

A full-page photograph of a man, Laurence Philippsen, standing on a rocky mountain trail. He is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, tan pants, a grey helmet, and a red backpack. He is looking down at the ground. The trail is rocky and has patches of snow. In the background, there are more rocky peaks and some evergreen trees. The sky is overcast.

Island Bushwhacker

Volume 48 | Issue 3 | Fall 2020

Laurence Philippsen near the summit of Triple Peak NW
Photo by Lindsay Elms

ACC VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION

Social Events

The club is now hosting virtual slide shows on the Zoom platform. These presentations can be viewed by people from up-Island and the Gulf Islands, so we may continue to offer virtual slide shows even when in-person slide shows resume.

Web Information

Web site: www.accvi.ca

Webmaster: webmaster@accvi.ca

Executive Meeting Minutes

Available on our meeting archives which are [here](#).

National ACC Office

For new memberships and renewals, changes of address or other details, and booking huts, contact the ACC National office directly.

www.alpineclubofcanada.ca

Email: info@alpineclubofcanada.ca; Tel: (403)-678-3200; Address: P.O. Box 8040, Canmore, AB, T1W 2T8

Annual Membership Dues

Single \$53 Family \$75 Youth (19 and under) \$38

The Island Bushwhacker Newsletter is published in March, June, September, and December. In other months, the **High Points Bulletin** summarizes events and key announcements for the section.

Newsletter editor: Janelle Curtis

High Points editor: Anya Reid

We encourage submissions of items of interest to our membership, including articles and photos in months when the newsletter is published. Please email your submissions to newsletter@accvi.ca by the 25th day of the previous month.

Advertising shall be accepted at the discretion of the editor. All advertising shall be for products or services of direct interest to our membership.

Our Motto

COME BACK ALIVE
COME BACK FRIENDS
RESPECT THE LAND
HAVE FUN
GET TO THE TOP
(IN THAT ORDER!)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Details of upcoming slideshows are on page 3.

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Reminder to Members:

Keep your membership up-to-date, so to as to be covered by the ACC's liability insurance. Keep your contact information current on ACC National's site, as it's from this master list that we download email addresses for mailouts.

Join or visit the ACCVI's [Facebook group](#). You don't have to be a Facebook member to see this page.



Upcoming Virtual Slideshows

Thursday 17 September at 7pm.

Sandy Briggs: The Geri-Arctics Ellesmere Island Expedition 2019 & Kayaking on Great Slave Lake”

Thursday 15 October at 7pm.

Mary Sanseverino: “Mountain Legacy Project”

Thursday 19 November at 7pm.

Nadja Steiner: “Lizzie Lake Trail environs”

December, date and theme to be announced.

Philip Stone

Mark the date and time. Zoom login details will be sent by email nearer the time.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Camping on Crest Mountain in the fog. Photo by Janelle Curtis

Upcoming Trips

Full information for all trips is located online on the [ACCVI Trip Schedule](#). We anticipate changes to our events as the situation with the coronavirus pandemic develops. Keep your eye on the [Trip Schedule](#) often! There are currently trips to the work on the Hišim'awil' hut, climb at Crest Creek Crags and in the Kootenays, and hike along the Elk River Trail.



Recommendations on books about nature, wildlife, or mountaineering

Members have a list of recommended books. Here is what they suggested, and why...

Deborah Boulton suggested *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. This book won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction and is about the trees and environment. You can learn more about this book [here](#). This is a description from Richard Powers' website: "*The Overstory*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, is a sweeping, impassioned work of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of—and paean to—the natural world. From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, Richard Powers's twelfth novel unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late twentieth-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is a world alongside ours—vast, slow, interconnected, resourceful, magnificently inventive, and almost invisible to us. This is the story of a handful of people who learn how to see that world and who are drawn up into its unfolding catastrophe."

Janelle Curtis suggested *The Sun is a Compass: A 4,000-Mile Journey into the Alaskan Wilds* by Caroline Van Hemert. Lynn Martel encouraged me to read this a few months ago and I couldn't put it down after I read the first sentence. This is a beautifully written and inspirational memoir that is a captivating blend of science and adventure. It won the 2019 Banff Mountain Book Award. Caroline and her partner travelled using their own power through some of the most rugged landscapes (and seascapes) from Bellingham, Washington to the Arctic Ocean north of Alaska. They even stopped in Nanaimo where I live! You can learn more about this book [here](#).

Mountain Education

ACCVI offers a wide variety of workshops and courses aimed at giving our members the technical and safety skills to get out there in the mountains safely. Courses are open to ACC members in good standing only. You are welcome to join the section of you would like to enroll in one or more of ACCVI's courses.

Education and Courses: <http://accvi.ca/programs/education/>
Is there something you would like to see? Contact education@accvi.ca

Please see the [trip schedule](#) for information about upcoming education events.



News from ACC National

By Christine Fordham

Hot Off the Press! The *2020 State of The Mountains Report* ... see how many ACCVI members you can see on page 28 at the ACC's 2019 Westfall General Mountaineering Camp!

The report offers expertise and photographs to tell the stories of how change in Canadian mountain environments is affecting people and ecosystems.

The 2020 edition features:

- the impacts of a changing climate interacting with the risks and hazards associated with landslides, volcanic activity, and melting glaciers
- underwater and underground geology
- arctic change, the effects of mining, and monitoring mountain biodiversity
- and much more download or see the flip book at <https://www.stateofthemountains.ca/reports>

Executive Episodes:

A quick update of ACC life from the chair's chair

An early indicator of fall is often the Harvest Moon, the full moon that occurs closest to the equinox in September. (Supposedly its light helped farmers bring in the late summer crops.) But this year we have to wait till 1 October to get the Harvest Moon - so maybe we can claim a few more weeks of summer yet. However long it lasts, I hope the summer continues to bring chances for you to enjoy local activities with close family and friends. Not too tough being stuck on Vancouver Island, is it.

After months of living with the pandemic's impact, it seems our focus has slowly been shifting to thinking about what we can do responsibly. That was certainly the theme for our executive meeting this week. So let's start with a quick look at what we can look forward to in the months ahead.

i) Trip schedule

The coming weeks should provide some great opportunities for hikes and mountain trips, and we'd love to see more leaders offering trips for the schedule. Our guidelines are that groups should be of 6 people total, use the new Covid waiver from our website, and follow provincial guidelines with respect to protocols and distancing. Some leaders have effectively used Zoom for an online introductory meeting with the group before the event - just let me know if you want that set up.

And see page 18 for how our leadership contest provides another incentive to get out and lead a trip!

ii) Online slide shows: our new virtual community

Online slide shows have become an effective way for us to maintain some sense of community. A huge plus of this format is that people can join regardless of geographic distance. In June we were treated to an astronomer's guide to the summer skies by Karun Thanjavur, and in July we were taken on a high-speed tour of Robie Macdonald's four decades of Arctic marine research and mountain explorations. Our thanks also to Neil Han for setting up the software and hosting the evenings. Looking ahead, we have four exciting, inspiring, and informative virtual slide shows coming up (see page 3).

Please check the trip schedule on the website for updated details. Login information will be sent by membership email the week before. We're always open for new ideas and volunteers to contribute, so please don't be shy, let me know if you would like to present.

iii) Photo contest

This annual favourite will run online this year on 29 October, and details of how and when to submit your photos will be sent soon. Note you will have to be present (virtually speaking) in order to join the coveted ranks of jury. And new this year, we are replacing the behemoth trophies with outdoor store gift voucher prizes - higher stakes!

iv) Hišim'yawił

The hut committee has been working very hard navigating the complex and fluctuating considerations around a plan for the re-opening of Hišim'yawił. The province has now approved our extensive Safe Operating Plan, and the hut committee is working on implementation. An opening date and further information will be announced shortly.

Laurence Philippsen 1955 - 2020

In early July we reported with great sadness that Laurence had not returned from a solo trip in Strathcona Park, and extensive searches by SAR teams had failed to locate him. Lindsay Elms and Val Wootton organised a follow-up search, and in a show of solidarity and support from the Island mountaineering community, 45 people furthered the effort on a particularly dismal weather weekend. Several weeks later Laurence's body was found on the south side of Mt Laing.

A full tribute to Laurence by Lindsay Elms and Val Wootton is on page 22, and there is also an excellent article in the current Island Bushwhacker Annual on page 71. Laurence is much missed in this community and beyond; we offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

Island Bushwhacker Annual 2019 and 2020

The 2019 edition has now been distributed to those who requested and paid the subsidised cost of a hard copy. As you know, this is the first time we have printed the journal in full colour, and the first time we have asked members to contribute to the cost, so we are certainly eager to hear your feedback. And if anyone is having non-buyer's remorse, let me know as we did order a few extra copies - I can get one to you for \$15.



Splendid in colour - IBA 2019. Photo by Catrin Brown

And now plans turn to the 2020 edition. Yes, that's a prompt - please do consider writing up your mountain adventures for posterity. To help streamline the submissions, we are developing a template with essential fields into which you will paste your content, and we will let you know as soon as it is available online. With the hiatus in trips this year, perhaps this is also the time to write up those adventures that you never quite got round to in previous years. Our editor Rob Macdonald will be happy to hear from you at bushwhacker@accvi.ca

Backcountry access

As members of the 'Right to Roam' group of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FM-CBC), Barb Baker and I met with the forest management company Mosaic in June. It was an opportunity for us to present our case (again) on how their extensive gate closures restrict our activities in the mountains. Subsequent correspondence with Mosaic has led to some cautiously promising progress in establishing a limited access agreement. Much as we hope such an agreement can be a constructive step towards broader agreements and solutions, we remain strongly committed to the true goals of the Right to Roam group, seeking "public corridors to public spaces". See Barb's report on page 13 for more information on access issues.

The significant increase in the number of people heading to the backcountry on the Island this summer has raised all kinds of anecdotal comment and discussion on social and mainstream media. While there are many positives about this surge in interest in the wilderness, it also presents heightened challenges. Chief amongst these are i) campfires in the alpine and sub-alpine, and ii) human waste and toilet paper disposal. Clearly, as a section we have a role - and indeed a responsibility - to step up our game with more education. Here are some ideas, and I'd love to hear of others:

- We'll develop a new section on the website dedicated to 'Leave No Trace' principles, with some specifics about best practice, dos and don'ts, information links etc.
- We'll also suggest that a quick review of Leave No Trace principles is a part of all trip leaders' discussion with participants, even on day trips.
- Where permitted, we can consider extra signage in some key areas.

Take-away messages:

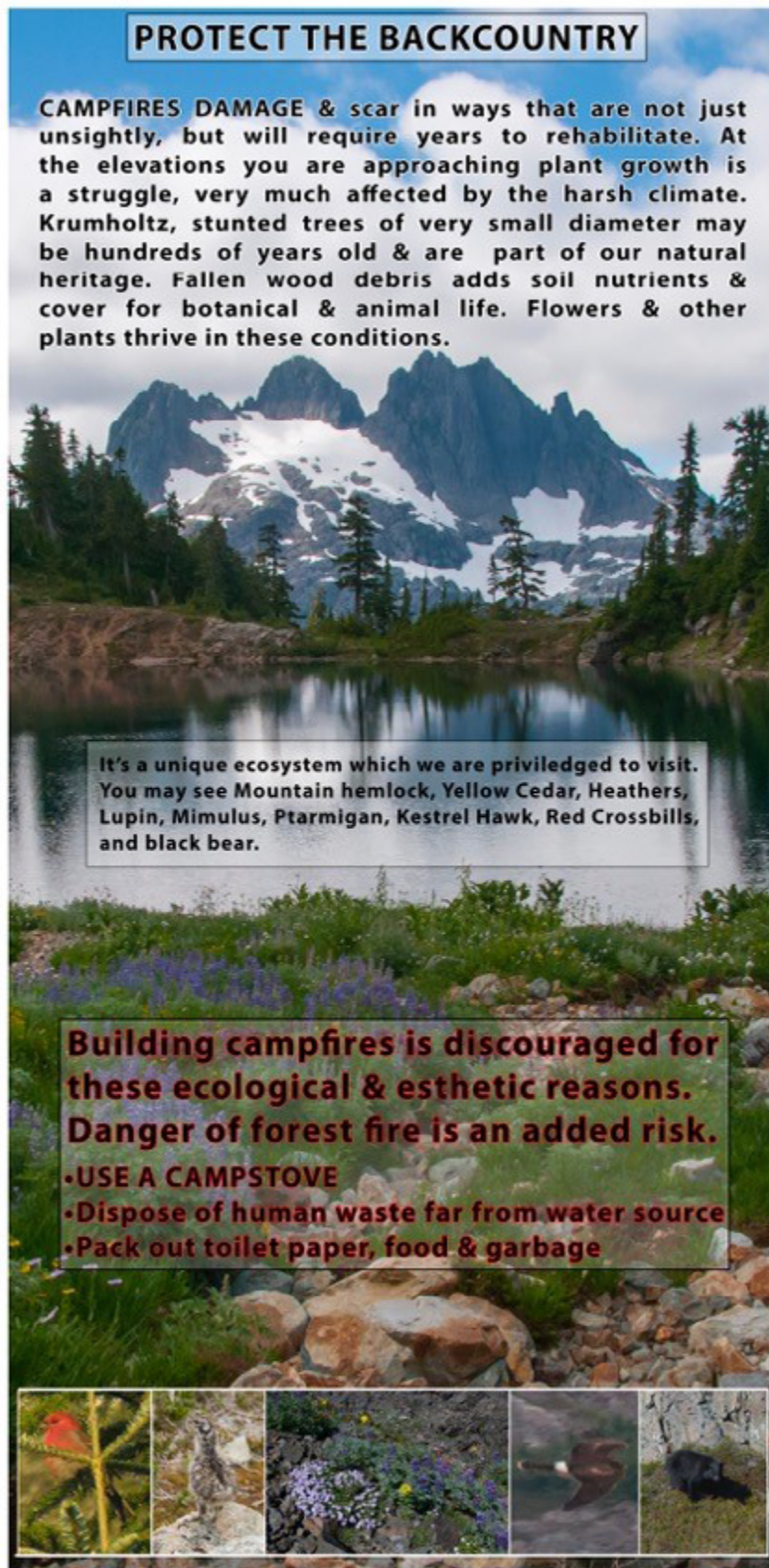
- Do not make a fire in the alpine, regardless of what may be 'allowed.'

See: <https://midislandindependent.ca/2020/08/13/alpine-environments-threatened-by-increased-number-of-campfires/?fbclid=IwAR3bjDbmOuwHpQo6l07D1CFL37sHcKZ8SLOG6w22GpZkJhxsNgXhth2KbI>



Sticker developed by ACCVI executive and distributed to members, more available on request.

- Bury waste away from water sources and pack out your toilet paper (suggest keeping a small ziploc bag handy for this purpose).



PROTECT THE BACKCOUNTRY

CAMPFIRES DAMAGE & scar in ways that are not just unsightly, but will require years to rehabilitate. At the elevations you are approaching plant growth is a struggle, very much affected by the harsh climate. Krumholtz, stunted trees of very small diameter may be hundreds of years old & are part of our natural heritage. Fallen wood debris adds soil nutrients & cover for botanical & animal life. Flowers & other plants thrive in these conditions.

It's a unique ecosystem which we are privileged to visit. You may see Mountain hemlock, Yellow Cedar, Heathers, Lupin, Mimulus, Ptarmigan, Kestrel Hawk, Red Crossbills, and black bear.

Building campfires is discouraged for these ecological & esthetic reasons. Danger of forest fire is an added risk.

- USE A CAMPSTOVE
- Dispose of human waste far from water source
- Pack out toilet paper, food & garbage

Call for input

In the south Island, the CRD is inviting public input into parks management plans for East Sooke, Matheson Lake and Roche Cove Regional Parks. This is a chance to have our say in the importance of preserving these natural places. Follow the links below to learn more and to take the surveys, which are open until 18 September:

[East Sooke Regional Park](#)

[Matheson Lake/Roche Cove Regional Parks](#)

Thanks for adding your voice.

Coming soon

I'm very happy to report that we are hoping to have a new function added to our website shortly - that is the ability for members to post trip reports directly to our site. The goal is a more inclusive platform than social media channels, which will also provide a greater ability to archive and search the posted material. Watch this space.

Member news

• 'Don Forest Service' Awards

Warmest congratulations to Barb Baker and to Jes Scott, who have both been awarded the ACC Don Forest Service Award for 2019:

Barb is recognised for her many years of tenacious work representing our interests with private forest companies and with local governments.

Through her effective communication,

she has established an extensive local network, which was a significant help with the logistics in building Hišimýawił from 2016 - 2018.

Jes stepped up in 2017 to build us a shiny brand new website after the original crashed irredeemably. She has since helped accvi.ca develop into an efficient, rich resource base. Jes has also worked hard to increase the diversity and inclusivity in our section, particularly by organising trips for the LGBTQ community.

We will find suitable ways to celebrate these awards with Barb and Jes in the fall.

- ***Growing families***

Our executive committee continues to add to the family! Happy congratulations to our communications coordinator Kathy Kutzer and Skafti Sinclair on the birth of their son Tryggvi William Sinclair on 14 June. And also to our trip scheduler Karun Thanjavur and Helen Kirk who were delighted to welcome their daughter Annabel Kantha Sybil Karunananth on 4 August. We look forward to meeting these delightful new members of the community soon!



Tryggvi with Skafti and Kathy.



Annabel with Karun and Helen.

- ***A delayed thank you***

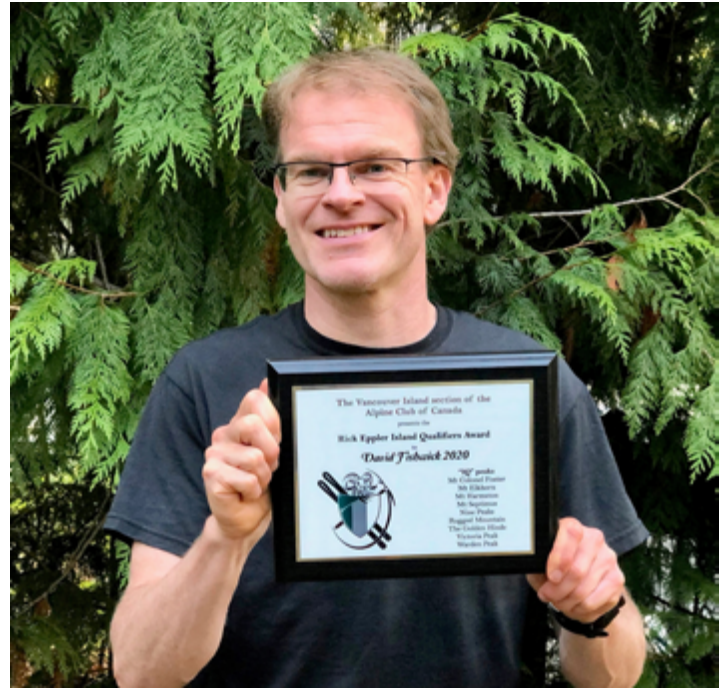
We recently found a good way to present Mary Sanseverino with a token of appreciation that has been waiting since the February AGM for an in-person event. Mary was sincerely thanked for her dedicated work on our newsletter over 7 years, in which she drove its evolution into a magazine quality production, helping to keep our community connected and informed. As you are reading this in the newsletter, there is proof enough that the legacy continues!

- ***‘Rick Eppler IQs’ Awards***

Congratulations to Dave Fishwick who received his ‘Rick Eppler IQs Award’ after successfully completing the nine Island Qualifier summits this summer.



Mary enjoys her expressions of thanks from the section on a perfect day in the Sooke hills. Photo by Mike Whitney



Dave receives his award in Victoria. Photo by Catrin Brown

Congratulations also to Barry Hansen who recently completed his IQ quest and will be presented with his award soon.

Executive events

The ACCVI executive met on 31 August 2020, and will meet again in mid October 2020. Please send me any items you would like to add to the agenda. Minutes of all meetings are posted on the website [here](#).

Name that Island lake

The answers to this issues's skill testing question are on the last page.



i)



ii)



iii)



iv)

Lake photos i), ii), iii) and iv) by Catrin Brown, taken in 2020.

And by the way, re the summer newsletter's satin flower collage: the odd one out was the 7 petalled specimen (And no one got it right).

Wishing everyone happy fall days, Thanksgiving celebrations, and a rare blue moon on Hallowe'en. Be kind, be calm, stay safe - and see you back here in early December.

Happy trails

Catrin

Catrin Brown

chair@accvi.ca



Remains of a campfire on Flower Ridge. Photo by Janelle Curtis

Access and Environment

By Barb Baker

Mosaic/ACCVI pilot access agreement currently nearing completion.

Mosaic is also in ongoing talks about access at the government level but there is nothing to announce yet.

Recently completed access trail at Cumberland had land access agreement with Mosaic. Could we be seeing a change of attitude from the company?

Mosaic gate interactive map continues to give weekend access info. For Cameron Connector to Arrowsmith, Moriarity, etc, the icon is not easy to find. Zoom in.

<https://www.mosaicforests.com/access>

Beauforts east & west accesses and Oshinow Lake access to Strathcona Park have been gated for fire hazard. Hope that might change after the recent rains.

See <https://www.leavenotrace.ca/home> for more suggestions on how to minimize our impacts in the backcountry.



Subalpine forest on Flower Ridge. Photo by Janelle Curtis

Portrait View: About the Island Bushwhacker Annual

By Robie Macdonald

As you can tell from the last Bushwhacker Annual, Issue # 47, we are almost at the 50-year mark for this publication. Although this proves the staying power of our section's newsletter, it is remarkable how many hands have passed the editor's torch along the way. Cynthia Tansley started the process back in 1973, if I recall correctly. At that time it was just a printed page or two with information on various things including trips. Jim Weston took over in 1979 and during his editorship, he substantially improved the presentation and the delivery – there were four issues per year all photo-offset. Jim handed the Bushwhacker to me in 1987, providing me with no end of instruction on how to follow his lead. During this time period, we laid up each issue using oversize pages with light blue borders to guide the placement of text and images. Basically, this was an inexpensive printing process done entirely in black and white. Simple it may have been, but it did absorb quite a bit of fiddling time for each issue.

While editor (1987-1990), I made three changes on the presentation: I used LaTeX to produce the text columns, I organized the Bushwhacker into an Annual outlay that incorporated mostly the section's trips organized into regions (Vancouver Island, Mainland, South of the Border, Far Afield), and produced three or so Newsletters during the year. I did this because there were two fundamentally different tasks for our Newsletters: 1) To keep a vibrant record of our alpine climbing, especially on the Island and 2) To provide timely information about club doings. One could hardly wait a year to find out that the BBQ was to occur three months ago, and yet it would have been cumbersome to present trip reports throughout the year in scattered, disorganized dribs and drabs. The IBW has continued since that time with the same sort of structure, but of course the layout has much improved. We continued with Black and White right up to 1999, but then started to put out a few more dollars to do a coloured cover and make the Annual look a little finer. I had handed off the editorial duties to Nick Krishanowski in 1991, and from him it went to a number of people. I think Viggo Holm really made a big step in the layout and introduced a splendid colour cover. Sandy Stewart also contributed six years of editing and brought his professional skills into play. Since that time the Bushwhacker Annual, which has colour covers and with some colour pages inside, has been maintained by Martin Smith, Cedric Zala and Sean McIntyre and, for the past two years, me. Presently, printing the annual issue runs us to a little over \$3000. It is in all an amazing unbroken chain of individuals who have stepped up to the plate to produce the Bushwhacker – both the Newsletters and the Annual.

With modern Application tools, like InDesign, times have changed. We now have not only a very nice looking Bushwhacker Annual, but Mary Sanseverino elevated the 'informative but staid' newsletter to something very elegant with an obvious personal touch. But of course only she, and anyone else who has tried putting together these sorts of things, knows how much work that is. Welcome Janelle who has taken on this daunting task.

So, what does the Bushwhacker Annual editor actually do? First, there is a beating of the bushes for articles (assisted by the executive). Second there is an editing and collating of all the material that comes in. This involves removing all the gratuitous formatting down to a plain text, light editing to fix typos, etc., fixing headers to follow common format, sorting the articles by date and location, and clarifying any mysteries with the authors. Basically, produce one big, long piece of text.

Third, all the images have to be rendered to greater or lesser degree in Lightroom/Photoshop to straighten them, crop sometimes, improve light balance and render to suitable print density (300 dpi). Black and

Bushwhacker Covers



Photo of IBA covers by Rob Macdonald.

1996. Don Berryman attempting 5040 on skis (Photo by Sandy Briggs); Back cover: Climbers approach the summit of Wedge (Gerta Smythe).
1997. Jules Thompson on Redwall, Mackenzie Range (Photo by Doug Goodman); Back cover: Tom Patton testing a new snow bridge on Baker's Coleman glacier (Photo by Greg Gordon).
1998. January 1st, 1999 on top of one of Vancouver Island's most celebrated peaks, Mount Arrowsmith (Photo by Peter Rothermel); Back Cover: Richard Keltie admiring the view of Prestly Peak from Valhalla Lake in the Valhallas (Photo by Kayla Stevenson).
1999. Approximately 50 m below the summit of Mt. Whymper (Photo by Richard Keltie); Back cover: Cayoosh Peak from 7 or 8 Mile Lake (Photo by Margaret Brown).
2000. Tak Ogasawara on the northeast peak of Mt. Colonel Foster. Landslide Lake and Mt. Elkhorn in the distance (Photo by Peter Rothermel); Back cover: Camp in June Valley, Baffin Island (Photo by Claire Ebendinger).
2001. Mount Arrowsmith west ridge (Photo by Peter Rothermel); Back cover: Stephenn Harnig climbing on Mt. Colonel Foster (Photo by Hinrich Schaefer).
2002. Martin Davis climbing on the gendarme on the Kain route on Bugaboo Spire (Photo by Marcello Laca); Back cover: Rick Johnson on Castle Towers (Photo by Rob Macdonald).
2003. Tlupana Range, photo looking SW towards Mt Alava in the background (Photo by Jules Thomson); Back cover: Camp at the base of Waddington's NW summit, Katy Holm way in the distance (Photo by Karen McNeill).
2004. Peter Rothermel belays Tom Carter back from the "Dark Side" of Warden Peak (Photo by Doug Hurrell); Back cover: Torge Schuemann setting a belay on the Lost Gully of Mt Arrowsmith (Photo by Sandy Briggs).
2005. Charles Turner and John Young on the North Ridge of Wedge Mountain (Photo by Christine Fordham); Back cover: Winter route on Mt Alexandra (Photo by Tony Vaughn).
2006. Lupines catch the morning sun in front of Golden Hinde (Photo by Jain Alcock-White); Back Cover: Mark Thibodeau on the Icebox, Mt Arrowsmith (Photo by Christine Fordham).
2007. A mosaic image of central Vancouver Island created from images taken by the Landsat 7 satellite; Back cover: Continuation of the mosaic.
2008. Charles Turner crossing the snow couloirs on Warden Peak (Photo by Tony Vaughn).
2009. Looking out from Springer Peak to Johnstone Strait, June 2009 (Photo by Dave Campbell).
2010. Climbing the Thumb; Alava-Bate Sanctuary, 2010 VI Section summer camp (Photo by Tony Vaughn).
2011. Nine Peaks in all its glory (Photo by Ahren Rankin).
2012. Charles Turner descending from Mount Tom Taylor (Photo by Dave Campbell).
2013. Griswold Pass tarn (Photo by Liz Williams).
2014. Rambler Junior (Photo by Dave Suttill).
2015. Viewing Rugged Mountain (Photo by Valerie Wootton).
2016. Roger Taylor crossing Garibaldi Lake (Photo by Roxanne Stedman).
2017. Hiking under an African sun in South Africa (Photo by Rick Hudson).
2018. Ryan Van Horne topping out on pitch 3 of the South Face Route on Grattan (Photo by Hunter Lee).
2019. Braiding the slopes at Hišimýawił (Photo by Gary Croome).

White conversion is required if we print in B&W. Otherwise the CMYK versions have to be made in Photoshop for a print version. Since we are wanting to have a full colour version on the web, we do one version of the Bushwhacker Annual in RGB. Also, all images have to be sized properly in height and width to fit the two-column format, and captions/photo credits need to be organized and set against each picture.

Fourth, layout using InDesign. Here the text is inserted and then figures and captions placed into the text from front to back. As they say back East, this is a right, some fiddly piece of work. Often there is needed some sort of last-minute text editing or image resizing to fix awkward breaks. The cover and the main body are done as two separately tasks and are put together during the printing process. Cedric Zala has produced a “Dummie’s Guide to the Bushwhacker Annual.” He does not know how many times I’ve gotten down on my knees and thanked him.

So, after about two months all told, we have another annual. I have less hair.

Island Bushwhacker Annual Historical Editors and Committee Members				
Issue(s)	Year(s)	Editor	Design and Layout	Bushwhacker Committee
46-48	2018-2020	Robie MacDonald		
44-45	2016-2017	Sean McIntyre	Sean McIntyre	Lindsay Elms, Rick Hudson, Rob Macdonald
42-43	2014-2015	Cedric Zala	Cedric Zala	Lindsay Elms, Rick Hudson, Sandy Briggs, Rob Macdonald
41	2013	Martin Smith	Sandy Stewart	Lindsay Elms, Rick Hudson, Sandy Briggs, Rob Macdonald
40	2012	Sandy Stewart	Sandy Stewart	
38-39	2010-2011	Sandy Stewart	Sandy Stewart	Lindsay Elms, Sandy Briggs, Russ Moir, Martin Smith, Rob Macdonald
36-37	2008-2009	Sandy Stewart	Sandy Stewart	Lindsay Elms, Sandy Briggs, Russ Moir, Rob Macdonald
35	2007	Sandy Stewart	Viggo Holm	Lindsay Elms, Sandy Briggs, Russ Moir, Rob Macdonald
34	2006	Viggo Holm	Rob Macdonald	Judith Holm, Ian Brown
33	2005	Viggo Holm	Rob Macdonald	Judith Holm, Ian Brown
31-32	2003-2004	Viggo Holm	Rob Macdonald	Ian Brown
30	2002	Viggo Holm	Rob Macdonald	Chris Pepler, Anita Vaughn
29	2001	Viggo Holm	Rob Macdonald	Larry Talarico, Anita Vaughn
28	2000	Michael Kuzyk	Rob Macdonald	Larry Talarico, Viggo Holm
27	1999	Michael Kuzyk	Michael Kuzyk	Larry Talarico, Rob Macdonald
25-26	1997-1998	Michael Kuzyk	Michael Kuzyk?	Russ Moir, Kayla Stevenson, Michael Kuzyk
24	1996	Michael Kuzyk	Michael Kuzyk?	Russ Moir, Kayla Stevenson, Michael Kuzyk, John Pratt
22-23	1994-1995		Kayla Stevenson	Russ Moir, Martin Davis
21	1993		Carol Stewart	Russ Moir, Martin Davis
20	1992	Nick Krischanowsky		Martin Conder, Martin Davis

Issue(s)	Year(s)	Editor	Design and Layout	Bushwhacker Committee
19	1991	Nick Krischanowsky		Martin Conder
18	1990	Rob Macdonald		Julie Hendson, Nick Krischanowsky
15-17	1987-1989	Rob Macdonald		Julie Hendson
14	1986	Jim Weston	Jim Weston	Rob Macdonald, Julie Hendson
7-13	1979-1985	Jim Weston	Jim Weston	
5-6	1977-1978	Mike Sampson		
4	1976	Cynthia Tansley		Mike Sampson
1-3	1973-1975	Cynthia Tansley?		



Shepherd Ridge just coming out of the mist. Photo by Janelle Curtis



ACCVI's "LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION CONTEST" IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THIS CRAZY COVID YEAR



There are still 4 months to join this year's **LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION CONTEST** and a chance to win the same great prizes including the coveted "Top Trip Leader" Arcteryx Soft Shell jacket and "outdoor store gift certificates". See details at <https://accvi.ca/trip-leaders/leader-recognition-program/>.

As a reminder, there is one point per trip day for outdoor trips and ½ a point for slide shows and indoor –zoom type events and cancelled trips. So for example, an overnight trip counts as 2 points. This is also a great opportunity to put on a trip to your favorite place on Vancouver Island, on the schedule. This may even take your badges to the next level. See your cumulative points and the contest rules at <https://accvi.ca/trip-leaders/leader-recognition-program/current-leadership-points/>.

Trip guidelines include a limit of 6 people and follow provincial Covid guidelines. These are posted at <https://accvi.ca/covid-19/>. If you feel you can offer our members a socially distant hike, climb, ski trip or zoom event, on beautiful Vancouver Island please do so. All our members will appreciate it. Remember to post the trip or event on the schedule by emailing schedule@accvi.ca and send in waivers to our librarian at librarian@accvi.ca so your points count. There are quite a few trips from earlier this year, that don't have matching waivers so a quick way to gain points is sending in those waivers to our librarian Tom, to make them count. Good Luck!

Contact leaderpoints@accvi.ca with any questions or comments, including errors or omissions to the below list, of 2020 Points to August.

Gilbert, Peter (5), Kelsie Warmer (5), Scott Collins (4.5), Christine Fordham (4), Jes Scott (3), Erika Ellefsen (3), Janelle Curtis (3), Peggy Taylor (2.5), Alois Schonenberger (2), Martin Hoffmann (1.5), Shawn Hedges (1.5), Keith Battersby (1.5), Greg Rowe (1.5), Gary Croome (1.5), Catrin Brown (1), Josh Slatkoff (1), Tak Ogasawara (1), Roger Taylor (1), Kristen Walsh (1), Brianna Cook-Coates (0.5), Nadja Steiner (0.5) Jeff Beddoes (0.5), ElizabeWilliams (0.5), Brian Parsons (0.5), Karun Thanjavur (0.5), Lenka Visnovska (0.5), Peter Morgan (0.5), Lindsay Elms (0.5), Robie Macdonald (0.5), Laura Darling (0.5), Mike Knippel (0.5), Colin Mann (0.5)



Landscape View: Island Mountain Ramblers

By John Young

The Island Mountain Ramblers club was formed in 1958, with Syd Watts being one of the founding members. Although it is based out of Nanaimo, members hail from all parts of Vancouver Island.

Our primary objectives are backcountry mountaineering and coastal trips, and to work for the preservation of parks and wilderness areas. We are a club of amateur enthusiasts who love sharing outdoor experiences with people that want to develop their skills. The club offers a variety of activities throughout the year, including easy hikes and challenging climbs, backcountry ski trips and snowshoeing outings, sport-climbing at local crags, and education opportunities. We



Golden Hinde Traverse - July 2020. Photo by Michael Paskevicius



Lowrie Bay, Cape Scott - June 2020. Photo by John Young

explore both remote backcountry locations where you'll need your navigation skills, and some established routes with boot tracks to follow. Members range from old to young, fit and not so fit, climbers and hikers. But they all love the outdoors and want to explore more of Vancouver Island.

The club, after appearing almost dead 15 years ago when the membership plummeted to less than 40 members, has seen a resurgence in recent years, and there are now close to 200 members. Whereas even 10 years ago our schedule was meagre, in

2019 we had close to 200 days of outings over the course of the year, ranging from short day trips to multi-day excursions. In recent years we have had seaside outings to Cape Scott, the North Coast Trail, the West Coast Trail, Nootka Island, and the Hesquiat Peninsula, among others. In addition, recent mountain trips have included the Golden Hinde Traverse, the Flower Ridge Trail, and the Bedwell Trail to Cream Lake. Moreover, Matthew Lettington and Phil Jackson, two of our more ambitious members, are knocking off all the peaks in "Island Alpine," often entailing hours driving up Island to climb lesser-known mountains. They each have close to 200 summits to their credit.

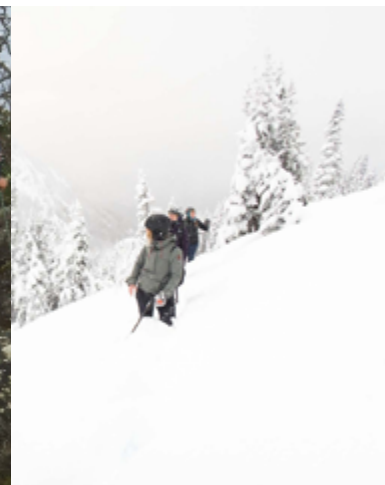


katzenjammer. Photo by Matthew Lettington

We have had an active education component spearheaded by Matt Lettington, including Wilderness Navigation, Avalanche Safety Training, and Mountain Improvisation. Matt has personally hosted map and compass refreshers, workshops in rappelling, trip planning, trip leading, using Garmin Basecamp for GPS track management, and using crampons and ice axes. Dean Williams has also led introduction to rock climbing workshops at local crags.



*Rappel workshop at Piper's Lagoon.
Photo by Matthew Lettington*



*Mountaineering skills workshop.
Photo by Matthew Lettington*

District of Nanaimo for the next five years to make improvements to the Mt. Benson trail. To date, the club has worked on the section known as the “straight to the top” route. The Ramblers identified an ideal route, moved markers, cleared rocks, filled holes and diverted water as much as possible. The work will continue when the Pandemic abates.



Mount Benson Project - July 2020. Photos by Matthew Lettington

The Island Mountain Ramblers encourages prospective members to join two day trips prior to joining the club. After you have completed your two hikes, you will need to join the club to participate in any further events. Respectfully, guests are not permitted on multi-day trips.

See: <http://islandmountainramblers.com>



My Friend

By Heidi Mulbacher, Campbell River

Laurence and I were climbing buddies for many years. We met at the climbing gym in Campbell River every Wednesday and Friday at 4 p.m. Most of the time we talked about climbing. When there was a hard new route, we inspected it carefully, then warm up quickly, so we could try it. On the hard routes we had to remember the sequence of many moves in a row, and we jokingly said that all that memorizing would fend off old age dementia. Climbing was serious business for us. We were competitive, but we managed to keep it positive and inspiring. Trying as hard as we could was fun. Laurence told me about his hiking adventures with his friends and about all the mountains he still wanted to climb which were many. He proudly told me about the university courses his wife Loraine took online and he told me about his sons, how smart they are and how he was so proud of them.

He was the happiest when he was talking about his two grandchildren. He already made plans of how and when to introduce his young granddaughter to climbing. One time he took her on a walk and it was a true adventure for the two of them, as exciting as climbing a big mountain. It is so sad that it was their last hike together.

I will miss you Laurence.



*Laurence on Triple Peak.
Photo by Heidi Mulbacher*



*Laurence on Triple Peak.
Photo by Heidi Mulbacher*



*Laurence on Triple Peak.
Photo by Heidi Mulbacher*

A Search for our Lost Friend, Laurence Philippsen

By Lindsay Elms and Val Wootton



*Laurence near the summit of Triple Peak NW.
Photo by Lindsay Elms*

Sunday July 5. I received an unexpected call from a friend, Andrew Schissler in Campbell River. Andrew is quiet-spoken and has a calm tone to his voice, but this morning he wasn't calling for a chit-chat. He quickly got to the point. He was calling on behalf of the Campbell River Ground Search and Rescue (SAR) of which he is an integral member. He said that he knew that I not only climbed regularly with Laurence Philippsen, but that I was very familiar with the terrain on Elk Mountain, and Mounts Laing, Filberg and Cobb. He was sorry to inform me that Laurence was overdue from a solo trip in the area and that they had been searching for him the last two days and were continuing with the search today. He was asking if I had time to go over the route with him and maybe suggest spots where I thought might be possible sites to look for Laurence.

Laurence had started out on Tuesday morning on a three-day trip hoping to ascend Mounts Filberg, Cobb and Haig Brown. It was an ambitious trip but it wouldn't be too much of a stretch for Laurence. Unfortunately, no one had heard from Laurence and on Friday morning, July 3, the RCMP had been notified that he was overdue. I was stunned to think that Laurence was missing. I quickly went

over the traverse in my head. I pointed out that Laurence had day-tripped Mount Laing last year and he had a clear view of his proposed route. I had also discussed the route with him during one of our climbs. I told Andrew that Laurence would have texted home once he was on the ridge where there was good cell coverage. I had a gut feeling that something had happened to him on the first day before reaching the ridge. I finished asking Andrew to keep me informed and said that I was available to fly in and help with the search. I felt dazed and wondered if the conversation I just had was real. I quickly texted Val to appraise her of the situation. She would want to know: "I just got a call from Andrew in CR and Laurence is missing somewhere along Laing, Filberg, Cobb. Overdue and hasn't called out. No sign of him anywhere. Not good!" For the rest of the afternoon I kept going over the different scenarios in my head, but kept coming up blank. Later in the evening Andrew called and asked me to be in Campbell River in the morning to assist in the search. They still hadn't found Laurence by the end of that day.

Monday July 6. I drove to the Search and Rescue office in Campbell River where I met many familiar faces. I was glad that so many people were offering their services to look for Laurence even though most of



Laurence on the summit of Mt Ginger Goodwin with Vanessa, Rich and Val. Photo by Lindsay Elms

them didn't know him. I discussed with Andrew my thoughts regarding where to search for Laurence based on my knowledge of the area and of Laurence. I then met with Paul Berry, the Comox Valley Ground Search and Rescue leader. Paul went over the information he had and told me that Laurence's vehicle was found on the logging roads on Elk Mountain and that Laurence had the tracks from George Butcher's GPS. George was a friend of many of us from the Alpine Club and had done a trip to Matchlee Mountain with Laurence last year. Just two weeks ago George had attempted Mount Filberg and had sent his tracks to Laurence. He suggested to Laurence to take this lower route through the forest as it would avoid going over the summits of Elk Mountain and Mount Laing again and would probably put him closer to the ridge north of Filberg in a shorter time. Paul said he had crews on the ground covering the route through the forest, but he wanted to send me up onto Mount Laing with Rod Szasz, Marc Lyster, Laurence Foucault and one other. We met the helicopter at the Campbell River Spit and soon we were in the air flying towards the clouds that hopefully weren't too thick and allow us to land at a site I had in mind on the east shoulder of Mount Laing just a few minutes from the summit. Unfortunately, we couldn't land at the intended site, but we found another landing zone not too far away where the pilot was able to drop us off. A couple of minutes after the helicopter left, all was quiet as we sat in the middle of the beautiful mountains of Strathcona Park. We spent the day searching the areas I considered the most likely places an accident might occur, but by late afternoon when we were plucked off the ridge near Mount Filberg there was still no sign of Laurence's whereabouts.

Tuesday July 7. After four days of intense searching in the alpine and in the forest, the search was called off. On Facebook, some members of the climbing community were asking why it was called off after only four days of searching. A search in the Paradise Meadows area a few years ago went on for a much longer period, but the difference was items from the missing person kept being found. In the search for Laurence, not a single clue as to where he was or what had happened was found. A huge amount of ground had been covered on foot by searchers and search dogs, and the helicopter had flown over much of the search area. Where was

he? That evening my climbing friend Rod Szasz, who was on the search from the Nanaimo Search and Rescue team, phoned Val and I and we went over the map trying to determine what other possible routes Laurence might have considered taking.

Wednesday July 8. Rod, Val and I continued pondering over the whereabouts of Laurence and talked again in the morning. Rod had all the SAR tracks from the previous four days and there appeared to be one area that hadn't been covered. All three of us felt that it was worth a shot to try and re-activate the search for one or two more days. Rod explained what we would have to do to have the search reopened was to talk to SAR and explain why we think this area should be looked at based on our collective knowledge of Laurence and the terrain. We also needed permission to speak on behalf of the Philippsen family which they readily agreed to. If SAR agree with our ideas, then they go to the RCMP and pass on the information and ask for a reopening of the search. SAR did agree to our supposition and were taking it to the RCMP. While we were waiting their decision, we decided to go ahead with a ground search of our own on the weekend. People were using Facebook Messenger to contact me saying they wanted to help search for Laurence. They had seen the newspaper article that was posted on the Facebook pages of both the Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Island (ACCVI) section and the Vancouver Island Climbing & Mountaineering group. Without officially asking for help with a search we were getting lots of interest. We contacted Catrin Brown, the ACCVI chair, to explain about the search we were organizing. She immediately jumped on board offering support. Catrin offered to send a notice out to club members and then coordinate the volunteers from Victoria therefore giving us more time to organize what we had to do. It was fantastic the number of people from the climbing community who felt the loss of a fellow climber and knew the value of having closure not just for themselves but Laurence's family.

Thursday July 9. The whole day was a blur. People were constantly messaging me offering their help. Many of them were trying to get a picture in their head of the location of the search and what had transpired to date. I did my best to give them all as much information as I could. In the meantime, Val was arranging forms that we could email out to those wanting to help. It wasn't a waiver, but we needed all their contact information. We also sent them a detailed list of what they needed to bring and asked them to tick the boxes on the sheet and bring it with them on the weekend. We wanted to ensure that they had what they needed to be safe in the bush while out searching. We didn't need another mishap. Also included was a map showing



Volunteer searchers getting organized in the rain on 11 July. Photo by Janelle Curtis

the logging roads up Elk Mountain for those who might be driving up Friday evening to camp. It was mid-day when Paul Berry notified us that the RCMP had agreed to reopen the search for two more days. We spent time with SAR doing an online zoom meeting looking at the maps with the tracks from the previous four days of searching. We decided on areas that they would concentrate their search and they asked us to keep our searchers out of the area as they were bringing in a number of SAR and RCMP K9 teams. We also marked out areas on the map that SAR felt needed to be searched by our teams. Unfortunately, the weather reports were not looking good for the weekend.

Friday July 10. By mid-morning we had 45 people on the search list. Val and I kept the family updated with how things were going and they felt overwhelmed by the response. At 3 p.m. I went down to the CVGSAR office and picked up a radio from Paul Berry so that we could stay in touch with him. He was impressed by the number of people volunteering and Val's detailed organizing skills. By 4 p.m. Val and I felt we had everything under control: everyone had the email with attachments, and we had a list of all those who offered help. We wanted a little down time so we drove up to the end of the logging road on Elk Mountain and camped. About a dozen friends showed up that evening and we all sat around the fire swapping climbing stories and laughing.

Saturday July 11. Unfortunately, we heard from SAR that due to the weather they could not fly in the K9 teams but would try again on Sunday. First thing that morning Rich Ronyecz and I drove down to the Big Den Recreation Area beside Upper Campbell Lake to rendezvous with the searchers from all over the island. It was heart-warming to see so many people especially when the weather wasn't the best. Car-pooling was arranged and then a convoy of vehicles headed up the logging road. When we all arrived at the "op centre" set up under a tarp between two vehicles Val, assisted by Janelle and Catrin, took all the forms and got everyone into groups of five or six people. Each team needed someone with a radio, a GPS and an emergency beacon. We didn't want people standing around for too long in the rain so Val quickly got them organized and passed them group by group to myself and Rod to be assigned their search area. Before the first team set off, Val read out a brief note from Laurence's family that they emailed to us Friday morning: "We continue to be astonished by the energy and determination shown by the hiking and climbing community in the search for Laurence. We are deeply touched and profoundly grateful for the efforts of each and every one of you. Please stay safe. The Philippsen family." It was an emotional moment reading it out and everyone paused to reflect for a minute. Eight teams headed out on pre-determined paths and although the weather wasn't very nice for the search everyone completed their task and returned safely, and given the circumstances, with a smile on their face, but with no fresh clues as to Laurence's whereabouts. The climbing community coming together at such a short notice and for such an unfortunate situation is very humbling. Thank you everyone.

Sunday July 12. Forty-two SAR members and five K9 teams were dropped into a remote area by helicopter and performed extensive searches through difficult wooded and technical terrain, but at the end of the day there were still no clues as to Laurence's whereabouts amidst the rugged mountains. Rod Szasz phoned Val and I that evening after returning from the search and told us that everyone was absolutely baffled. It was



*Lindsay and Rod taking a break in the rain on 11 July.
Photo by Janelle Curtis*



Val keeping us all organized during the search. Photo by Janelle Curtis

like Laurence had disappeared off the face of the earth. If his vehicle wasn't parked where it was, one might have thought he had gone somewhere else to climb. Sadly, it appeared as though this missing person wasn't going to have any closure and we were going to be left with many unanswered questions. It wouldn't be easy shaking him from our thoughts.



Laurence on the summit of kla-anch Peak. Photo by Lindsay Elms

During the months of July and August, friends went into the area with their own climbing objectives, but also knowing that Laurence was out there somewhere, and although not a pleasant thought, were hoping they might find him. Then on August 13, two climbers found Laurence's body not far from the ridge where he could have texted home on that first day of his trip. It was a bittersweet feeling, but now there was closure. We now knew where the accident had occurred and what most likely happened, but we didn't know why. All it took was an instant. A foot slipped or a hold came off in his hand. The weight of his pack probably pulled him over backwards. He stood no chance. This is how he left us, forever, with his dreams, his happiness. Sometimes words simply fail. His death has left everyone in shock. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family, and the mountaineering community mourns the loss of a friend. As mountaineers we know only too well that there is this side to mountaineering. There is passion, but also pain. I will remember Laurence for many things, but it was his love of adventure and his willingness to explore new places that brought us together in the mountains. I first met Laurence in 2013 on a work party to clear the trail to Rugged Mountain. We then did a trip in 2015 to Emerald Peak north of the Alava/Bate sanctuary. It was a little after Val's climbing accident in 2017 when I was looking for a regular climbing partner. Laurence was also looking at getting back into the mountains after his climbing competition accident and early retirement. It was a case of synchronicity. Laurence had worked his whole life up at Vernon Camp between Woss and Gold River and when his two boys were young, they used to go hiking in the area into some of the small beautiful lakes that nestled in the mountains to go fishing and swimming. Occasionally, he would climb some of the peaks with his cousin Ernie Klassen. Now he wanted to explore those mountains more thoroughly near where he had worked. With various other climbing friends, we climbed all the satellite peaks around Mount Maquilla, the three peaks of what we called Kla-anch Peak and nearby Mount Sebalhal. Then we started down the Tsitika Main climbing some of the obscure peaks surrounding Tsitika Mountain. The Bonanza Range was just across the valley so we did several day-trips scrambling around their summits. Then there were some climbs in the

Mackenzie Range and the Prince of Wales Range. There was a never-ending list of peaks to climb.

Laurence was meticulous in his research. He spent hours looking at Google Earth and plotting the roads on his GPS. When he wasn't climbing in the mountains, he could be found at the climbing wall in Campbell River, on average twice a week, with his gym partner Heidi Mulbacher. Together they climbed at a level higher than many of the younger jocks. Laurence also had his own goals and was keen to finish off his IQ's. One of his memorable climbs was the traverse of Mount Colonel Foster with Andreas Hinkkala. Andreas sent me a few words about the trip: "In 2015, I had the opportunity to complete the Colonel Foster traverse with Laurence. He was probably the fittest 60+ year-old climber I've ever met. He was a very experienced and low-key climber who never bothered discussing much about his climbing exploits. The year we did the traverse was an extremely hot summer and I remember getting truly cooked, while Laurence took it all in stride. Because of Laurence's comfort in soloing, we moved through the traverse fairly quickly and efficiently. We ended up bivying on the northeast summit due to lack of water anywhere else on the route. Unfortunately, not too long after the successful traverse Laurence broke his back during an indoor climbing competition. We kept in touch over the years, and had planned to head back out once his back was fully recovered. Laurence was an easy going yet incredibly tough climbing partner, and my only true regret is that we never returned to the alpine together again. He was an inspiration to me, and to this day I fondly reminisce of the Foster Traverse and the great partner I had for this trip." Laurence completed his IQ's in 2019. But Laurence didn't always have to climb at the higher level as he enjoyed taking new climbers to the mountains. He also loved going into the mountains with his two boys, when they could get away from their work, where they could just enjoy the views and to be together in nature. Laurence was also a devoted Grandfather. In the summer of 2019, Laurence was there to support Val in her return to the mountains and in September 2020 we were looking forward to going to England with Laurence and his wife Lorraine. Instead, Val and I will just have to remember all the good times we had together with Laurence in the mountains and as a friend. Rest in peace mate!

I will leave it to some of the members from the island's climbing community to have the final word:

He was a very unique person in all respects. When I first met him, he continually surprised me every time we went out - whether his tales from the glory days of logging or his last foray in the streets of some European capital. He was constantly story-telling and entertaining... very sad. (Rod Szasz)

Laurence always had a good story to tell. He was kind and always happy to share a smile. I enjoyed trading beta on climbs with him at the climbing gym on routes that were often much too difficult for me...but that he made look easy. I'm grateful that he was found and hope it can bring a degree of closure for his family. May he rest in peace. (Natasha Rafo)

I'm very sorry for the loss of your close friend. I didn't know Laurence but he was clearly an active and cherished member of our community. Hopefully finding him and bringing him back from the mountains he loved, to be closer to all those that loved him, will be a step toward the sad but eventual closure. (Phil Stone)

I didn't know Laurence, but felt inspired by what I had heard about him and his mountaineering expertise. I am sorry for the loss in the community and for all close loved ones who have been touched by this. (Dominique Klees-Themens)

Wandering through the thick bush up there during the search had me wondering if he would ever be found... with such a large area and no solid clues it made a sad and tragic situation seem desperate. I'm glad he was finally found so hopefully his family has some closure. Big thanks to everyone else who kept the search going. May he rest peacefully now with his spirit soaring among the misty mountains. (Garner Bergeron)

What great memories you two made together climbing so many peaks on the island. The man may be gone but his spirit will live on forever in the hills. They hold the heights they won. RIP. (Chris Wille)

RIP Laurence - you are much missed in this community and beyond. (Catrin Brown)

Rest easy brother. (Andrew Munoz)

Peaks south of McIver Creek

(18-22 June)

By Ramsay Dyer

This is a report of my exploration of the mountain south of upper McIver Creek. It was a rewarding trip, but it was not what I had in mind when I set out. I'd intended to do some of a "Tlupana Range traverse" from McIver Creek to the Perry River. But I don't want to present a report of my failure to make an objective; this is about four days of exploring a mountain, and it was a success, because at least I managed to get on top of it.

The mountain doesn't have any name. It has three distinct prominent peaks, each of which has a 5000' contour on an NTS map. The middle peak is the highest, located at GR799380 (WGS84); it is called Peak 1553* (Sebalhal Outliers) on the VI Peaks list hosted at the Island Mountain Ramblers website.

The mountain is less than 15 km from my home in Tahsis, but I accessed it by driving up the McIver FSR. This is about a 2.5 hour drive from home and my wife Cheryl did with me so that she could take the truck back home (I was intending to hike home).

I had done some exploration of this mountain two years earlier, when I climbed the southwestern peak



Looking SE from the summit of Peak 1531 towards Emerald Peaks.

Photo by Ramsay Dyer

(1531m on the BC Basemap). I used the same drainage to ascend this time; it's the big southern branch of the upper McIver that passes near GR7839. The first 100 m of ascent from the cut-block at the road is steep, and on my previous trip my options were limited because I was constrained between the ravine of the creek to the east, and a smaller parallel creek (not shown on the map) to the west. In order to avoid a couple of bluff obstacles near the top where the ground levels out, I figured it would be good to try to ascend to the west of the smaller creek this time. However, to do that I should've located and crossed that little creek before I even left the road or cutblock, because by the time I'd traversed to it in the forest it was already a ravine that looked unattractive to try to cross.

So, I ascended the exact same way as previously. When I'd done it before, I remember being glad that I'd brought a rope so that I could rappel it on the way back, but when I did return to it I didn't feel the need to get out the rope. I had similar thoughts when I ascended this time with a big heavy pack, but I was not intending to come back this way anyway.

There are no significant obstacles after that. The forest is nice, but not characterized by large trees. I had



*Looking south from the summit of Peak 1531 towards Peak 5150 (centre).
Malaspina Peak is on the right. Photo by Ramsay Dyer*

forgotten that a large part of the route is through a forested boulder field (house-sized rocks). Again I had no incentive to try to cross the main creek to the left (east); it often sounded like it was a fair ways below me, like it was still a canyon. When the terrain was flat and I saw that the creek was crossable, I decided to cross then, since I knew the terrain would force me to soon anyway. But as I was crossing I looked up the creek and saw that I was already at the part where I'd be forced to cross anyway. So still I was closely following my footsteps from the trip two years earlier.

I broke out of the trees just after noon and made my way up to a place where I could see up the

tributary drainage on the left (east) that I wanted to take, around GR785380. I stopped there for lunch.

I hadn't noticed before, but this tributary creek finishes its descent to this valley with a waterfall into a mini canyon. I arrived just above this canyon (I'd already crossed the little creek further down, so I'm south of it now), and was faced with a greasy black slab that I had to cross to continue. The slab was not steep, and if it were dry, you'd walk across it with your hands in your pockets. But it was not dry, it was really slick, and I did not feel at all comfortable with attempting to cross it. My memory of this obstacle does not well-convey the aspect that made it so hard for me to go ahead and cross it. I expect that looking on this spot another time or with different eyes, it might be difficult to understand why it spooked me so much. If the psychological discomfort I experienced is the only significant obstacle, then I expect this drainage is probably part of the easiest route up to the main peak, but I haven't laid eyes on all of it.

So now I would have to go all the way up the way I'd gone before, up the main drainage and over that SW Peak 1531 that I'd already climbed. This is a straight-forward slog up to the col SW of the peak, and then some pleasant easy scrambling up to the peak. On the way up to the col a slab must've released somewhere above the wall on the east side, and a pile of snow and rocks funneled down onto my uptracks just behind me. The drainage is wide though, and there was plenty of warning, so expect I wouldn't have been damaged even if it had occurred a few minutes earlier. Anyway, it was a reminder that the spring snow movement had not entirely finished.

I camped that night on the summit of Peak 1531. It had taken me all day with my big pack to do what had been just a part of a day trip a couple of years ago. It was really nice to camp there though. I shared the summit with a ptarmigan who probably didn't appreciate the interruption of solitude.

The plan now for the next day was to make my way up to the main summit of this mountain, and then get down into the unnamed valley to the south to the base of where I was going to ascend the other side. The north facing slopes of this valley that I can see from here have a bare rock alpine character all the way down,

but the south-facing slope that I'll descend is full forest. Much of what the other side presents looks pretty intimidating viewed from this angle, but there were a few different options I could try as ascent routes. As it happened, I didn't even make it down to the valley, so I didn't begin to try any of those options.

The clouds were thickening and lowering, but not much of my view was obscured yet. This was about to change; the rest of the trip would be spent in a cloud with plenty of rain.

The next day I descended from the peak to the col to the NW. It took a while to find my way down there, but a route eventually presented itself. Once down, I dropped my pack and just took a light daypack to go to the main summit. It was a pleasant scramble to get up onto its SW ridge, and once there the travel was easy and I soon found myself on a peak, but this was just a subpeak on the ridge (it has a 1530m spot elevation on the basemap). The descent from this looked bigger than what was indicated on the map, but I guess this was only a psychological artifact, perhaps aided by the mist and intermittent visibility, because it took no time to descend and continue on.



Looking NE from the summit of Peak 1531. The Main Peak is on the right. Its subpeak is barely visible in front of it, just right of the tip of the snow tongue. The unclimbed peak is left of it, and left of that is the bump at the start of the ridge I descended. The terrain that gave me difficulty getting to that ridge is not visible, hidden behind a roll in the slope. Photo by Ramsay Dyer

Soon I was on the real top; I used my InReach to confirm that. I took some photos, but they mostly show how bad the visibility was. Rather than returning the way I'd come, I descended to the south side, rather than going back up to the subpeak, and the travel was easy and much faster than the way I'd ascended.

I returned to the col where I'd left my pack. In retrospect, it would've been better if I'd brought my pack up to near the subpeak, because my plan was to descend by the rib that hosts the boundary line between the Leiner and Nimpkish watersheds. Instead of hauling my pack up there, I figured I'd just traverse over to that rib. Looking at the map now, it is clear that the col is already too low to make traversing to the next rib to the east a likely option, even if I weren't doing a descending traverse. So I was going down the rib west of the one I intended. Anyway, the map doesn't give enough detail to be sure which rib is most likely to present a reasonable descent option. Descending this kind of terrain with a heavy pack on probably doesn't push me to do the most penetrating kind of exploration.

It was steep and bluffy and raining steadily, but I made progress on the descent until just below 1200 m. Then any further descent options presented an airiness that was too far beyond my comfort zone. I explored the width of the rib, from the enormous ravine to the west, to the also imposing one to the east. I was not going to continue my descent on this rib. I hiked back up a ways until I found ground suitable for making a camp. There was no trouble finding water.

At this point I abandoned the idea of trying to traverse to the Perry drainage. The thought of going up and trying to descend by a different rib didn't even occur. I was aiming for a five day trip, but I was prepared for seven days, because I knew five might be optimistic. But seven days wasn't really realistic because we'd be leaving town for a month on the eighth day, and being this wet there was no way I could be ready for that. I was going to hike back to the McIver Valley. If I were quick and motivated, I could hike back home from there via the Leiner Valley.

It was raining when I got up the next day. I enjoyed a lazy morning and didn't start moving again until close to noon. I thought that I'd go and climb the third peak on the mountain, the most northerly and easterly one, and then descend to McIver Creek via the big NW ridge that extends from near the main summit.

I ascended back to the col by a much better line than I'd taken down and stopped for lunch. The rain had



The eastern face of Peak 1531 I descended. Photo by Ramsay Dyer

subsidied, but visibility was poor; I could see less than 100 m. I planned to proceed under the northern face of the main peak, but I'd have to feel my way. Progress was okay for a while, but then I was confronted with an imposing gulley that blocked my traverse. After exploring it a bit and deciding that I couldn't see a way that I'd be comfortable trying to cross it, I went back and down, trying to find a way to descend into the large drainage trough below me, but that wasn't going to happen either. Eventually I decided that I'd just go back to the col, and probably return to McIver the same way I'd come up.

However, as I was ascending back up to my traverse track, the mist temporarily cleared a bit and I saw a snow field that went across to where I wanted to go. For some reason I had assumed that the gulley that blocked me extended right to the cliffs above me, but it didn't. It just emerges from a benign snow shelf at the base of the cliffs. I was able to continue without further obstacles to the col between the main peak and the NW ridge.

By now it was late afternoon with intermittent rain and a strong wind that was not dispelling the mist. I knew that I was not going to make it to McIver Creek this day, but I decided that I wanted to get out of the alpine to get some shelter from the weather. Even though I couldn't see the NE peak, I knew that it was a walk up to the summit that was less than half a kilometre away and 100 m above me. But I no-longer felt a call to it, so I left that peak unclimbed.

The ridge makes for really pleasant travel and would provide beautiful views on a clear day. It would be good to use it to access the main peak, but the challenge would be to find a nice line up to it. I descended in a westerly direction from the end of the alpine ridge.

The transition from fully alpine to fully treed is abrupt, just a thin band of subalpine, but it took me a while

to find a way down to the trees. Then I descended a fair ways before I found a pocket of land flat enough to make a camp for the night.

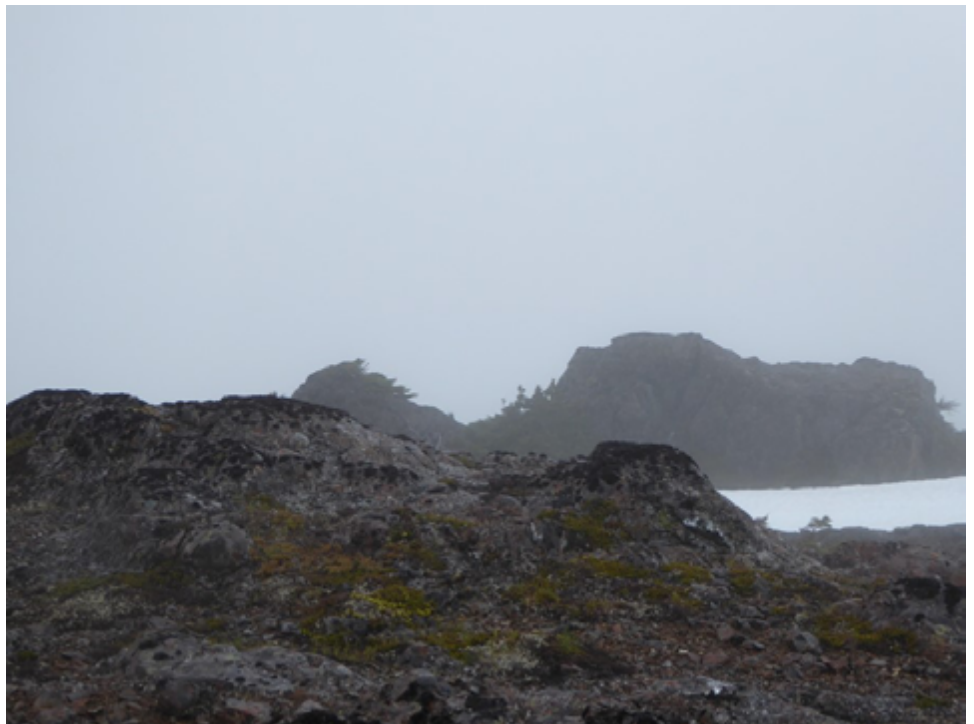
The next day I continued my descent through the bluffy terrain; a lot of scrambling down gullies was involved until the terrain relaxed at around 900m. At around 700m I could hear the creek clearly and I changed my course from west to north, aiming to the right (east) of the knoll represented on the basemap by the closed 660m contour east of the creek.

The forest in here had some impressively big trees in it; quite different from the other side of the creek. The fact that they hadn't been logged out was a good indication that there would be terrain obstacles that made it difficult to push a logging road up here. I was walking down a kind of valley, even though there wasn't a real creek running down it. I soon broke out to the edge of a big bluff, with a canyon to the east. I was looking down at the spur road that came up off the McIver main right after the bridge just before the main road is blocked. I didn't see a way all the way down and didn't think my 30 m rope would be sufficient for a rappel.

Anyway, I headed west above the bluffs looking for a way down. At one point, there was a steep descent that I could've taken that would get me down a fair way, but it seemed likely that I'd still be bluffed out once I got to the bottom of that. I did not relish the idea of hauling myself and my big pack back up that if that were the case. At that point, I decided that there was no point in exploring if I was that reluctant; I may as well go up and cross the creek and descend the way I'd come up. I was pretty much at the knoll here, so I just ascended the knoll, and then made my way south up the creek valley.

I was able to cross the creek soon after I arrived at it, and I made my way to the small knoll that marked the top of the steep ascent from the road. I made a concerted effort but was unable to find the small ramp I'd used to ascend to here. When I'd done it a couple of years previously, I'd left an orange flag to mark where it popped out; I guess that flag had helped me more than I realized. I ended up rappelling down this bluff at a different spot, and went around and looked up at the ramp, which was indeed roughly where I'd thought, but I couldn't make out why it'd been invisible to me. I kept the rope out and did another short rappel at the next bluff, without even bothering to try to find how I'd come up.

So I finally arrived at the road after another full day of travel. I camped at the start of the spur road just after the bridge; a fire ring and wood had been left there. The next day was day five. I hiked out the McIver Road and met Cheryl who came to pick me up as a detour on her way home from a trip to Campbell River.



On the main summit: view to the NW. Photo by Ramsay Dyer

Strathcona Wilderness Institute (2020): An Exciting Summer into the Great Unknown

By Loys Maingon

Editor's note: We are aiming to include an article from one of the organizations supported by ACCVI. You can also learn more about the organizations ACCVI supports [here](#).

Strathcona Wilderness Institute (SWI) is more than a two-storey hut at the head of Paradise Meadows on Mt. Washington. The hut is home to a volunteer-run educational facility and a visitor centre, staffed largely by local volunteers and summer students. Founded in the wake of the Larkin report on Strathcona Provincial Park (1988) by Friends of Strathcona and incorporated in 1995, SWI is a brainchild of the “Friends of Strathcona” who spearheaded the protests that saved Strathcona Provincial Park from further mining development. The protest stopped further mining and logging within the park. It resulted in an expansion of borders of the park and adjacent wilderness areas to compensate for the loss of the centrally located Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park, which is largely controlled by the Westmin mine. SWI was intended to fill educational gaps created by BC Parks’ closure of naturalist interpretation infrastructure and develop alpine and subalpine research programs to inform public decisions about park management. SWI is independent of both Friends of Strathcona and BC Parks. It works to bridge areas of mutual interest with BC Parks and the public through education and science.

Some things have taken a little while to come to full fruition. Twenty years later, the building came about largely through the efforts of Steve Smith in 2008. And now, another 10 years on, research and educational ambitions are being realized, by a volunteer team of local educators and scientists. As its name suggests, Strathcona Wilderness’ interests lie not just in Strathcona Provincial Park, but also in adjacent areas and additions to the park that include the Strathcona-Westmin Park, White Ridge Provincial Park, Wood Mountain Provincial Park, the Megin-Talbot Addition, the McBride Creek Addition, and all additions recommended, but not incorporated, in the Larkin report which have ecological significance for the Strathcona Wilderness’ ecosystems.



Accessibility Day. Photo by Loys Maingon

With the support of Comox Valley Naturalist volunteers SWI has over the past decades been able to run a continuous educational summer program of weekly guided walks around Paradise Meadows as well as a continuous program of guided naturalist interpretive hikes in both the Forbidden Plateau and Buttle Lakes areas, covering most of the main trails in the Strathcona Wilderness. In non-Covid years, in addition to the cycle of walks and hikes, in coordination with BC Parks, SWI also provides wheelchair access to the boardwalks of the meadows and organizes an annual “Accessibility Day” which showcases “trailrider” interpretative hikes to Battleship lake. The 2019 Accessibility Day was a wonderful success for the 60 participants who got to enjoy the boardwalk loops and the 8 trailrider users who were delighted by the enthusiasm of 19 volunteers from Nanaimo to Campbell River who brought visitors to Battleship Lake.



Mycology Workshop. Photo by James Holkko

As of 2017, SWI has increased efforts to provide educational workshops for up to 40 participants at a time, in the “Ruth Masters’ Nature Hall” facility. Now legendary mycology and bryology workshops have been organized with the assistance of well-known Vancouver Island Mycological Society specialists such as, Andy McKinnon, Shannon Berch, Juliet Penrith and James Holkko, as well as with well-known local resident scientists, such as Thom O’Dell, Randal Mindell, Dan Tucker and Jamie Fenneman. Had Covid not interrupted the delivery of programs in the summer of 2020, SWI would have seen the addition of fern, willow, lichen and data collection workshops, with more training for effective citizen-science reporting. SWI workshops are designed to provide basic field training and experience in fungal and plant identification. These workshops also provide unique training in biological specimen photography for scientific identification and reporting purposes so that participants can submit their findings and observations for verification and contribute to the building of a phenological database to track the regional progress of climate change. These workshops are meant to provide an educational basis from which to prepare participants for the non-invasive collection of park data in “adventure science” by alpinists, climbers and

hikers trekking across Strathcona Park, even to remote areas normally inaccessible to the public which are bound to be home to yet undiscovered species. It is an opportunity for people to take ownership of their park and acquire the tools from which to make and support informed management decisions for the benefit of future generations.

While 1988 marked a turning point for Friends of Strathcona, the need to protect Strathcona Park has never stopped. It is a continuous concern. Over the years since the 1988 Friends of Strathcona protests, public interest in the park's future has had to be protected again, as the controversies show, including those surrounding the development of a dude ranch with access to horse trails in the park, the building of low impact trails, and the 2014 passage of Bill 4 which now enables the passage of pipelines and transmission lines through parks (1). An informed local public that takes ownership of its parks with access to, and participating in, science is the best means of protection for our provincial parks.

The park cannot be managed effectively without a detailed understanding of its complex and fragile sub-alpine and alpine ecosystems. That understanding should not be the privilege of a few people in Victoria or Vancouver. At a time when it is increasingly recognized that we have embarked on a trajectory of global biodiversity collapse and climate emergency, the parks that were once seen as a refuge of tranquility are now themselves the locus of considerable biological upheavals. The problem for biologists and planners is that we really have neither much time left, nor much long-term detailed information on the parks' ecosystems. That is unfortunately, largely a product of the notorious obstructive process involved in obtaining research permits in BC Parks, and the discriminatory funding practices, which dissuade many scientists from undertaking park research. As one scientist put it: "It is easier to get a permit to kill a bear in BC Parks than to research fungi."

As the 1988 Larkin report, *Restoring the Balance*, pointed out, relatively little is really known about the park. In this respect, things have changed very little since 1988. At a time when BC talks of reconciliation and UNDRIP, big changes are underway. Climate change is accelerating all around us. More co-management agreements with First Nations have yet to be developed. These agreements stand to change park culture. And, BC is currently developing its very own version of the global biodiversity crisis driven by logging and mining around the parks (2). It is really imperative that we understand our parks as more than just playgrounds or "recreational spaces" for public exercise. Given the extent of BC's losses through poor forestry practices, the management of its parks as conservation refuges is more important than ever. As Larkin also pointed out, BC Parks unfortunately lost public confidence a long time ago, largely because of its centralized top-down management which alienates local realities. This continues to this day. It was Larkin's belief that while BC Parks officially manages the parks, the parks belong to all British Columbians who must be directly involved in as much of the decision-making as possible.

Strathcona Provincial Park, which lies at the centre of Vancouver Island, has a unique, if little-known and even-less-understood cultural heritage, and is a keystone in the region's ecosystem functions. Culturally, a 1997 SFU thesis on First Nations' use of alpine areas notes that, although it is well-known that First Nations made extensive use of alpine areas, the accidental discovery by Friends of Strathcona of marmot bones and artifacts in karst caves of Strathcona Park, would be the only alpine archaeological data available on Vancouver Island (3)! In fact, the 4th "Occasional Paper" by BC Parks indicates that Strathcona Park has 2 of 4 important archaeological alpine sites in the Northwest Coast. Ecologically, Strathcona is unique in covering alpine to sea-level ecosystems and encompassing the headwaters of rivers flowing into both the Pacific Ocean and the Salish Sea.

Yet, beyond a smattering of short plant data, patiently gathered in the 1980's and 1990's by Betty Brooks, Adolf Ceska and Hans Roemer, the alpine work of Dr. Kathy Martin on Vancouver Island's white-tailed ptarmigan, the work of the Vancouver Island Marmot Recovery Foundation, and Dan Strickland's ongoing

research into the uniqueness of BC's Canada jays, regrettably there continues to be little public information and understanding about the biology of Strathcona Park's ecosystems and regions.

In addition to meeting its general educational mandate, in order to meet the need for a more robust independent local data collection SWI started to put together a core research team in 2017. The team draws on the expertise of local retired PhDs and biology professionals. Ironically, the Institute's PhD team does not qualify for BC Parks funding for "citizen science" projects which is available only to already publicly-funded universities. This means that research is localized in the political and administrative hubs of Vancouver and Victoria, and regional interests are not represented. Regional institutes such as SWI catering directly to the public interest and public communication, and engaged in citizen science, do not qualify for BC Parks' citizen science funding.

Last year, in preparation for the fall Bryology Workshop, SWI's Dr. Randal Mindell and Dan Tucker initiated a drive to catalogue the moss and liverwort species of Strathcona Provincial Park. This resulted in a total list of 252 moss and liverwort species. Mindell and Tucker found 189 of the total 252 known species. This is a fair measure of what was known about the park's biota. Of the total 252, 59 are new additions to Strathcona Park, 5 are new to Vancouver Island and 1 appears to be new to BC. This work culminated in SWI's publication, at private expense, of a short guide for the public in September 2019: *Common Sub-alpine Bryophytes of Strathcona Provincial Park*. This publication has proven to be in high demand. It is already out of print and now awaits a second printing. Other SWI scientific publications based on this work are also in preparation.



Training the Students on Crest Mountain. Photo by Loys Maingon

This year the effort has been concentrated on expanding our knowledge of the park's lichens, and a new book on lichens in Strathcona Park is in the works. The season auspiciously began with the discovery of a rare red-listed lichen, new to Vancouver Island, the exotically-named "Wahlenberg's Goblin Lights Lichen" (*Catolechia wahlenbergii*), normally found in Alaska or Haida Gwaii. This project is sure to bring new surprises once the full list is compiled.

While Covid has hampered SWI's public outreach effort by limiting the size and number of public hikes that can be safely offered, it has also proven to be a great public research opportunity for SWI. In keeping with its mandate to communicate the wonders of the Strathcona Wilderness to the public, SWI used the opportunity to put in place and develop the infrastructure for data collection and reporting. As uncertainty lay ahead, SWI wanted to minimize health risks to the students we employ. Two summer students with geography and biology backgrounds who would normally have been leading interpretive walks were trained to collect biological data on trail transects and enter the data on iNaturalist to aid in the SWI and BC Parks efforts to create a species database available to the public. This was a good opportunity to test the value of the principles of "adventure science," which are available to all park visitors. The work of the two students, Erin Sketchley (UBC / Okanagan) and Helen Anderson (UVic) who covered large areas of the backcountry has proven to be extremely useful. In spite of their lack of experience, their curiosity, dedication and interest helped identify some new plants in Strathcona.

As of August 15 2020, in 2 months the 5 members of SWI have collected 4250 observations and identified 868 species. The SWI data is collected on the unfunded "SWI Data Collection" site (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/swi-data-collection>) and it is partially merged with the funded BC Parks site which covers only the political boundaries of Strathcona Park, involves 261 people, and serves a different purpose. With only 5 people, SWI accounts for about 75% of BC Parks species data and effort at Strathcona.

One can only wonder how much more might have been achieved with research permits and funding support? With an "adventure science" programme set to grow in the coming years and involve more members of the public, SWI looks forward to engaging the public in the appreciation and future preservation of the Strathcona Wilderness.

Support for the SWI and participation in its programmes are always welcome. SWI can always be reached at the website: <https://strathconapark.org>

1 <https://thenarwhal.ca/bill-4-passes-b-c-parks-now-officially-open-pipelines-and-drilling>

2 https://thenarwhal.ca/bc-extinction-crisis/?fbclid=IwAR00gJaq_QRoxC0TqWq_dPEIHsxoobWYVK-0WDIr8toJOy4PcrA7faKZYQmw

3 Rudy Reimer (1997) *Extreme Archaeology: The Results of Investigations at High Elevation Regions in the Pacific Northwest*. Simon Fraser University; D Nagorsen, G. Keddie and Tanya Luszcz (1996). *Vancouver Island Marmot Bones from Subalpine Caves: Archaeological and Biological Significance*. BC Parks.



A New Route on Colonel Foster

By Phil Stone

On 14 July, Josh Overdijk and I headed up the Elk River Trail with the west ridge in our sights. It was an ideal window of weather as much of the 2020 summer alpine season has been: moderate temperatures perfect for the exertion and clear and sunny for the soul. The hike up to Landslide Lake and on to Foster Lake was uneventful save for the proliferation of Instahikers posing at nearly every scenic point. We pushed on up the southeast chute to the south col finding the rock dry and generous snow cover for the top half leading into the col.

Next morning we were out of camp for 7 am and made a short ascent up the boulder field below the South Gullies to a small shoulder on a rib that opens the way to the traverse below the west face. It took about an hour to traverse the talus and remaining seasonal snow slopes to the base of the upper ridge.

It was easy to locate the transition from the lower ridge to the upper, climbable rock face, where we wanted to climb, as the slopes fanning out from the peaks end abruptly at the rim of a glacier-scoured cirque below the northwestern half of the mountain. Nearing this feature, we turned our attention upward and started scrambling up a heather-filled gully alongside an outcrop of bright, white granite. A small headwall forced us leftward into another major gully identifiable by a bulging roof on the righthand wall. By now we were a total of about 200m above the lower scree fans. Here the rock steepened and it was clear this was the point to pull out the ropes and move into pitched climbing.

The first pitch was a full 60m rope length up a clean slab on the left wall of the gully at around 5.7. A second, easier slab forced us into the gully where a small chockstone gave a short 5.6 step leading into a wide amphitheatre. From a belay at the head of this widening we followed an angled corner slab breaking off to the left of the main gully (5.7). Some fun climbing then led into a second, larger amphitheatre. After close to another rope length pitch we belayed at the base of a band of granite running up the crest of the ridge.



*Josh Overdijk on the SW Peak.
Photo by Phil Stone*

This was what I was hoping to find, a place straddling the Campbell and Ucona watersheds, where in the same stream you could pee in the Pacific and Salish Sea!

Looking up at this granite we were quite excited. It must be the west part of the same, familiar granite intrusion that is encountered on the east side of the mountain following the summit traverse line up from the small glacier up the Southwest Peak. Josh led off scrambling up over a series of granite blocks above the belay and onto the crest of the west ridge. He disappeared out of sight and I belayed and wanted my turn. Following I found a jumble of boulders on the north side of the ridge which led into a beautiful granite corner. Here was one of the most enjoyable pitches of the route and being granite is a rare one



*Phil Stone in the second amphitheatre on the NW ridge.
Photo by Josh Overdijk*

few misty clouds drifted by giving us a little advance warning of the forecasted change in the weather.

Repacked, we started to make our way along the summit ridge to the south. We took a look down the gully on the west side to get into the col but an exposed slab convinced us to make a quick rappel instead. We scrambled over the perched blocks jammed in the col between the Southwest and Southeast peaks and then a quick roped pitch up the awkward corner and narrow chimney onto the top of the Southeast Peak.

We took the major gully to the southwest off the peak and were back in the South Col for around 4pm. We knew that the weather was on the change, so I quickly pitched a tarp on a flat heather shelf a little below the col as clouds piled up all around us. Sure enough the rain started in the early morning hours and we were thankful for the shelter as we packed and had breakfast. We had a soggy but uneventful descent down the snow and rock slabs back to Foster then Landslide lakes.

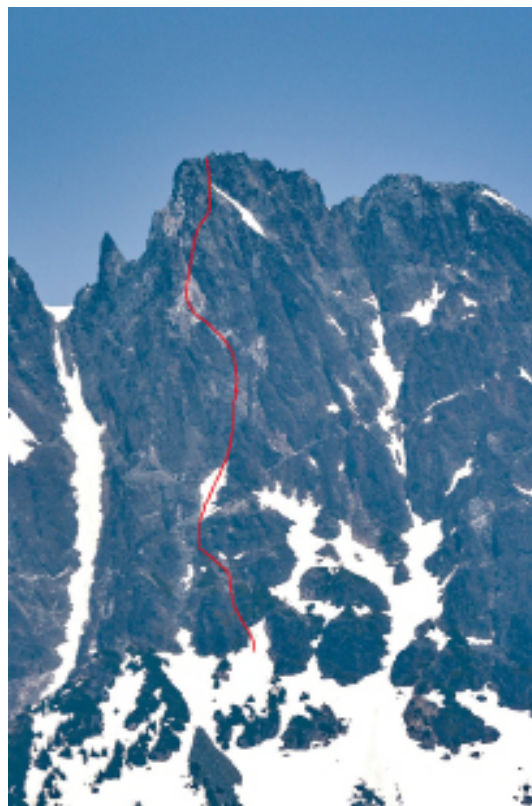
4th class to 5.9 (III) 450 m

FA: Josh Overdijk, Philip Stone 15 July, 2020

at that. A pair of spectacular 5.9 finger cracks led up to an airy belay where I found Josh straddling the now well-defined ridge crest. We laughed a bit after discovering that as beautiful a pitch as it was the thin cracks were totally avoidable by keeping to the south side of the ridge where a series of easy 4th class to low 5th class ledges led up to the same stance.

There was some discussion about following an amazing granite sill which ran out across the left side of the upper arete but we were now a little past it so decided to tackle a second steep corner instead. This corner turned out to offer some more fun climbing with some strenuous 5.8 moves to reach a boulder field on the ridge crest. It turned out we had made a good choice because it looked like the enticing sill led into a jumble of loose boulders. Potential bullet dodged.

That was the end of the technical climbing and we scrambled up ~65m of low 5th class and 4th class terrain through boulders and rock steps up to the crest of the summit ridge a little to the north of the top of the Southwest Peak. It was a gorgeous day and it was only just about noon so we took our time on the peak having lunch and taking in the view. A



*Mount Colonel Foster West Couloir and ridge
with new route.*

Historical Photos of ACCVI Members

By Rob Macdonald

Editor's note: Future issues of the newsletter will hopefully include some historical photos of ACCVI members over the years.

Mt Klitsa, May 31, 1981 – a crowd on the summit after a long slog up the ‘Couloir Route’. This trip was led by Mike Sampson and included a fairly large fraction of the section membership at that time: Karel Hartman, Alan Phillip, Erika and Chris Kellserhals, Rob Macdonald, Gil Parker, Ross Parker, Sharon Sampson, Chris Schreiber, Sonia Heckel, Rick Eppler, Derek Shaw and Bill Freyer (see Bushwhacker 81, Vol 9:5 for short writeup). The boot ski down was fast and furious.



Victoria Peak, 1979. After a climb of the peak's unexplored west-face, which consisted of shallow chimneys and ledges covered in very loose, primordial junk, Paul Erickson and I found ourselves on the summit of Victoria Peak as the sun went down. We “held the heights we’d won’ for a cold and relatively sleepless night as we had abandoned all useful bivy gear, - with the exception of a plastic sheet - at the bottom of the West face.

Youth!



Liberty Bell, 1982. On the 1st of July, 1982, Martin Conder, Jim Sandford and I went down to Washington to climb some routes on Liberty Bell, Concord and Lexington Towers. Here is a very young Jim on what was likely his first climb of this sort writing our names in a summit register. As he did this he turned to me and asked what my name was (I guess we'd not been introduced). I said "Rob Macdonald," to which he replied "*the* Rob Macdonald." I still laugh – it was clear at that time that he would climb far past me!

Steamboat, March 10, 1985.

Our first attempt to climb Steamboat (Rick Eppler, James Budac and myself).

For a start we had to get across the river in spate using a snow-covered log a cheval – the picture shows James taking his turn. After that it was a very snowy slog around to the back side of Steamboat and up the gully that eventually gained us the mountain. We made it to the top as darkness fell; we were wet, tired and cold. We debated a bivy, decided not to, and dragged ourselves back down to Rick's station



wagon where we slept fitfully in the back and drove home the next day. We were probably within only 15 minutes of the summit as it turned out. I remember Rick running the engine every hour or so as we shivered the darkness away.



ACCVI History 1924 to 1927

By Lindsay Elms



1924

ACCVI Executive

Chairman – Robert McCaw

Executive – George Winkler

January – Photo exhibition of the Rocky Mountains

March 15 – Col. William Foster talk “The Lure of the Trail” at the Empress Hotel

May 3 – Club trip to Mount Finlayson

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Thursday January 10, 1924, p.10.

VIEWS OF ROCKIES BEING SHOWN HERE

Local Section of Alpine Club Arranges Exhibition of Photographs for This Afternoon.

An exhibition of magnificent photographs of the Rocky Mountain scenery is being held at 622 View Street today, tomorrow and Saturday by the local section of the Alpine Club of Canada.

The pictures, which are loaned by the Alpine Club of Canada, number about one hundred, and are excellent examples of photographic art, depicting the grandeur of the Rockies and showing the lofty peaks where Alpinists love to climb to the clouds.

Among the pictures are some by Dr. Winthrop E. Stone, who came to a tragic death while climbing in the Rockies. The exhibition, which is the Central Building, View Street, on the ground floor, is in charge of *Mr. George E. Winkler**, a member of the executive of the local section of the Alpine Club. The pictures will be on view from 1 to 9 o'clock today, tomorrow and Saturday.

In the window will be shown a map of Mount Logan, the highest peak in Canada, which has never yet been surmounted by man. The Alpine Club of Canada intends making an attempt to reach the top, nineteen thousand feet above sea level, and a box for donations to the fund for the expedition will be on hand at the exhibition to receive donations.

The purpose of the pictures here is to arouse increased interest in the Alpine Club, and to give some conception of the beauty of the Canadian Rockies.

Dr. Stone, who is mentioned above as having taken some of the photographs being exhibited, was president of Purdue University. He met his death on Mount Eon on July 17, 1921, at the moment of achieving its first ascent.

The unique map of Mount Logan to be exhibited in the window is work of Major Harold F. Nation, of the Provincial Mineralogist's Department.

*George Edgar Winkler was a poet and prospector active throughout B.C. He published under the pseudonyms "Ernest Altrew" and "The Prospector". Winkler was born in Kincardine, Ontario in 1875. He first came to British Columbia in 1897 where he settled permanently. He worked in stores and for newspapers and became interested in prospecting, eventually taking university courses in geology. He had interests in many mining concerns, both as owner/operator and manager. Winkler was a poet, publishing several books of poetry during his lifetime as well as publishing in magazines and newspapers. He was interested in politics and unsuccessfully ran for Provincial office as a Socialist Party of Canada candidate in the 1907 general election. He was a member and on the executive of the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada. Winkler died in Victoria in 1978.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Saturday March 8, 1924, p.6.

The Lure of the Trail

Colonel William W. Foster, of Vancouver, president of the Alpine Club of Canada, will be a visitor in the city next week, and on Saturday, March 15, in the Empress Hotel ballroom will give an illustrated lecture entitled, "The Lure of the Trail." Colonel Foster will speak here under the auspices of the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Tuesday May 6, 1924, p.3.

MOUNTAIN CLIMB STAGED BY CLUB - ALPINISTS AND FRIENDS ENJOY OUTING

Summit of Mount Finlayson Reached by Party Which Sets out From Goldstream.

A most enjoyable climb to the summit of Mount Finlayson, on Saanich Inlet, was carried out by the members of the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada and their friends on Saturday [May 3].

Some of the twenty-five people, more than half of whom were guests of members, left Goldstream for the mountain about half past nine in the morning, with Mr. George E. Winkler as guide. Following a trail through the woods, past the western shoulder of Mount Skirt, the climbers paused for a lunch at a small stream at the base of Finlayson. The ascent was made from the eastern side, no difficulty being experienced, and on the summit the beautiful view, which took in the Olympics, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Victoria and its environs, and glimpses of Saanich Inlet and nearby mountains was enjoyed. Cameras were much in evidence throughout the trip.

The descent was made on the northwestern slope, quick time being made to the road which wound past the mountain on that side. Up to that time the party had been under the usual Alpine Club discipline, with the members of the party numbered, and other precautions taken, but once the road was reached and the roll called to be sure that everyone was down, the climbers were allowed to do as they wished. Following the descent, Mr. Robert D. McCaw, president of the local section of the Alpine Club, expressed the pleasure of the members at having the guests with them and also conveyed the thanks to Mr. Winkler for his work in locating the trail in advance, and in acting as leader. The climbers returned to Goldstream by way of the road and came into the city by train.

1925

ACCVI Executive

Chairman – William Dougan

March 10 – Club evening at the Wheeler's home with talks by Alan Campbell, Stanley Mitchell and Frederick Godsall.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Thursday March 12, 1925, p.10.

ALPINISTS GUEST OF CLUB DIRECTOR

Mr. and Mrs. A.O. Wheeler, Sidney, Entertain Members of Island Canadian Alpine Club.

Mr. Arthur O. Wheeler, director of the Alpine Club of Canada, and Mrs. Wheeler on Tuesday [March 10] evening entertained very delightfully about thirty members of the Vancouver Island section of the society, including fourteen from Victoria, at their home at Sidney. Short addresses on mountain climbing subjects provided the chief entertainment. Mr. [Alan] Campbell, of Sidney, gave an interesting talk, copiously illustrated with lantern slides, on his climb over the snowfields from Mount Columbia to Mount Clemenceau, a distance of 25 miles. Mr. Norman C. Stewart contributed a highly descriptive paper on the Caribou Road, using a map to illustrate his references, and taking his audience all through the district lying between Ashcroft and Williams Lake, a distance of some 150 miles. Mr. [Stanley] Mitchell added an interesting account of a cave at Banff, the description of which was humanized by some amusing reminiscences of the old Scotch guide who accompanied him.

The programme was concluded by Mr. A.O. Wheeler's lightning sketches of some of the outstanding mountain climbers, illustrated with photographs. Another speaker during the evening was Mr. [Frederick] Godsall, who in a few words told something about the use of the ice axe.

At the close of the very enjoyable evening, which included the serving of delicious refreshments, the host and hostess were accorded a hearty vote of thanks by their guests. Mr. [William] Dougan*, president of the Vancouver Island section, who acted as spokesman, referred appreciatively to the generous welcome and kind hospitality shown by Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler. Among the guests were Mr. and Miss Leonard and Miss Sylvester, members of the Calgary branch of the Alpine Club of Canada.

*William Holmes Dougan was born near Seattle, Washington, in 1872, and was a member of a very old American family. He was a nephew of the late Oliver Wendell Holmes. Dougan was an experienced mountaineer by the time he moved to Victoria in 1911 and subsequently joined the ACC. From 1924 to 1927 he was Chairman of the Vancouver Island section of the ACC and was active in the section until about 1940. In 1928 he was involved in the exploration of the Forbidden Plateau region. After striking up Mount Becher the party proceeded on to Eugene Croteau's camp and then a large group ascended Mount Albert Edward. With the weather being in their favour and plenty of food in camp a party then decided to make an ascent of the unclimbed Castle Mountain (now Castlecrag). He was an extremely active man and had little interest in anything that didn't involve hard work. He lived in the present and around the campfire would discuss the job to be done tomorrow. Today and yesterday's work was past so there was no point in discussing it. During the 1940's his eyesight failed, forcing him to give up most of his associations, but he never forgot a voice he had known. One could pass within a few feet of him on the street and he would not recognize you, but say "Good Morning," and he would call you by name. Dougan died in Victoria in 1962.

1926

ACCVI Executive

Chairman - William Dougan

Treasurer - Gordon Cameron

April 10 – Annual club meeting at home of James White at Lake Killarney, Sidney.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Tuesday April 6, 1926, p. 6.

Alpine Club Dinner - The annual meeting and outing of the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada will be held Saturday [April 10] at the Lake Killarney Summer camp of Mr. and Mrs. [James] White, of Sidney, kindly thrown open for the occasion. Those who can leave the city in the morning will be given the opportunity to join an

excursion to the top of Big Saanich Mountain, this party will leave camp at 11 o'clock. There will be an afternoon walk leaving camp about 2:30, for late arrivals. Those who wish to join the outing should bring provisions, and full information about transportation facilities may be had by telephoning 3911R.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Sunday April 11, 1926, p. 6.

ALPINE CLUB HOLDS ITS ANNUAL OUTING

Lake Killarney, in Highland District, Is Rendezvous for Enjoyable Assembly – Campfire Meeting

The Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada yesterday afternoon held its annual meeting at "Killarney," the summer camp of Mr. and Mrs. James White, of Sidney, which for several years has been very hospitably thrown open for the occasion. The early morning thunderstorm did not abate the interest of those who had announced their intentions of joining the gathering, and fifteen members railed on the shores of Lake Killarney in the charming forest retreat to participate in the outing.

Big Saanich Mountain expedition being abandoned owing to the sodden condition of the undergrowth after the rain, the afternoon resolved itself into two smaller expeditions, each most enjoyable. One was to Durrance Lake, the other to Aladdin's Cave, where under Mr. White's personal guidance, tyros were initiated into the ghostly wonders of the subterranean cavern. Supper time brought the explorers together once again round the hospitably spread table, set beneath a great "fly" in the open, with a crackling bonfire nearby radiating its cheerful warmth.



1927

ACCVI Executive

Chairman – William Dougan

Secretary - Mrs. Healy-Kerr

Treasurer – Gordon Cameron

Outings Committee - Claude Harrison

June 18 – Club trip to Cattle Hill.

July 30 – Club trip to Grouse Nest Farm.

August 27 – Club trip to Mount McGuire.

September 17 - Club trip to ?

November 19 – Club trip to Mount McGuire, dinner at Sooke Hotel.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* June 1, 1927, p.9.

Alpine Club Plan to Hold Regular Outings.

The Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada recently drew up a list of proposed expeditions to be followed during the summer months, and members and friends are requested to reserve these dates and join the

outings. The outings are to be as follows:

Saturday, June 18, to "Cattle Hill," conducted by Rev. R. Connell. The Natural History Society and the Prospectors' Association are joining in this expedition. Members and friends, who are invited, will leave by C. & C. bus, Government Street, not later than 1:45 p.m. It is requested that those intending to join the expedition communicate with the secretary, Mrs. Healy Kerr, 6490L, in order that the requisite accommodation may be reserved.

Saturday, July 30, Grouse Nest Farm, conducted by Mr. E.C. Warren.

Saturday, August 27, Mount McGuire, conducted by Rev. Chapman.

Saturday, September 17, open for suggestion.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Sunday September 25, 1927. p.3.

Mount Albert Edward Is Conquered by Expedition

Remarkably Interesting Climb Is Made by Party Which Included Hon. T.D. Pattullo, Surveyor-General, and Chief Forester

Several interesting climbs have been reported from Up-Island areas during the past few weeks, but none more ambitious character than that undertaken by a party which set out from Courtenay on August 27 with the summit of Mount Albert Edward as its objective. Although only three of the party actually achieved the goal, the expedition was unanimously declared to have been a great success, and the record of the outing, *The Colonist* correspondent states, has awakened renewed interest in the possibilities of the mountain as a climbers' paradise. Glaciers and "red snow" were found, and bear, and ptarmigan and quantities of deer, wild geese, grouse and other game were seen.

Mount Albert Edward is east of Buttle Lake, and just outside the Strathcona Park area. It is about twenty miles west, in direct line from Courtenay. Shown on the map as 6,968 feet in altitude; an aneroid record taken at the summit indicates over 8,000 feet. But some doubt as to the veracity of the latter figure is entertained by climbers themselves, as they reached the summit during a hurricane and in dense fog, with the barometer falling. Altogether the expedition took five days, during which about sixty miles of country were traversed, and some secondary exploration work accomplished.

The party comprised Mayor [John] McKenzie of Courtenay; Alderman W. [William] Douglas, who was appointed "horse wrangler"; Constable M. Condon, self-appointed chef; and Messrs, John [Nigger] Brown and [Bob] Gibson, who made up the vanguard; and the Hon. T. [Thomas] D. Pattullo, Minister of Lands; Surveyor-General J. [Joshua] E. Umbach, Chief Forester P. [Peter] Z. Caverhill; Mayor A. [Alec] Maxwell of Cumberland; Alderman H.E. Wallis, Alderman T. [Theed] Pearse, Dr. Moore, Surveyor Donald Cameron, and Mr. V. Bonora.

VANGUARD LEAVES

The vanguard of the expedition left Courtenay at 4. p.m., on Saturday, August 27, led by Mayor McKenzie, Alderman Douglas, Constables Condon, and Messrs. John Brown and Gibson, the vanguard also including seven horse and four mules which were used as mounts and for packing the tents, sleeping bags, commissariat supplies, etc.

The Puntledge River was crossed early in the evening on the bridge owned by the Comox Logging Company, and before dark camp was pitched immediately opposite the Bevan Mine.

The advanced party had just finished breakfast the following morning when they were joined by the Hon. T.D. Pattullo, Mr. J.E. Umbach, and the eight other members of the party mentioned above. By 9 a.m. the whole group was on the march and by 1:30 p.m., after a brisk morning's work, they had reached the top of Quartzcreek [Mount Becher] Mountain (4,000 feet). After luncheon the party took a survey of their surroundings discovering that the mountain offers a magnificent view, not only of the Comox Valley and Cumberland, but of the Gulf Islands, Powell River, and other Mainland points were clearly visible.

CAMP AT GOOSE LAKE

After about an hour's rest the party proceeded over a picturesque trail to Goose [McKenzie] Lake where tents were pitched and a bivouac made for the night. Abundant fodder for horses and mules was found in the big natural meadows surrounding the camp. The evening was spent around a roaring camp fire with yarns and pipe tales, but everyone was tired enough to turn in by eleven.

Monday, August 29, the self-appointed chef and the "horse-wrangler" were astir by 4:30 a.m., and the Minister of Lands was a close third as an early riser, taking a dip in the stream at 5 a.m.

The fine weather of the previous day had passed and "cloudy and foggy" took the zest off the third day's programme. It was 10 a.m. before the expedition broke camp at Goose Lake. The Up-Island correspondent's description of the remainder of the day's programme is reproduced verbatim:

Crossed a seventy-five-acre natural meadow, and through winding canyons and draws reached "Forbidden Plateau," 4,100 feet above sea-level. Here the scenery was truly grand. Occasionally we would glimpse the snow-clad peaks of the Dome Glacier [Comox Glacier] and Mount Albert Edward.

Numerous lakes were seen, some small and some quite large, but each one was a mountain jewel in its own particular setting. Several flocks of geese were seen, and judging by their excited honking they evidently resented the invasion of their sanctuary.

We descended from the plateau into Panther Lake Basin. Here the trail follows the shoreline of the lake, affording a splendid view of this beautiful body of water, with Mount Albert Edward for a background. Mushrooms the size of cabbage were found along this trail.

After traversing a number of natural meadows and passing several more unnamed lakes we came to our camping site located about one mile from the base of Mount Albert Edward. Game appeared very plentiful in this section as several deer, coveys of grouse, and one black bear were seen by the members of the party.

At this stage the party were beginning to get "trailbroke," and every member, without a single exception, got busy and assisted in pitching tents, getting firewood, hobbling horses, and other chores. Our chef excelled himself in "slinging out" good eats, and after the repast was over willing volunteers helped to wash up the dishes. After camp cleaning a roaring camp fire was built and was soon surrounded by the entire party, as we were now at an elevation of 4,100 feet, and it was quite chilly. Constable Condon, our chef, appointed himself chairman, and each member of the party was compelled to tell a bed-time story. Everybody complied. By 11 p.m. lights were out and the camp fire was burning low.

RAIN AND FOG

Tuesday, August 30, the day on which the actual ascent of Mount Albert Edward was planned, furnished but poor weather for the crucial part of the expedition. Rain and fog made even the lighting of the morning camp fire difficult, and breakfast was carried to the tents to be eaten. Only three enthusiasts could be found willing to venture the climb to the summit of Mount Albert Edward, viz, Mayor McKenzie, Mayor Maxwell, and Alderman Douglas. Leaving camp at 8 a.m. they reached the base of the mountain and took a preliminary survey, ultimately deciding, as deer hunters accustomed to spending the day in wet clothes during the hunting season, that the weather could do them no particular hurt, and that having gone so far they might as well attain their objective.

RED SNOW

After a stiff climb they got above the timber line, and here, among the eternal snow, they found instances of the peculiar phenomenon known as "red snow," well known in certain localities of the Alaskan coastal glaciers, and also in Greenland, but rarely recorded on Vancouver Island. The color arises from a slow-germinating microscopic plant which thrives in the snowfields. "Snow which has its surface periodically disturbed offers the "red snow"

plant little chance for growth. It resembles fresh blood, and the illusion can hardly be dispelled when handfuls are taken up and examined," reports *The Colonist* correspondent.

SUMMIT REACHED

Ptarmigan were found quite plentiful up among the snow. The climbers encountered a terrific gale blowing from the southeast, and the thermometer registered just eight degrees above freezing, so a conference was held in the middle of a snowfield before proceeding. It was decided, however, that the programme must be adhered to despite the weather, so pressing through the storm they reached the summit at 1:10 p.m.

A hurricane was blowing, but a momentary glimpse was secured of a lake surrounded by snowfields in a canyon about 3,000 feet below. As in the case of the Mount Arrowsmith expedition of a week later, fog was encountered at the summit in conjunction with the high wind. The aneroid, which had been carefully checked after leaving Courtenay, showed an altitude of slightly over 8,000 feet, but as the glass was falling a little doubt was felt by the mountaineers as to the veracity of their instruments.

Remaining at the summit of Mount Albert Edward long enough to inscribe their names, the trio started back to camp once more. On their way back down the mountain they saw numerous deer. It was still foggy, but as they descended the wind lessened. Hungry and wet though they reached camp shortly after 4 p.m., and were greeted with a welcome hot meal. The day's achievement was the main subject of discussion at dinner, served at 7 p.m., when the successful climbers were heartily congratulated on their feat.

Mr. Pattullo having to return to Victoria, camp was broken early the following morning. Mr. Pattullo being accompanied by Messrs Caverhill, Umbach and McKenzie. This section of the party made the twenty-mile trip back to Courtenay the same day, and attended a dance in the evening. The remainder of the party took the return in more leisurely fashion, pitching camp about 3 p.m. at Goose Lake, and after a preliminary survey of the country, spent the night there. Next morning Mr. Donald Cameron, surveyor, assisted by Alderman W. Douglas, chained off Goose Lake so that Mr. Cameron could compute the area. This done the party continued on its way to Quartzcreek Mountain, lunching at the top for the second time in five days, and reaching Courtenay about dark.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* November 4, 1927, p.20.

Alpine Club Plan Mt. McGuire Trip.

The Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada has arranged an outing at Sooke on Saturday, November 19, Mr. Claude L. Harrison will act as guide for an expedition up Mount McGuire in the morning, and those intending to join the party are advised to take luncheon and wear proper climbing outfit. For the afternoon a walk in the Sooke district has been planned for those who cannot join the morning walk. Dinner will be served in the Sooke Hotel at 6 p.m., and will be followed by an impromptu dance. Those wishing particulars are asked to telephone the secretary, 6490L, or Mr. C.L. Harrison, 4667.

Reported in *The Daily Colonist* Sunday November 6, 1927, p.5.

Plateau To Be Home of Game From Alpine Parks

Big Horn Rocky Mountain Sheep Will Be Introduced to District in Neighborhood of Mount Albert Edward

Courtenay, Nov. 5 – Big Horn Rocky Mountain sheep are to be added to the game that abound in the high plateau on Vancouver Island behind Courtenay. This is the result of the plans just announced by Mr. M.B. Jackson, K.C., chairman of the Game Conservation Board. The Big Horns are due to arrive here from Banff immediately. The car load will consist of fifty animals, and on arrival will be conveyed to Strathcona Park, where they will be released in the neighborhood of Mount Albert Edward, whose upper portions are covered in snow winter and summer, and

where natural conditions are said to be ideal for those animals. For some years after their introduction to this huge area the sheep will be very carefully protected; and it is expected that their numbers will substantially increase as time goes on.

The sheep are the gift of the Federal Government National Park authorities, and there is little doubt that the decision was actuated by the enthusiastic reports brought out by the members of a party, which included the Hon. T. [Thomas] D. Pattullo, Minister of Lands, which went on an expedition of investigation into Mount Albert Edward in August last. On their return the members of the party were unanimous in their opinion that the area is ideally suited for the establishment of a game reserve.

The Big Horn mountain sheep, monarchs of the highest Rockies, will be the first of their kind to be brought to Vancouver Island.

According to Mr. Jackson, the successful establishment of mountain sheep will make the Island a paradise for hunters. In addition to the usual game of the coast, the Island already has substantial herds of Elk, which are increasing as a result of protection. In addition, mountain goats have been brought here by the board and have established themselves in the Cowichan Lake district, where they were recently sighted for the first time since their arrival several years ago. With Big Horn added to the game population, the Island will have a wonderful variety of wild life.

Naturally the new additions to the Island game will be given complete protection for years until they have become well established. Some day they will attract large numbers of hunters because the game areas of the Island are so readily accessible.

The Introduction of Big Horn to the island will be the latest step in the most important experiment undertaken by the Game Board. First muskrats were brought here and have flourished until they promise to become important economically as fur producers. Then mountain goats were released in the Shaw Creek game reserve on Cowichan Lake. As they were not sighted for years, it was thought that they had found the climate unsuitable or had fallen prey to cougars. Recently, however, a game warden sighted a band of substantial numbers, showing that the goats had come to stay. Encouraged by the success of the goat experiment, Mr. Jackson asked the Federal Government to cooperate with the Game Board in the introduction of Big Horn here. The Federal authorities agreed to send a car load of the animals from Banff national Park, where they are so tame that tourists are able to takes pictures of them at a distance of a few feet. Introduction of sheep into Strathcona Park will add another charm to the Island reserve. Sheep there will enhance the mountain character of the park, in which rise so many snow-capped peaks. Here the Big Horn are expected to live and multiply, providing a new attraction for visitors. If they become as tame as they are in Banff, the animals will be frequently seen by people exploring the Strathcona wilds in the neighborhood of Buttle Lake.



A Ridge So Near: Can I trust myself?

By Matthew Lettington



Phil and Rick carousing in the alpine. Hiking the west face of Mount Haig-Brown. Below, our camp in the meadows west of Haig-Brown, Ptarmigan Pinnacles, El Piveto, and Rambler Peak. Photo by Matthew Lettington

Amid this odd pandemic-summer-- one fraught with social upheaval and weather that left most of us wondering when summer would arrive-- I joined two friends for a strenuous traverse of the high peaks of the Filberg Range. Planning weeklong adventures sometimes comes down to crossing your fingers and hoping for the right conditions. It took four years for the stars, work schedules, and weather forecast to align for our attempt along the Filberg Range Traverse. That's three years of disappointing last-minute trip changes. Was it worth it? *Oh, yes.*

The Filberg Range Traverse is challenging no matter what metric you use (you can read a good route description in Phil Stone's *Exploring Strathcona Park*). Ever chasing our self-imposed Island Alpine Quest (a goal



A shot of our camp in the meadows west of Haig-Brown. Ptarmigan Pinnacles in the background. You can see the snow gully to the ridge just above the copes of trees. Photo by Matthew Lettington

to summit all the peaks with an entry in *Island Alpine* by Phil Stone) our intent was to summit each peak along the way. By the time we exited the Elk River Trail, we'd spent five nights to traverse the 70 km and ascend 5400 metres of elevation. More importantly, along the way, we hiked fabulous ridges, unnamed features and managed to summit Elk, Laing, Cobb, Filberg, and Cervus peaks, missing out on the summit of Ptarmigan pinnacles and El Piveto Mountain.

Though we were excited to start the trip, we did so on a sour note. Our planned route took us through terrain where two weeks earlier well-known island mountaineering Laurence Phillipson disappeared. We spent as much time route finding on our first two days of hiking as we did scanning for some previous undis-



Rick and Phil, topping out on the ridge crest, Ptarmigan Pinnacles. Photo by Matthew Lettington

covered sign left by him. This blind searching led to repeated speculation about what could have happened, and speculation into deep personal reflection about my own decision-making. My thinking became questions about my internal motivations, what drives me to head to complex terrain where at best, I can only mitigate risks, and how my choices hold influence over others.

When Janelle asked me to write a report for the traverse, I was excited and drafted a 3500 word trip report—far too long! But, when I tried to truncate the narrative, I decided there's no way I could present a reasonable account of what I experienced. So I've summed it up: we hiked in the middle of a heatwave that

caused us to sweat through our clothes and boots, faced some of the phalanxes of mosquitos and navigation quagmires that demanded creativity to overcome.

Not enough? Maybe. But the real takeaway from my trip came weeks after when I was surfing Facebook. I found a post authored by Ken Wylie, he posed a hypothetical question that challenges the participant to consider their decision-making and personal values. From the ether emerged the phrase motivation bias, two tidy words that explain those amorphous reflections I had on my trip. Though motivation bias is a complex beast, a simple explanation is how our motivations influence –maybe interfere with—our decision-making. An easy to understand example is summit fever.



Phil and Rick standing on Cervus Mountain, examining the route below Rambler. Photo by Matthew Lettington

A Vignette

By four in the afternoon – on the fourth sweltering day of our trip-- we found ourselves, pockmarked by plagues of mosquitos, dehydrated and fatigued. Crossing the low saddle between the end of the Filberg Range and the toe of Conquistador Ridge, El Piveto's awesome north ridge, we'd already been on the move for eight hours. Already that day, we'd faced route-finding challenges, steep snow slopes, and risked ourselves on exposed fourth-class, chossy terrain only to discover we wouldn't have time to reach the summit of Ptarmigan Pinnacles. We'd had a full day of adventure by many standards, but we pushed our-

selves to make up lost time. Our goal was to make it to El Piveto's Northwest ridge for a better camping spot that evening. Reaching the ridge would position us well for an attempt on El Piveto, and ensure that we'd make it to Elk Pass the next day, beating the lousy weather we knew was rolling in.

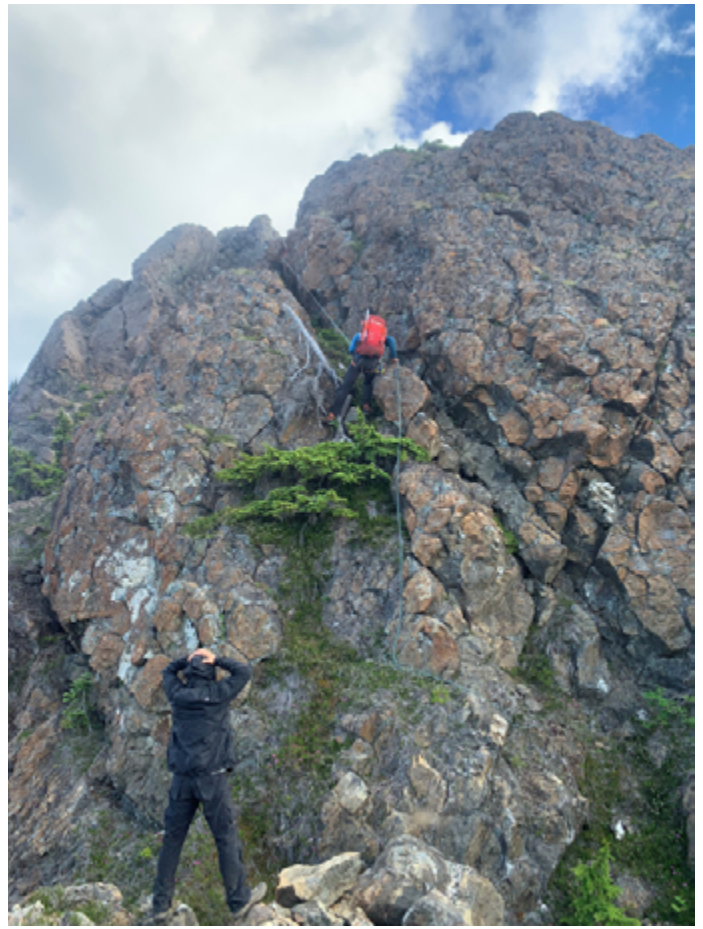
We reached deep into our energy reserves to ascend the north ridge's last few hundred metres, but we moved quickly knowing respite was just over the next hill. Our destination was an important mark on our map (~1640 m), an intersection between the low fifth class route toward the summit, and the lower exposed walking route that descends sandy exposed terrain to the northwest ridge.

When we reached 1625 metres –just 125 horizontal metres from our mark—an obstacle presented itself. The high rocky promontory rose dramatically from the ridge. I stood at the base and checked gullies descending each side, and then looked up the unexpected feature. It was beyond the terrain we expected to find—beyond third-class we felt. Yet, it was close enough to our marked intersection that I wondered if we missed the descending route. We each read the route description multiple times, trying to read between the lines and grasp our own misunderstanding in the language. However we sliced it, we were going to have to deal with the obstacle, either go over it or go below it.

We backtracked and tried a lower route on the north side of the ridge. An easy gully down led me out onto low-angle rock slabs with an exceptional amount of exposure. The trouble was the gravel that created exceptionally slippery conditions. We felt it matched the route description, but when I tried ascending what looked like an innocuous slope midway along, every rock rolled away under my feet and careened down the mountain. I was not comfortable and decided to turn back. I'm sure my friends stood watching with the realization



Phil on the lower route we used to avoid El Piveto's north ridge. Some how we're more comfortable in sketchy bush than crumbly gravel. Photo by Matthew Lettington



Rick hamming it up for the camera as I rappel the unexpected feature on El Piveto's north ridge. Photo by Phil Jackson

that there was nothing they could do to help. By the time I got back to my friends, my adrenaline was pumping. None of us was willing to proceed along this lower route, so we regained the north ridge.

Time was pressing us forward. 6:00 pm was creeping up, and I felt the pressure of night settling upon us. Getting benighted would be a disaster. As a last effort to route find, I scaled the rockface to explore beyond. At the top, I dropped my pack and followed the much easier terrain beyond to 1640 metres, and the GPS point marked in the route description.

Arriving at the intersection, I was sweating under the late evening sun, effort and the choice I was presented: A crossroad of sorts - higher or lower. From here, we could follow the ridge into (probably) spicier terrain, or descend along a section where the book warns, "take care." I had a moment of doubt.

I stood and considered what brought me here. I'm no stranger to decision-making: I've led scores of trips for the Island Mountain Ramblers and participated in many group decisions. I thought about my past and weighed this experience against it: Since 2015, Phil and I have successfully summited more than 150 different Vancouver Island peaks, on top of the many unsuccessful summits and days spent exploring routes and revising previous locations. I considered my partners: I'm lucky to have adventuring partners with whom I'm familiar. They know my skills and abilities, my likes and limitations, and I have a sense of theirs. Yet here, I knew that my choice was going to be a make or break moment.

My friends were going to follow what I recommended. It was already beyond 6:30 pm. If I returned and called them up, it would be past 7 pm by the time we regained my position. When they arrived here, would they have the guts to say no, and turn around? Or, would they feel that they'd come too far and urge themselves forward because we'd already done worse. I didn't trust my eyes as I evaluated both options. I squinted. Closed one eye, turned my back on the possibilities, breathed and looked again.

Over the years, I've learned that what I see isn't a reflection of the physical world; it's a blend of my lived experiences, anxieties that creep out, and what's presented. Often obstacles are easier than I perceive, and sometimes they're worse. I looked longer, trying to stare down the answer.

I've had friends seriously injured, some die, and many more that escaped with nothing more than an incredible story. I've encouraged friends to go farther, reach higher. And, I've stood by silent, when I should have yelled, "stop being an idiot; come back". What role does luck play? I've had narrow misses—lucky. And had a friend fall while running in the city and smash the bones in their face resulting in brain injuries so severe that they couldn't return to work for eight months—that's luck too. At best the skills I've learned only help mitigate risk. My choices have more power to influence outcomes than skill or luck. Ken put it this way, "Luck plays a role as much as our choices, and we need to bolster our choices, so we rely on luck less." Could I trust what I was seeing wasn't influenced by my motivation to get to camp before dark?

On this night, I didn't trust my ability to make the right choice for the right reason. I was making choices for others in a situation that might take away their ability to make an objective decision. I snapped some images and turned around, gathered my bag and rappelled to rejoin my friends.

I shared my thoughts about the route and my photographs, and what my decision was: No, let's go back to the saddle. It's too late to make this decision, we'd feel pressured to move forward to the northwest ridge and maybe compromise ourselves.

The next day, we found a different route around.

Upon returning home, I reached out to my friends with first-hand knowledge of the route. Yes, I had been in the right spot. Yes, the route goes, and it's sketchy. Yes, it would be much easier to come up the route than go down. Regardless of these yeses, I'm confident that my conscious choice to turn around and overcome my desire to just do it was the right one. It only cost us two hours of walking, but we all completed the traverse safely, and I still got my story.

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From the Front Cover:

Laurence Philippsen near the summit of Triple Peak NW

Photo by Lindsay Elms

Thank you to this month's authors:

Barb Baker, Catrin Brown, Ramsay Dyer, Lindsay Elms, Christine Fordham, Matthew Lettington, Rob Macdonald, Loys Maingon, Heidi Mulbacher, Phil Stone, and John Young

Name the Island lake answers:

i) Green. ii) Ruth Masters. iii) Cream. iv) Little Jim

