining account of that year's Panorama Traverse. Kayla's all-too vivid description of the route after Neil Colgan left some of us wondering – what did Peter have in store for us?

One answer came that very evening. After a quick ascent of adjacent Mount Bowlen (3,072 m), whose summit offered great views of the north face of Mount Fay and its famous ice bulge route, Peter pronounced the group (and the weather) fit for an attempt the next day up seldom-climbed Mount Allen. He assured the fainthearted among us that although it would be a long day, we would have no difficulty with the route. Most of us believed him.

The next day the weather was as near perfect as it can be in the mountains, calm, hardly a wisp of cloud and, thankfully, not too hot. We set off from the hut on two ropes of five, crossed the glacier and soon arrived below the east side of Mount Perren. We strapped on crampons and climbed up a slightly convex snow slope. When we reached the top of the snow slope, we left the

crampons behind and moved carefully out across some not very stable rock scree to the Perren-Allen col. At the col, it dawned on us that (a) we were already pretty damned high and (b) we were going to go a lot higher.

Time for the helmets. Short-rope, with Peter leading the first rope, we started climbing. We were headed up the NE ridge route. With ten people on two ropes it was pretty slow going. Slow is good. We got to appreciate the teeny places on which to stand while waiting for the other rope to catch up. We also noticed a lot of rotten rock and loose handholds and got to experience some serious exposure (or great views, depending on your state of mind). It all seemed steep, with the worst of the steepish bits said to be 5.3, which felt really awkward when short roped. Let's just say that there was a healthy level of stress on the way up and a keen awareness of the ultimate fragility of human life. Our helmets saved most of us from injury from falling rocks – a hazard with a group our size.

We reached the narrow summit ridge of Mount Allen just before 1 pm and the actual summit (3,301 m) shortly after that. The summit book indicated that ours was the first group to reach

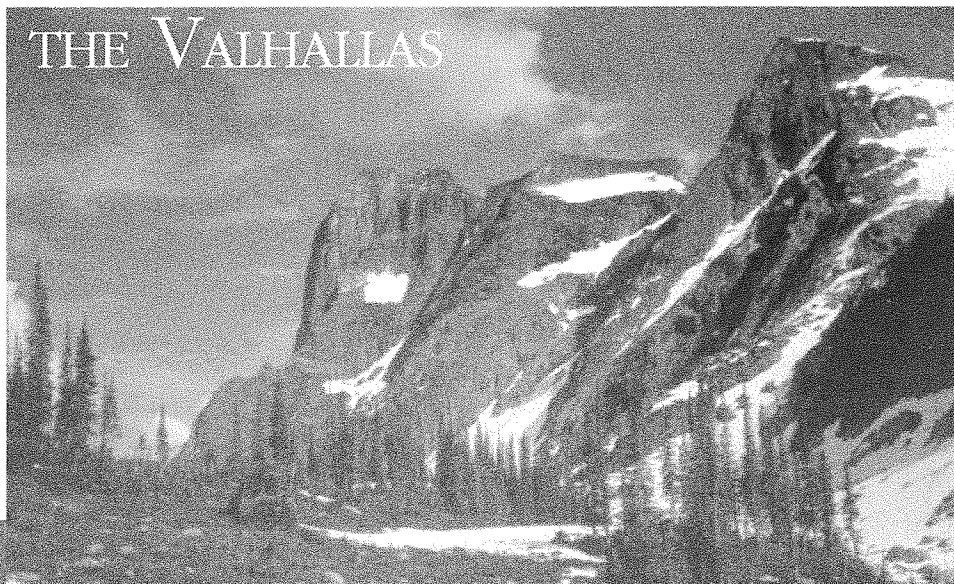
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# SIX DAYS IN THE VALHALLAS

Kayla Stevenson

June 28 - July 3

This was a six day mountaineering traverse from the Drinnon Lake access to Valhalla Lake, then Prestly Lakes, around and over the Asgard col into Mulvey Basin and the out via Gimli ridge. Good route finding is necessary as the way is unmarked. This traverse offers the opportunity for many climbs along the way.



Dag, Bat Wing, and Wolf's Ear in the Mulvey Basin.



Richard Keltie and Larry Talarico climbing Drinnon Peak.



Richard Keltie at Valhalla Lake with Prestly Peak in the background.



Storm over Gimli.

Participants: Richard Keltie, Larry Talarico, Kayla Stevenson, and Dave Smith ACMG.



the top in 1998 and apparently the only group of ten ever to summit. We were keenly aware that without Peter none of us could have made it up the mountain but we felt pretty proud of ourselves anyway.

The views down, way down, into the Valley of the Ten Peaks, and of Mount Hungabee and The Goodsirs were spectacular – still hardly a cloud in the sky. It was July 21, Lynne's birthday. What better way to celebrate one of life's milestones?

The climb down ("Face out" Peter said) was every bit as challenging as the ascent. Ten and a half hours after leaving the hut we finally reached our crampons at the top of the snowslope above the glacier. Still roped, we started heel plunging down the snow. What's this? An ice band just as we reach the steep part? Whoops! Most of us on Rope 1 tried some kind of ice axe arrest, but to no avail. There was a good run out of snow at the bottom, so we just lay

back and enjoyed a cool, wet ride. Lynne scraped her knuckles on her ice axe, but we were otherwise undamaged. Rope 2 (the slow ones) came down without falling. When they arrived at the bottom, we told them we had just been demonstrating how to bumslide roped but they didn't buy it.

By 8 pm or so, we were at the hut, looking back at Mount Allen and sharing in a new respect for the mountains, for our guide, and for each other.

## ROGER'S PASS SKI WEEK

*Doug Hurrell*

March 1 - 7

As most readers will know, the Rogers Pass is the route that the Trans Canada Highway follows as it passes through the Selkirk Mountains. It is a spectacular area where sharp peaks rise 6000 feet steeply above the highway. It is rich in the history of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway which was completed in 1885 and also as the birth place of Canadian mountaineer-

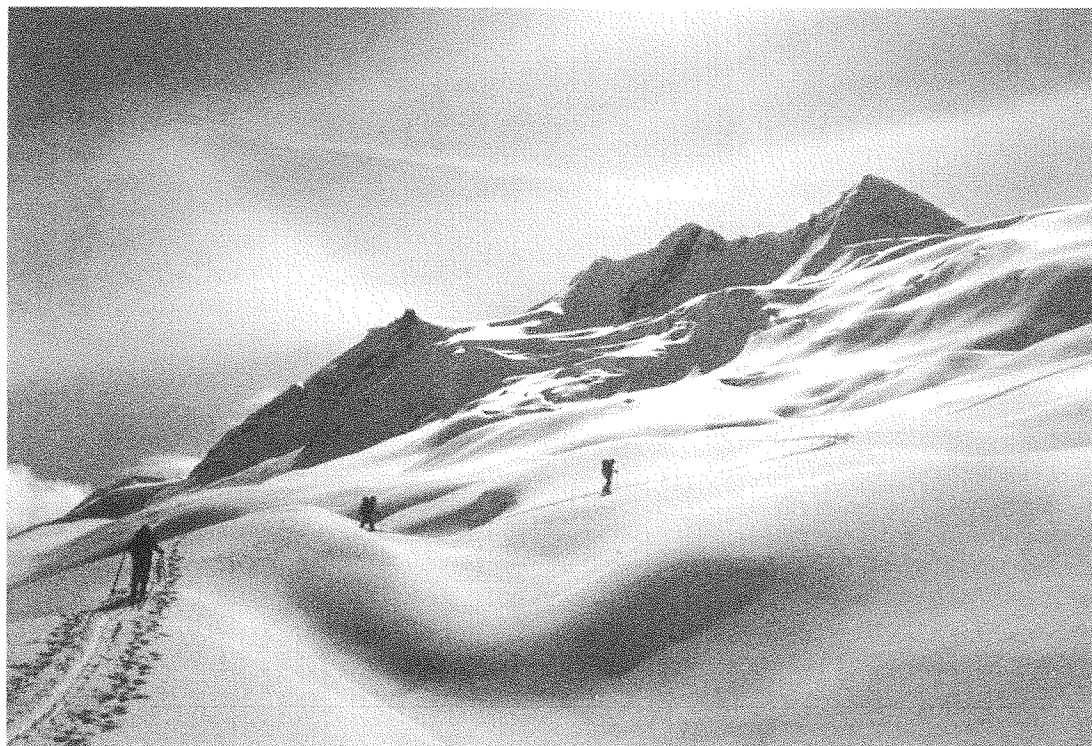
ing which began shortly after. In more recent times the area has become famous internationally for its excellent ski touring. It is also well known for its bad weather and tremendous avalanches - every route that we toured crossed avalanche paths.

The entire group except for Judy arrived at the parking lot at almost the same time late Saturday afternoon and

began to haul their supplies up the abandoned railway grade to the Wheeler Hut - a distance of about a mile. The weather was gloomy and the snow seemed terrible. The hut, which sits in the forest at an elevation of 4,100 feet is a roomy 50 year old log cabin that has been improved over the years and is very well equipped and attractive. The hut keeper, Geoff, a young Brit who

was spending his winter ski touring in Canada and his friend Claudine from Quebec, greeted us.

On Sunday our group went back to the highway, drove up to the hotel at the summit of the pass, and skied up Connaught Creek behind the hotel to Balu Pass at an elevation of 6,700 feet. The snow was so bad that no one could turn properly in it but everyone enjoyed the run back to the highway and the day of exercise. In the parking lot we met a party from France who were touring



Approaching Sapphire col. Photo: Doug Hurrell.



in the area while staying at the hotel.

Judy had arrived from Banff and on the next morning we packed up all our gear and provisions and headed up Asulkan Brook destined for a cabin high above us. Light drizzle soon turned into snow. After passing through a ravine bearing the rather ominous name "The Mousetrap" the route steepened dramatically and we plodded mindlessly upwards into the misty void like a train of aging yaks. We were spurred on by the threats of our



Ski tracks on the Seven Steps of Paradise. Photo: Doug Hurrell.

leader who kept reminding us of the white death that loomed above us on the mountain sides waiting to thunder down and sweep us into oblivion. Finally Gerhardt crested a small rise just above the tree line at 7,200 feet and found the Asulkan Hut.

It is the most attractive modern mountain hut that I have yet visited. It is constructed of naturally finished woods inside and out and the large windows give it a bright and airy atmosphere. There is sleeping space for 12 and our party of 11 and a young ski mountaineer from Michigan named Mike made up a full house. Two couples from the U.S. soon followed us through the door, which made conditions a bit cramped. After dinner most of us crawled into our bunks on the top floor while the others slept on Thermarests downstairs. The propane heater was impossible to regulate and I slept poorly due to the hot and stuffy atmosphere.

We awakened to find clear skies and about a foot and a half of near perfect fresh powder snow. The hut is superbly situated at the foot of the romantically named "Seven Steps of Paradise", a vast snowfield that has many choices for powder

skiing for both beginner and expert. Many of the steeper slopes had fractured and slid so we were cautious but the many fine skiers in the group were soon off in all directions carving up the deep snow with graceful looking tracks. Those less skilled were having just as much fun defacing it with bomb craters. After an exhilarating day we returned to the cabin for dinner, socializing and bed. We left the windows wide open and had a better sleep.

The next day was again clear. The snow had stabilized somewhat and we were able to ski steeper lines. Imagine floating down a mountainside on a sea of powder snow. There is a brief moment of weightlessness as you free fall perhaps 10 vertical feet between turns, the gentle rebound as you change direction, snow swirling about your waist, and then you plunge into the next turn and repeat the motion again and again. Imagine doing this among some of Canada's most beautiful mountains, under blue skies, and with only a few companions to share the experience, the only sound being the hiss of snow as it slides by your body. Can such a sublime pastime heighten one's consciousness or

even elevate one's soul to a higher spiritual plane? I can only say that in my case it hasn't resulted in any improvement.

Judy had just returned from a leadership seminar in Banff and had been trying hard to mould us into a disciplined group. It was obvious that she had given us up as a lost cause when we saw her skinning solo up the very steep face of Young's Peak, the summit of the "Seven Steps". I was skiing with Viggo and we felt compelled to follow. The summit at 9,250 feet was the high point of our week and the view from the summit was spectacular. The face was too steep to be enjoyable skiing but we "hopped and hoped" our way down with no disasters. Most of the rest of the group followed the track up and summited successfully. We then enjoyed a superb run back to the cabin and packed for the steep but enjoyable descent to the Wheeler Hut. A group of young Americans had turned the east end of the building into a reasonable facsimile of a liquor store, so we moved into the west end with Geoff and Claudine.

Russ had been having trouble with his boots and Gerta as a health profes-



Viggo and Judy approaching Asulkan Pass with Mt. Sir Donald in the background. Photo: Doug Hurrell.

sional was alarmed to find him soaking his bleeding and smelly feet in one of the basins that was used for washing dishes. This created a toxic waste disposal and cleanup problem which Barb offered to solve by blending the effluent into her soup - how can a vegetarian soup have such a delicious meaty taste? Gerta decided that it would be better to wash out the basin as best as possible and place it discreetly in the kitchen area used by the Americans.

Thursday turned out to be another perfect day and Geoff had offered to guide us down the Lily Glacier. The route went up Asulkan Brook through the "Mousetrap" and then climbed steeply up to the right over snowfields and glaciers to Sapphire Col at 8,500 feet. We had lunch near the emergency shelter, which reminded me of a large tin can. The descent route dropped down a steep 500 vertical foot slope of breakable crust on the opposite side of the mountain. Then we traversed a level snowfield and avalanche debris to the right that led to the top of the Lily glacier. The first pitch of the Lily was a wide untracked snow field sloped at about 25 degrees with crevasses on the right - a perfect powder field that dropped about 800 vertical feet and boosted everyone's egos. The second pitch of the Lily was heaven - quite a bit steeper and twice as long. I'm sure we each made a hundred or more turns before stopping to

bar at the hotel and stagger back to the Wheeler Hut. The hut was relatively empty, as the Americans had left to seek medical attention due to a mysterious stomach ailment.

Friday, our last day, was again sunny. I decided to ski the Lily again with Viggo who had taken a rest day on Thursday and with Barb who had been turned back by a broken ski. Keith had decided to come along for a second run, as well as Barb's distinguished looking friend Ian who had arrived from Calgary. I was feeling quite strong after my second week of touring in the space of a month and was a bit annoyed when we were passed on the ascent by a couple of young tourers from Femie and then three more from Germany. As I look back I now realize that they must have been using performance-enhancing substances. Most of the rest of our group spent the day climbing high on the Illecillewaet Glacier.

On Saturday the weather had turned warm and cloudy but it didn't matter - we had to move out and head home. Thanks Viggo and Judy! It was a great trip.

*Participants: Judy & Viggo Holm (leaders), Gerta Smythe, Barb Brooks, Gerhardt Lepp, Keith Battersby, Doug Dalquist, Russ Moir, Claire Chairperson, Tim Strange, and Doug Hurrell.*

rest at the bottom - the best skiing of the trip. The route then followed a big moraine and the Loop Brook valley out to the highway a mile or two downhill from the parking lot. The day was winding down and vivid alpenglow coloured the peaks. Judy was worried that Viggo would be getting worried, so we decided to leave the

## BLACK-WINGED SEASONS

### MOUNT WORK SOLILOQUY

#### SPRING

I grunt up the trail  
forcing myself to stay fit, alive.

Ravens croak, screaming above.  
I break through juniper to see, rising  
on thermals where south winds flow  
upward the cliff,  
black, but for their eyes, rising  
in loose formation of twos and threes,  
till one dives  
pointing a wing to earth, knifing down  
the others in pursuit, then  
rounds out, leaving them braking, fluttering  
sniping at him in mid-flight.

Young—they can hardly fly—  
yet already have guts for the game.

#### AUTUMN

Today the fall begins.  
It's in the leaves, molding yellow  
into black muck on the trail.  
Rabbits scatter at my tread, brown bodies  
scurry to hide white winter tails.

Above the cliff I face the wind  
blowing in storms over marching ranges.  
Again ravens play the updraft, rising  
then folding black wings to dive, dive  
round out, and rise again, but *soundless*,  
silently storing the summer's fun.

I want to shout,  
To bound along ridges with them.  
But, I too am silent,  
storing all the joy  
against the coming winter.

*Gil Parker*



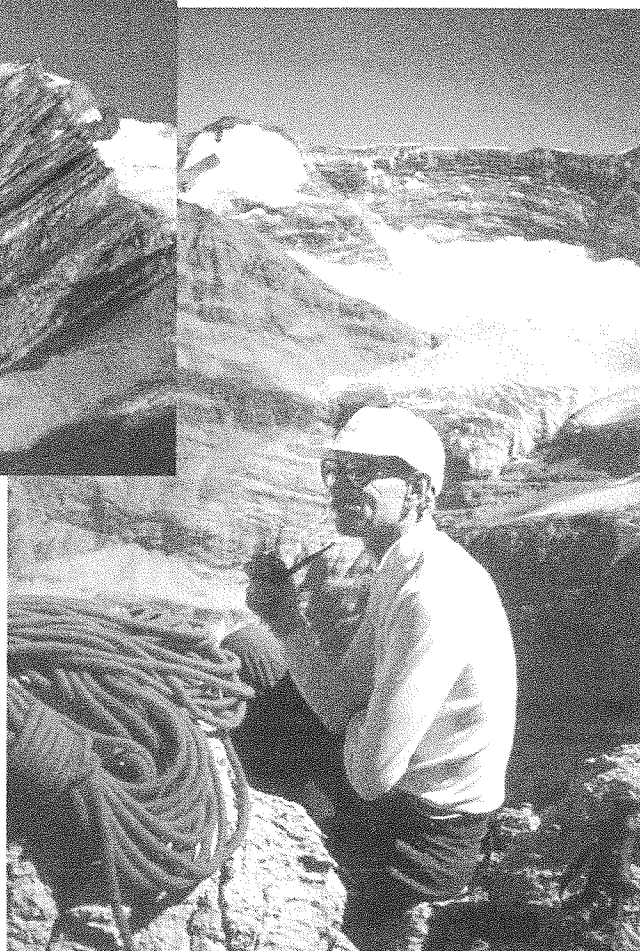
Whiterose Pk. from the GMC camp.

# ACC GMC 1998

*Kayla Stevenson*



Alexandra Peak, 11,114 ft.



Guide Peter Amman on the summit of Rose Petal with Mt. Fresnoy (10,630 ft.) in the background.



Climbing Whirlwind at 9,000 ft. Photo: Richard Keltie.

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# DISTANT OBJECTIVES

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## MEXICO'S VOLCANOES

### NEVADO DE TOLUCA - 4,558 M (XINANTECATL)

Lindsay Elms  
November

The weather in the southern Mexican city of Oaxaca (Wa-ha-ca) wasn't as warm as Elaine and I had expected. It was about 15 C and overcast. To the east we could see the lower foothills of the Sierra Madre de Oaxaca but the tops of the higher mountains were permanently shrouded in clouds that looked like they contained a high percentage of moisture. There was one particular mountain that we were interested in climbing - Zempoaltepetl. This is a sacred mountain of the Mixe (Me-hay), the indigenous Indians of the area, and is known as 'the mountain of 20 heads.' At 3,395 metres it was nowhere near Mexico's tallest but from what I could establish it is the highest in the range.

At this point in our travels in Mexico we were in a state of what I called 'ruined', that is when you are totally saturated from visiting ancient Aztec, Toltec, Zapotec or Olmec ruins. We were getting to the point where we were visiting the ruins just to say: "been there, done that but didn't buy the T-shirt." It was time for the mountains.

After asking around and reading through books, we could find no information on Zempoaltepetl. I knew roughly where it was but didn't know the best place to begin climbing it from, whether it could be done as a day trip or what to expect from the weather.

"Si hay o no hay mucho lluvia en las montañas ahora?" In my Spanglish this was the best I could do to find out about weather conditions and of course the answer was always: "No hay lluvia. El tiempo está bueno." At least that is what I thought they were saying. So off (in the general direction of the mountain)

we went. First of all we caught a bus to the old village of Mitla and then after waiting an hour we caught a camionette (minivan) to San Pedro y San Pablo Ayutla. Our driver, Speedy Gonzalez, knew exactly what speed to take the corners at to get us as quickly as possible to Ayutla via the windy and in places, narrow road. Initially the weather was good, but the further in and higher we got, the more rapidly the weather began to deteriorate. By the time we arrived in Ayutla, it was *lloviendo* (raining) and the *neblina* (mist) limited visibility to about 100 metres. Ayutla's altitude was 2,060 metres (about the same as Mexico City's). We found a friendly family Casa de Huespedes for the night and began weighing up our chances of climbing Zempoaltepetl.

Next morning saw no change in the weather and after talking to the local school administrator, we found out that this weather was normal for this time of the year. We asked about the mountain and found out where the trail began and that it was a 3 - 5 hour climb. He informed us that Zempoaltepetl is rarely climbed but if we wanted, he could find a guide for us. We thanked him for the information and advice then packed up our gear and caught the next camionette back to Oaxaca. Climbing Zempoaltepetl would have to wait for another time.

When we first arrived in Mexico City, we contacted the Club Andino Mexicano to find out what trips they had scheduled and whether we could go on them. They were pleased that we were interested and showed us a program of their trips. The up-coming weekend they had a trip to Citlatepetl (Pico de

Orizaba), the highest mountain in Mexico and the third highest in North America, but on a previous trip to Mexico I had climbed this mountain as well as Popocatepetl. Elaine and I were interested in Ixtaccihuatl (the third highest) and Xinantecatl or Nevado de Toluca (the fourth highest mountain.) We noticed that on the last weekend of our stay, they had a trip up to Ixtaccihuatl. Their excursion wasn't to climb the mountain but was an instructional trip up onto the glacier. They said we could go with them and share the cost of transportation. This appeared great, as it would save us a lot of hassles. We wouldn't have to worry about transport to and from the trailhead and then we could leave our equipment in their bus knowing that our gear would be safe and secure. Unfortunately, it is no longer safe to leave gear in your tent while climbing up to the summit. We got their phone number and said we would call them in the week before the trip so we could make our necessary arrangements. It looked as though everything was falling into place and we would have an easy time.

After arriving back in Oaxaca, we took the day train back to Puebla and once there we called the Alpine Club. To our shock they had cancelled to trip to Ixtaccihuatl due to the volcanic activity on the neighbouring Popocatepetl. Popo was living up to its name - 'Smoking Mountain' in Nahuatl, the Aztec language. For the last couple of years Popo was closed to climbers because of the constant activity in its crater. The volcanologists hadn't been too concerned about an eruption, but in the last week there



was renewed activity on the mountain. The vulcanologists were thinking they may have underestimated the extent of the mountains activity and were hypothesizing that the mountains resting period of 40 - 50 years may be over and warned that the volcanoes activity could foreshadow a major eruption. Plumes of ash were belching up to 4 kilometres into the air and showering nearby towns and at night glowing rocks could be seen exploding from the summit. Surrounding villages were preparing evacuation plans in the event of a disaster and the military were increasing patrols to keep climbers and hikers at least 7 kilometres away from the mountain. The Alpine Club was making a discretionary call in canceling the trip. They had no backup trip for the weekend but luckily for us we did - Nevado de Toluca.

We bused into Mexico City to our friend's place where we were storing most of our climbing equipment and then went out and bought what we would need for the weekend. The Alpine Club was very helpful in giving us the necessary information about getting to the mountain, the climbing routes and where the refugios were located.

Saturday morning we were dropped off at the Poniete Bus Station where we caught a bus to Raices, the little village at the base of the mountain. After the bus dropped us off, we began walking up the dirt road towards the lower refugio on the mountain but we soon got a ride from an American who lived in nearby Toluca. He offered to take us up to the refugio and if we wanted, would drive us up into the crater for a look and then drop us back at the refugio. For about 45 minutes the road wound its way up and around the mountain into the crater. At 4,000 metres we stopped for lunch and admired the view of the mountain from within the crater. Nearby were two lakes: Laguna de la Luna (moon) and Laguna del Sol (sun). At the smaller Laguna de la Luna we found some divers who had just come out of the lake with some ancient artifacts that they thought were about 2,000 years old. Here we were gasping for breath at this altitude having basically come up from sea level

two weeks ago and there they were swimming around at the bottom of the 14 metre deep lake, in water that was 7 C, as though they were at sea level. Figure that out!

There are two refugios on the mountain. One is lower down in the forest at 3,500 metres and the second is at 4,000 metres. We got dropped off at the higher refugio, a hut with 12 bunks and a propane stove. We found three Mexicans in the refugio so we asked if it was okay if we stayed and then we asked if they were there to climb. It was okay with them if we stayed but then they informed us they were not climbers but marathon runners. Two of the runners (guys) were living up there for three weeks and were training for a marathon in the States in early January while the other (a woman) was up there training for a week. We started talking about running and soon found out that the two guys were 2 hour 14 minute marathoners. Every morning (except Sunday) they run the marathon distance of 42 kilometres in 2 hours 51 minutes. I couldn't believe it! Here I am a sub 3 hr runner (at sea level) and here are these guys running the distance at 4,000 metres while training and at a pace faster than my best time. They even asked me if I wanted to go on a 12 km training run with them later in the afternoon but I had to decline the offer. I just wasn't used to the altitude the way these guys were.

We settled in for the afternoon and occupied our time by going for a short hike up onto the ridge and talking to the runners.

Next morning we were up at 5:30 am and away by 6:00 - first light. There was a well-worn trail up onto the ridge above the crater and then we began to follow the ridge crest that led up to Pico del Aguila. Some easy scrambling brought us onto this secondary summit in an hour and three quarters. Off in the distance we could see Ixta and the smoking Popo, which was still belching out huge columns of ash. Some 4<sup>th</sup> class scrambling down off the peak and back onto the crest of the ridge. In places we had to traverse under crumbling volcanic rock towers while in others we had to

climb over them. Nothing very technical but pleasant climbing. An hour later we stood on the highest point - Pico del Fraile at 4,558 metres. We spent 20 minutes on top before we continued along the ridge on our traverse.

A short distance passed Pico del Fraile we dropped off the ridge and descended 600 metres down a scree slope to Laguna del Sol. We decided we didn't need to continue along the ridge crest any further as the summit was in the bag and we might as well head back to the refugio. From Laguna del Sol we skirted around its shore and through the narrow causeway to Laguna de la Luna. From the laguna it was a short climb back onto the saddle on the ridge where we had begun earlier in the morning and then down to the refugio.

Later on in the afternoon saw us back in the smog-laden Mexico City, grasping for fresh air but delighted at being back in the relatively lower elevation. We didn't have time to climb anymore of the volcanoes but we had one day left to see the most incredible ruins in Mexico - Teotihuacan.

Mexico is a big, diverse country and still has many untapped natural features to be discovered by the traveller and climber. Every time I return to the country I find new places to visit and more interesting mountains to climb. Of course there are the old favourite volcanoes to climb, but in the remoter mountain ranges to the south there are unknown, and possibly untrodden summits to be explored.

*Participants: Elaine Kerr and Lindsay Elms.*



# CREVASSE RESCUE WORKSHOP

June 27-28 (and evenings of June 2, 23)

The group who came to this year's practise were excellent at jumping into the situations, getting involved and actively experimenting with different problems and scenarios. This group was truly of our Section, ever recognizable by the ability to PLAY!

The first evening we prussiked up ropes hung from trees, and covered dividing a rope and tying in for glacier travel. The second evening we set up "drop loop and Z-pulley" systems in

massive seracs, with the Coleman glacier leading upward toward the peak and vividly green moss on the newly melted slopes below. It was very welcome to have the warmth of sunshine.

This year's practice sessions were based on Canadian information gained this spring from Murray Toft (Association of Canadian Mountain Guides), from Tom Benson and Gord Ross (Slipstream Adventures), and from talking with Brian Jones (Canada West Mountain School).

so many in this Section who have been familiar for years with this subject.

## CREVASSE RESCUE

1. Prevention of an accident is, of course, the best. There is much to learn about the nature of glaciers, and how to safely route find across them. In general terms, 3 are the minimum number of people recommended for glacier travel.

2. Concentrate on understanding the basic principles of crevasse rescue, rather than the details of a particular system.

This is easier to remember over the long-term, and gives a greater ability to adapt to individual situations, each of which will be different.

3. Be solid in your ability to quickly arrest a fall.

4. Know how to set up an anchor. (T-slot in snow, ice screw in ice). Middle person builds the anchor. Middle person is freed to do this by his short leash (made with a longer bight on the figure of 8 when he tied in - about 15 cm), so the pull goes directly to the end person who holds the fall.

5. Know how to safely transfer the weight of the victim onto the anchor. Use one of your prussik lines that is already on the rope. Ideally the prussik is tied to the anchor carabiner using a blocked munter hitch. Ease weight slowly onto anchor. End person prussiks along the rope to middle person. Back up the prussik that is holding the load by tying the rope to a separate carabiner in the anchor bight. The advantage of using another blocked Munter hitch to



Crevasse Rescue Workshop 98. As physicist Kevin reeled in his wife, he grinned and shouted, "You're lucky I studied physics and not sociology!" Photo: Judy Holm.

the backyard. The group who arrived at Mt. Baker was definitely ready for the real thing - we were amazed to see blocked munter hitches being tied during breakfast on the ferry and to hear that one person had been spotted practising prussik hitches on her steering wheel!

On Saturday afternoon Mt. Baker lifted her veil of clouds for us and we discovered that we were camped in a very dramatic site, overlooking a maze of

In general principles, what is described in the Seattle Mountaineers' "Mountaineering, the Freedom of the Hills" seems to be consistent with what is done in Canada. The American system differs somewhat in the details. Traditionally, our Section has relied a lot on this book; it is possibly a good idea to also be aware of what is currently taught in Canada.

Here's a very brief and partial overview of the crevasse rescue section, in case anyone is interested. There are

do this is that the system is reversible if you need to lower the victim. End person builds a second anchor (closer to the lip to save rope) if this is judged to be necessary.

6. Check to see how the victim is and reassure him/her

7. Be able to prussik up and down a rope. You may need this skill if you become a victim, or if you become a rescuer you may need to prussik down to help an injured victim.

8. Devise a rescue plan - what is the quickest, easiest way to get the victim out?

9. Can you lower him to a place where he can walk out?

10. Send down a drop loop (a bight of the rescue end of the rope) and bring up his pack so he'll be freer to move and be a lighter load to pull up?

11. Send the drop loop back down and pull up the victim? For greatest mechanical advantage the drop loop can have a pulley and carabiner on it; the victim clips this carabiner into his harness. A benefit of the drop loop is that while the accident end of the rope has usually cut into the lip of the crevasse, the loop has not. Prepare and pad (anchor the pad) the lip of the crevasse where the loop will go. Also, if you have to knock snow/ice down to prepare the edge for the loop, this can be done without knocking snow onto the victim. When you raise the victim, back up the system by keeping the original accident end of the rope taut, using the prussik loop that is already in place. The victim can help lift by pulling on the accident end of

the rope.

12. Can the victim prussik himself up? Does a rescuer need to prussik down to help because the victim is injured or unconscious?

13. Is a Z-pulley needed in addition to the drop loop? In most cases the drop loop provides enough mechanical advantage and it will not be necessary to set up the Z-pulley.

*Participants: Barbara Baker, Deborah Bear, Liz and Kevin Bartlett, Carey Ditmars, Chantelle Giroday, Leslie Gordon, Judy and Viggo Holm (organizers). David Press helped at the evening sessions, and a few more people came to a second quick overview session.*

## THE CLIFF

Roshan Virk

It was about time we started for the first base camp. The porters were ready, thanks to Arun, the translator for the porters. He had got everything organized finally!

K2 is the second highest mountain in the world and the most difficult to climb. Blair and I were going to be the first people to climb it from Canada. Well at least if everything went right. Blair and I had been training for five years for this climb.

It was about a six-mile hike to the first base camp. After about the third mile the porters wanted to have a rest. Luckily the weather was nice so we had about a ten-minute break. Blair yelled out "Arun" and waved his hand inviting him over to us. He was going to ask Arun to tell the porters to get moving. Arun was sitting on top of a snow bank with his buddies. He jumped off into the powdery snow and was up to his waist in snow. Blair thought this was quite amusing and started cracking up as he struggled getting out and walked over to where we were sitting. Blair told him we had to get moving, because it was four o'clock and we need

to get to the base camp before it got dark. I thought this was a good idea so we started on our way.

About two hours later we reached base camp. The sun was just setting when every one was setting up their tents. Blair had already set up ours. As I got into the tent, he asked, "How are you adjusting to the altitude?" I replied, "Just fine, how about you?" He said, "OK. The porters have been complaining about frostbite. Some of them have already left to go down, but not many" I knew there was always trouble with porters. They didn't take any of our supplies with them did they?" "None, they left our stuff here". That was a relief.

I crawled into the sleeping bag. A cold chill went down my spine as I got in. I heard the wind starting to blow harder every minute. "Hey Pete" said Blair. "What?" I replied. "How do you think those porters are doing in this weather on their way down?" I replied "Probably not very well". I slowly dozed off.

When I woke up in the morning, Blair had already left the tent. I could still hear the wind blowing. I slipped on my snowsuit and goggles and stepped

outside. One of the tents had not been attached to the other and went off a cliff. The two people that were in it had jumped out onto a ledge before it went over. "Pete" yelled out Blair was standing about twenty feet away from me. I could just hear him. The wind was almost blowing me over; the snow was stinging my face. I felt like a bunch of needles was being violently shoved into my cheek.

I ran over to Blair while I was putting on my facemask. "What happened Blair?" Blair interrupted me and pointed down. The two porters that had got out were stuck on a ledge about a hundred feet down. It was about -40°C. plus wind chill. They had only a very thin layer of clothing on, and would die from hypothermia if we did not get them up here very soon. The cliff below us slightly overhung the ledge.

I quickly ran back to my tent and grabbed my harness and two jackets. I ran back to where every one was watching. Blair and some other porters had already started walking around. This would take too long. The only way I could get there before they froze was to rappel

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off the over hang. This was dangerous, as there was no good rock for an anchor. I stuck the extra clothing for them in my backpack. I put on my harness, took my piton gun, found the thickest piece of ice and shot a piton in. I took the rope, tied a quick figure eight, looped the rope through my gri-gri and leaped off the edge.

The wind was rocking me back and forth. Once I felt the rope tighten, I pulled the lever on my gri-gri and started descending to the ledge. I could not see down through the blowing snow, the ledge had to be coming up soon. Then I felt the rope starting to give. I knew it was the ice the piton giving way and pulled the lever on the gri-gri almost all the way over. I started to descend very quickly. I could feel my stomach going up into my lungs. Still looking down I could see the ledge

just barely. The rope started to give more. I started to let go on the lever to slow me down. All that was going through my mind was "would the piton hold?" After what had seemed to be the longest 10 seconds ever, my feet finally touch the ground. I was still falling at a half decent speed and hit very hard. I was knocked out.

I woke up about 4 hours later in our tent. Blair told me what happened. He said, "You saved those porter lives". There was a big smile on his face. "We got to the ledge about 3 hours after you were knocked out. We carried you back here. The porters found the extra clothing in your pack and put a bandage on your head and took care of you until we got there."

My calculated risk had paid off and when I recovered I was able to get to the summit.

*Roshan Virk who is 14 years old wrote this story. It was done for a school assignment. Roshan's father is still a member of the Himalayan Club and organised two successful climbing expeditions to India. These were the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> successful climbs to summits over 20,000 ft. by Canadian-based expeditions.*

*Roshan's brother is 17 and a keen climber who started at Stellys High School on the climbing wall. His mother was a member of the Calgary Alpine Club and did several climbs in Banff area and also one of the Indian expeditions. We wonder whose footsteps he is following, or is he simply creating his own?*

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## SILENT ODE TO MOUNT PUGH

I have heard a lot of silence.

Silence is the mist in the old-growth forest  
that softens hard edges of granite and  
lends ghostly, mobile shape to thrusting firs.

Silence is the sound of faint breezes and falling streams  
in far, uncertain distance;  
it is the touch of rain on nettle and salal,  
the waking owl, the unheard crunch of boot on trail.

Silence moves alone  
sorts the sounds and files them,  
unseeing, but not unthinking  
feels its wisdom, knows its truth.

Silence is the sadness  
of our separate walking meditations,  
of finding our rational deductions  
create an endless loop  
having no empathy.

Silence is my fear  
that we will not transcend it.

*Gil Parker*



