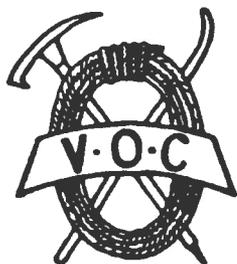


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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MURIEL PACHECO

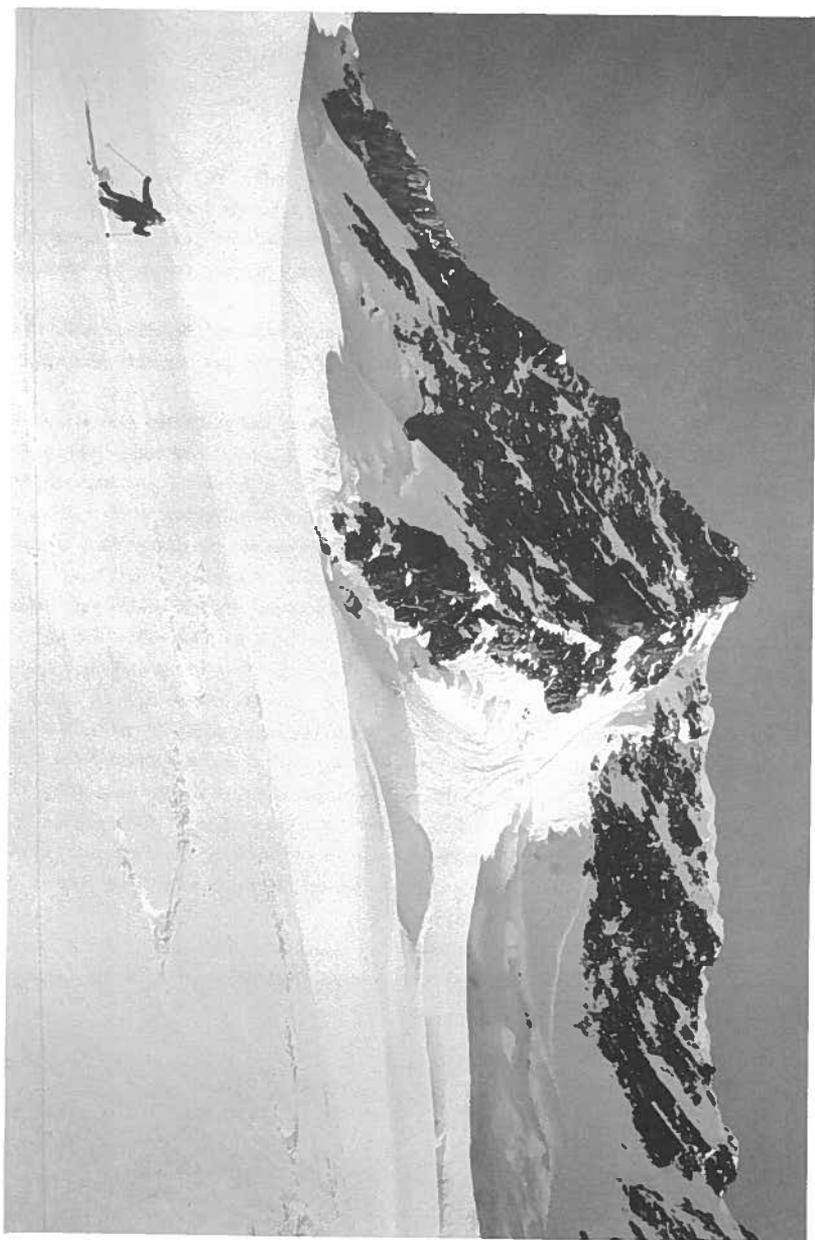
Hi. You may not know me if you are a new member this year, but I'm your president. When I was elected for this position last year I thought I was going to have a light academic load. As it turned out I ended up taking an intensive program in education and I have spent most of my year on the north shore. No, not skiing, but teaching rebellious high school students art.

Fortunately with the aid of my better half, Andy Pacheco, dedicated executive members, and some very keen general members, the club has held together without my visible presence.

I believe one of the most notable advances the club had made this year is with its move towards greater organisation through the transfer of much of the club's paperwork to the personal computer. John Omiclan spent many hours developing a custom-made program for the club's Hustler's Handbook in which now is contained each member's interests and abilities in the outdoors - a must when desperately searching for a partner to go on trips. The journal is now done with a PC by club members, which saves both time and money. Also of particular note are the instructional booklets which have been developed for the club's two most popular courses, rock school and glacier school, by myself and Craig Hollinger respectively. Craig has also gone a long way towards preparing a structured telemark school. Jan Palaty restored law and order to the equipment room, while Nick Folkard fulfilled his role as secretary admirably, often taking up the slack when the rest of us faltered. Last, but certainly not least is the work done by our Federation Rep, Judy Needham, who has been very vocal in recreational land use issues, supporting the club's stand of minimal impact on wilderness areas. We are continuing to strengthen our ties with the Federation of Mountain clubs; this will not only increase our awareness of the problems involved in maintaining the wilderness we use, it should also make it easier to voice our own concerns on land use issues.

Well, that's it for 89-90; remember though that VOC is often most active in the summer months when work loads ease up, so keep in touch. See you at the summer barbecues!

Steve Dods skiing below Manatee



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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

KEN LEGG

Phew! Its done! A special thanks to all those who immortalized themselves - the last minute deluge of articles was impressive (thanks Eric).

Gratitude is also owed to all those who helped with the typing, editing, and proof reading - it couldn't have been done without you.

I hope that you keep this Journal as a memory of your time in the VOC, and enjoy reading it as much as I did.

You know, its not really all that bad of a task

VOC EXECUTIVE 1989-90

PRESIDENT	MURIEL PACHECO
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VOC EXECUTIVE 1988-89

PRESIDENT	ANDY PACHECO
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SPECIAL PROJECTS	ERIC CLEMSON
PUBLICATIONS OFFICER	NICK FOLKARD

GRAD NEWS

Jim Chesko is doing his PhD in chemistry at Berkeley California; **Dave Robinson** has returned from his world-wide tour and is presently looking for employment.

Darlene Anderson, **Peter Celliers**, and **Dave Williams** are all back in town from various spots around the world

Peter Stone graduated! and is now spending even more time in the mountains.

Kobus Barnard is working at SFU and studying computer science part-time. He is now one course away from a second degree.

Emily Butler, **Viv Demuth**, **Dave Sullina**, **Ed Spatt** and ex-presidente **Richard Howes** are all working at the Mtn. Co-op.

Other ex-presidents: **Bill Durtler** is a filthy rich landlord (or so we hear) and is working in Calgary. **Rob Driscoll** is just finishing Med-school (look out world).

Trevor Norman was working for a pharmaceutical company in Calgary; rumour has it that he may now be travelling in Asia.

Francois Welt is lecturing at the university of Papua New Guinea

Markus Kellerhals was last seen working at the Strathcona Park Lodge.

Erika Kellerhals may have finished Med-school by now.

Bruce Fairley is now running a law practice in Golden.

Kwon Kim recently got his Masters in Biopsychology and is now one of the workforce.

Peter Fredman has been working in Northern Sweden and has spent the winter in New Zealand on a field trip.

Bjorn Wolgaart, fellow Swede, was last seen headed for Nepal; both have sworn to return to Canada.

Rich Lechleitner is now a full-fledged ranger at Grand Canyon Ntl. Park (rumour has it he even carries a GUN!)

Brad Boyle is doing his PhD in Zoology in St. Louis, Missouri. He and current member, **Alice Waterman** have recently announced their engagement!

Speaking of engagements, this has been a big year for the VOC: **Nick Folkard** and **Suzanne Rao**, and **Jeff Greenwood** and **Lisa Moody** have also announced their engagements. In addition **Steve Dods** and **Anita Miettunen** got married at Christmas, in Jamaica.

THE SOCIAL SCENE

Summer Barbecues:

On the last Wednesday of every month throughout the summer, a large VOC contingent was found partying at Spanish Banks. Attendance was very high, and this initiated many successful trips all summer long. As well, several bouts of frisbee, soccer, and football occurred.

Summer Reunion Party:

On an evening in September, several people gathered at the Grad Centre for a potluck dinner, and viewing slides of activities that occurred during the summer.

Longhike, September 30 to October 1:

Over 100 people attended this annual function. Rock school in Squamish and Murin Park was a major success due to the excellent organization, and invaluable instruction from the volunteer instructors. A record number of about 80 students learned how to crank. Several hikes went out on this sunny fall day, as well. Dinner, a superb linguini feast prepared by several VOC chefs, followed at the AMS Whistler cabin. Many thank-you's go to Becky Nakamura, who was instrumental in organizing the meal. Much partying and drinking occurred into the night, though not to its assumed high potential. When the sun rose, so did a handful of breakfast cooks, who prepared a delicious batch of pancakes. On Sunday, several day trips went out, while others continued to hone their skills on the sunny slabs of Squamish. All in all, an excellent weekend!

Halloween Party:

This was a major event in the VOC social year that was missed by only a small, unfortunate few. Unlimited quantities of free beer, pumpkin carving, and a costume contest were enjoyed by the countless individuals who partied well into the new month at Jan Palaty's house. Truly an experience one will never forget.

New Year's Reunion Party:

Again held at the Grad Centre, this event attracted many more than expected, and surprisingly, almost all brought food!

A wide variety of delicacies were enjoyed, ranging from exotically prepared sushi, to the vice-president's (Ahem) chocolate chip cookies. After the chow, many people showed slides of the past fall, and Christmas. A whole range of scenes from desert rock climbing to Rockies' powder were viewed.

Winter Longhike:

A small, but enjoyable affair held in late February attracted a lean group to Manning Park. The weather was clear, the skiing cool, and the dinner Mexican. A trip enjoyed by all who came.

Spring Banquet, March 29, 1990:

A lasagna dinner is being served at the Grad Centre Ballroom. Journals will be handed out, as will the traditional VOC awards to those who deserve them. Dan Seri will give a slide show about climbing, and "poking around" in the nearby mountains.

Banquet 1989

Bill Durtler was the judge of the VOC photo competition. Category winners were Ken Legg (flora and fauna, summer activity, winter activity), Tom Baumann (humour), Jeff Greenwood (people), and Andy Pacheco (scenery). The overall prize went to Eric Clemson for a panoramic shot of Mt. Baker.

Goon Awards:

Paul Kao, Hemorroid cream for his mysterious references to substances called "roids" which might help his training regimen.

Mike Hayden, a keychain for misplacing his keys and arriving at the parking lot fully laden with gear after the glacier school.

Many more Goon awards were given out but unfortunately nobody was assigned to record them! A goon award to the executive members in charge will be forthcoming at the next banquet.

Old Geezer Award: Now Grandpaw Peter Stone

Broken Board Award: Scott Phillips for the many ingenious ways he devised to injure his ankles over the year

Loving Cup: Anita Miettunen and Steve Dods



SPRING 1989

Mount Sheer Triathlon

Craig Hollinger

Spring 1989

Try this one some time. Strap your skis onto your mountain bike and head up the road behind Britannia Mines. Cycle up as high as you can, past the old townsite. When you can't go any further, ditch your bike, stuff the skis into your pack, and continue on foot. Put on the skis when snow of sufficient depth is reached. Ski up onto the ridges above Utopia Lake and over to Mt. Sheer. Leave the skis at the base of the mountain and scramble (class 3-4) to its summit and back down. Now the fun starts. Repeat the above, except in the reverse order. Crank turns down the slopes until you run out of snow, then hike back to your bike. Once on the bike, it's downhill (so to speak) all the way. Cycle, hike, ski, climb (oops, perhaps it should be called the Mt. Sheer Quad-athlon), a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

One point to remember, if you leave your skis in your pack when you cycle down, watch out for low branches. Skis that catch branches, have a way picking an unsuspecting cyclist off of his saddle and depositing him onto the ground.

Bicycling the Gulf Islands

Marilyn Noort

May 1989

The trip started with a quick discussion of weekend activity options at the clubroom on Friday. A bicycle trip to the San Juan Islands had been in consideration since the rains of February and since no one had a flat tire, it seemed like the perfect weekend to give it a go. Loose plans were made to meet at Stuart and Leslie's in the morning. At 9:00 p.m. I made the first of what would be several calls to Brian. "Do you have a patch kit?". "Not really". At 9:30 p.m. Brian phoned me. "Susie wants to come too, can you pick her up?". At 9:45 I phoned Brian. "My bicycle rack just broke, can we take your car?". At 10:00, Brian phoned me. "Do you have a pump?" "No. By the way, have you finished packing? You haven't started? Good. You haven't got the bicycle rack out of storage and onto your car yet? Oh. You haven't found your panniers yet? Oh my." I can usually count on Brian to be further behind schedule than I am but this was ridiculous.

At 7:00 a.m. we met at S and L's and carried on to the Tsawwassen ferry terminal. We thought we were really on top of things for once since our objective was the 10:00 ferry.

But as supplies were being rearranged among panniers at the terminal, simultaneous cries of "Where is my wallet!?" came out from Stuart and myself. Frantic searches through pockets and packs revealed nothing. I bicycled back to my parked car and found mine on the passenger's seat. Stuart wasn't so lucky and deduced that he must have left his at home in Richmond. Plans to make the 10:00 ferry were scrapped. The revised plan was for Stuart to scrounge off his friends for the weekend and for us to get on the 11:00 ferry. At 10:45 we went to buy tickets. They were sold out. "For foot passengers!?" we asked, incredulous. "Yes, well, this is the long weekend you know" the ticket vender snorted. The second revision of plans was for Stuart to race back to Richmond to get his wallet and for us all to board the 12:00 ferry. The question was, could Stuart make it home and back by 12:00? Should he even try? After all, there was always Leslie's Visa card. Since Stuart is basically a thrill seeker, he decided to challenge the gods of Richmond traffic, leaving the rest of us to wait at the terminal. As we held our 12:00 tickets firmly in hand, we had an opportunity to ponder the extent of our loyalty to our friend. If he didn't make it back, would we use our tickets? Our loyalty was never truly tested, because at 11:55 we saw Stuart pedalling like a demon toward us.

After a lovely ferry ride, we landed at Schwartz Bay and rode on to the Washington ferry terminal where we planned to catch a ferry to Friday Harbour, San Juan Island. With visions of country roads and whole wheat cinnamon buns (which you can only get on San Juan Island, as far as I know) dancing in our heads, we eagerly approached the terminal. Vague feelings of misgiving grew as we saw that we were the only people around. A glance at the ferry schedule told us why. The only ferry going to the San Juan Islands for the weekend had left two hours ago. Unless we swam there was no way of reaching our planned destination. If we had just made that 10:00 ferry . . . All in all, things seemed to be going from bad to worse. As the unofficial and reluctant leader of this trip, I began to see mutiny amongst the group as a genuine possibility. Never mind, things could only get better. The third revision of plans involved a change of destination. We would go to the Gulf Islands. We rode back to Schwartz Bay and got on a ferry to Saltspring Island.

On Saltspring Island, there is only one area (Ruckle Park) within reasonable biking distance where one can legally camp. We silently agreed to disregard the signs warning that all campsites at Ruckle Park were full. We were tired and we really needed a campsite, so we rode on. Approaching the park, we saw a ranger standing in the middle of the road, blocking the entrance. We briefly considered overpowering him with our bicycle pumps but, well, he might have had a gun. He was actually quite a sympathetic guy, and told us that we could camp in the picnic area, but would have to leave early in the morning before anyone saw our blatant violation of park rules. No problem! The picnic area was actually the park's prime camping spot, with a view of other Gulf Islands and soft, flat tent-size patches of land. After one or two relocations, as Stuart searched for the "perfect" spot, we were finally settled for the evening.

The next day was Brian's birthday (May 14, for those who are curious). We plotted and planned mean and nasty things to do to him to celebrate but our imagination was inhibited by certain restrictions - namely, that a) it was Sunday and most stores were closed, b) we had limited funds, and c) no one would volunteer to carry a blackforest cake all day in

their panniers in 30 degree weather. We settled for two teeny weeny pudding cakes from a bakery in Ganges that miraculously was open.

In the afternoon it was decided that we should ride our bikes up Mt. Maxwell (Stuart's idea). Apparently, bicycles are usually not ridden up Mt. Maxwell. Most of the ride is on fairly steep gravel road, and no one was equipped with a mountain bike. Brian did have a very low gear that his comrades were prepared to wrestle away from him (if we could have caught up with him). Brian and Stuart rode on ahead while Leslie, Susie and I pushed our bikes and coughed gravel dust. The ferry from Saltspring Island was leaving at 4:30 and after our experiences with ferries we had planned to head back a bit early. At 3:30 we saw Brian and Stuart hurtling toward us. They had ridden to within a mile from the top and apparently decided to turn back because time was running short. This was a wise decision because we made it to the ferry terminal with only five minutes to spare, after a tooth-loosening ride down the steep, gravelled, pothole-ridden road (bicycle brakes are about as effective on steep gravel roads as they are on wet days).

We got off the ferry on Pender Island and found a campsite fairly easily. Leslie and I went searching for firewood, which we discovered was in short supply. Trying to look forlorn and woodless as we trod past other well-stocked campers but no one wanted to donate any of their precious cache. We finally staggered back dragging a 12 foot tree behind us. Since we lacked an axe with which to chop the tree into manageable pieces, we simply set one end of the tree ablaze (kids, don't try this at home). After dinner, we presented Brian with his cakes, which were in remarkably good shape, considering they had been in a pannier amongst dirty socks, spare tires and a can of WD-40.

On Monday, we rode to Bedwell Bay, had a pint in the pub, ate lunch by the lighthouse, explored the beach, and even found some rocks to climb. Leslie got sort of stuck in a less than elegant position while trying to downclimb in bicycle shoes. Brian captured this position on film, if anyone is interested in seeing it (sorry Leslie).

The trip back to the mainland was pleasant and relatively uneventful. Dinner and ice cream in Richmond capped off an enjoyable weekend. The Gulf Islands by bicycle - a pleasant and recommended trip.

Participants:

Stuart McDonald

Brian Smith

Leslie McDonald

Marilyn Noort

Susie Gaskin

Wahoo Tower the Easy Way

Jan Palaty

June 1989

Early June is a difficult time: late for really good skiing but still too early for hiking. The only thing to do is to drag your skis along anyway and hope you'll be able to put them

on soon. For such travel, it is best to get up to some higher elevations where the skiing can still be surprisingly good. This was our reasoning when four of us made a ski trip to the Manatee group in early June with Wahoo Tower as our objective. Real Mountaineers like the Editor ascend by the north buttress but we figured that the east face would be more than enough for us.

We drove up to Meager Creek one Friday evening in George's venerable VW bus. Uneventful, except for nearly running over three owls on the Lillooet main line. Fortunately, the Devastator Creek road gate was unlocked so we managed to drive to a point about 2 km from the Creek. Bright and early next morning (Peter saw to that) we set off on our Quest, carrying enough climbing equipment to put up a new route on Waddington. The scramble up The-Hillside-From-Hell was the usual miserable thrash but fortunately the snow appeared fairly soon, greatly easing our progress. Once on the meadows, travel was brisk and the views spectacular under brilliant blue skies. It was also amazingly hot in areas sheltered from the wind: not far from 30 degrees! Incidentally, this weather continued for the rest of the trip, resulting in several very sunburned individuals.

After crossing the large unnamed creek in the meadows on an exceptionally doubtful snow bridge (this creek usually requires a surprisingly large northward detour in summer), we made our way across the Manatee glacier. The crossing was enlivened by the discovery of some recent animal tracks belonging to either a full-grown grizzly or a very large marmot. Since the prints were nearly a foot in diameter (really!), we concluded that it must have been an exceptionally large marmot. We then cut some fine-looking grooves down the west end of the glacier on excellent spring snow.

Anyway, we then traversed around to the Remora glacier and set up camp about a kilometre north of the base of Wahoo. The east face looked intimidating: we frequently looked up at it that evening and tried to convince ourselves that it really wasn't all that steep. Only George, The-Man-Who-Skied-With-John-Baldwin, was unconcerned. No less disturbing was the spotting of at least two wolverines a few hundred metres from camp. They were very attractive animals, in their shaggy brown fur, but we weren't too keen on contributing to their healthy appearance with our food.

Next morning we were roused before dawn as usual by Peter's desire to expose a few hundred feet of film. We skied up to the base of Wahoo, ditched our skis (except for George: an unfortunate decision as it turned out later) and started the "climb". The snow was very soft (not surprising, considering the daytime 20 degree plus temperature) so the leader would sink up to his knees with every step up the steep slope. Not at all fun. After a thousand-odd exhausting feet of this, the route moved to rocky ridge involving some enjoyable Class 2 - 3 scrambling before following a snowy plateau to the summit. Like, just totally rad views all around. On the descent, it was discovered that the snow was ideally suited to a sitting glissade, which instantly drenched one's trousers but was a wonderful ride. At first, Steve declined to join in this childish approach to the serious science of mountaineering but eventually he abandoned his usual dignity and slid down with the rest of us.

Although the glissading was fun, we were generating some rather large wet snow avalanches in the process. The potential danger of these slides was not realized until George put his skis back on (they had been left half-way up the face) and started to telemark down.

Part way down, the snow slides he had triggered with his first few turns caught up with him and started to carry him towards a section of the slope having a steep drop. The moving sheet of snow on which George was riding was temporarily in complete control (the sight of George's ineffectual efforts to get off attested to that) but after a few scary seconds, he managed to roll off on to some stationary snow. A few more (careful) glissades brought us to the base of the mountain by noon: time to bag some more peaks! Manatee and Remora seemed to be the obvious choices so off we went. We picked our way up to the Manatee-Remora col through the crevasses (never let a photographer lead the way on a heavily broken-up glacier as they will head straight for the most impressive/terrifying crevasses) but not before several of us had felt ourselves suddenly sink by about six inches as underlying snow layers had settled. We were very glad indeed to reach the friendly rocks at the top of the ridge.

Peter and Steve looked briefly at Manatee's allegedly Class 3 west ridge and said that George and I were welcome to it. After a brief scramble on the loose and exposed ridge one of us decided that he wasn't feeling sufficiently honed to do loose Class 4 notches in telemark boots so we retreated to the col and nipped up to Remora to join the others in meditating on cloud formations and Life in general. Lovely news, warm sunshine, no hurry anywhere: what more could one ask for? We lounged around on top for a while and then set off down the slope. The skiing was marginal high up as the snow was already in shadow but the remainder of the descent to the camp was simply heavenly as we made turn after turn on the vast and gentle expanse of spring snow. Great stuff.

Up bright and early again next morning. A wolverine walked through our camp to wish us well and we were on our way. Several hours later we were finally out of the blazing sunshine and back in the forest, trying to ski as far as possible on the sparse snow cover. Eventually even George found it difficult to ski on pine needles so we took the boards off and made our way down to the valley by the "tumbling boulder" method. One hour and innumerable falls later we finally burst out of the forest on to the Devastator slide area. It was positively sweltering down there: had we really been skiing just a few hours before? We walked back to the truck and drove down to the gate, which was now, of course, locked. By virtue of my extensive dealing with CRB Logging Co. watchmen, I was volunteered to go down the camp and remedy this situation. Fortunately, I met the watchman as he was driving out of the camp and after giving him our suspicious (to him) reasons for being in what he considered CRB's sacred realm he reluctantly unlocked the gate. Several hours later, scorched and dehydrated, we were back in Vancouver.

In summary, Wahoo Tower is a great spring ski destination which I would highly recommend to anyone who wants to do something a bit more exotic than Brandywine but doesn't want to spend a lot of time and effort in getting there.

Factor 8 sunscreen, by the way, is not advised for spring ski trips.

Participants

Steve Dods

Jan Palaty

George Fulton

Peter Stone

Scramble up Mt. Larrabee

Tom Baumann

Spring 1989

This was going to be a rather international hike and we would bag two peaks in one day; well it's just that the name in Canada is Mt. Larrabee and in the U.S.A., Red Mountain. About two thirds are south of the border and that's where we started our hike. As we are rather lazy we take the 4 x 4 and drive the very narrow and in places rotten road up to Twin Lakes, two little lakes in a mountain pass with a mini waterfall between them. This by itself is worth the hike or as it was drive. After the usual "Oh this is just too much work, let's have lunch here and go home then", we set off on a well groomed hiking trail.

As the snow lingered around long this year, there are several patches of steep snow to navigate, not without the traditional boot skiing on the downhill parts. Yes, the trail first heads downhill to circumvent a steep cliff off Mt. Winchester. It then leads ever upward to Low Pass, usually in snow, then to high pass, less snow. From this first part of the trail one gets a good view of the back side of the Chilliwack River Valley mountains, including Mt. Slesse, The Pleiades and more. Further along you can see Mt. Baker and Mt. Shuksan and the mountain one can spot from the TransCanada Highway near Chilliwack, Mt. Tomyhoi with its great snowfield. From here the lake just below Tomyhoi is visible which is an outing by itself for another day. Now we can make out the old mineshaft which will be the start of the rock scramble. After crossing an extensive snowfield we start using the primate technique (hands and feet) to climb up to a ridge that led across a scree slope to the rocky part of the climb. The rock itself is red colored and in an advanced stage of decay. There are plenty of portable handholds and loose rocks will keep on cascading down. As there is no marked trail many approaches are possible. We choose the easiest route and still venture off it several times because of no markings. Once we spend a solid hour in a chimney trying to extract ourselves as the grade is getting beyond our skills. Near the top there seems to be no solid rock at all to rely on and the two sides of the ridge are quite exposed. We never really appreciate the top of the mountain until we make it safely back to the meadows and look back at it. I just don't make a good mountain goat!

Participants:

Josef Seywerd

Tom Baumann

The Wapta Icefields Ski Traverse

Composed in a party tent, while lost in a storm
somewhere on the Columbia Icefields

Ken Legg

Spring 1989

April exams were finally over. Still shaking from the effects of caffeine and sleepless nights we finalized our plans for a ski traverse in the Canadian Rockies. Having only two weeks before Rob and Saskia had to return to school and I had to show up for work, it was important to make the most of it. Our plan was to start at Peyto Lake and ski across the Wapta Icefields to Sherbrooke Lake. Writing their last exam on Thursday (after a leisurely 8 exams in 5 days) they immediately departed on their journey to the Rockies for a little R and R. I couldn't get away until Monday noon and planned to meet up with them in Lanner's Deli at Lake Louise. The drive up was uneventful for both parties: they ran out of gas on the Coquihalla; and I froze numb in the mobile icebox (VW Van of course).

We sorted through our mountain of colourful gear in the middle of the Lake Louise shopping mall, entertaining a throng of curious tourists. Finding ourselves organized we drove off to leave one car at the West Louise Lodge, where our traverse would wind up, and then drove the other north up the Icefields Parkway to Peyto Lake, our starting point. The great thrash down to the lake began under unsettled and stormy skies. A tiring route-finding error was made by taking the summer trail down to Peyto Lake rather than cutting through the trees at the point where the highway comes nearest to it - a costly mistake. The relatively short distance to the lake exhausted us. From the lake we skied up a narrow valley decorated by glacial moraine until reaching the glaciologist's hut that is perched beside Peyto Glacier. Invited in by the resident glaciologist, we were treated to a fine brew of hot Tang. It was getting late in the day, and the visibility up on the glacier was deteriorating. Nevertheless, lured by the thought of a comfortable bed, we decided to push on to the Peter and Catherine Whyte hut. Under heavy packs we trudged up the glacier for another hour and a half until the hut finally appeared from the mist. Alone in the hut our weary threesome quickly settled in for a meal of macaroni and cheese. I had smuggled along a gala keg of wine, some wine glasses, and party favours, which two of us enjoyed immensely. Unfortunately Rob was incapacitated by the leek soup and didn't enjoy the party. If you're ever in the Whyte hut don't use the old white bucket for getting snow - it's now contaminated.

The next day was grey and gloomy, and chronic hut lassitude kept us in bed until gone 11:00. We spent most of the day reading and lounging about the hut for the glacier was too whited out for us to attempt an enjoyable crossing. Around four o'clock the clouds suddenly broke and shafts of sunlight lit up the glacier. Our gear was quickly crammed into packs and the short ski over to the Bow hut began (the old Bow hut, replaced this past summer). We became a little nervous midway across when the clouds once again dropped onto the glacier, but within a few minutes they again burned off. We reached the hut in less than two hours,

reaching Nirvana on the final, virgin slope down to the hut. There was a few centimetres of new snow atop a light crust, blue skies above with what few clouds there were tinted with alpenglow, and the majestic summit of St. Nicholas looming over our tracks. The ski down was so enjoyable that we dropped our packs at the hut and went back up to get in one more run before the sun set. There was a party of five ski bums from Banff in the hut that night who entertained us with their trendy mountain bike talk:

"Like, I've got a \$5,000 custom designed hand built frame with \$3,600 in components man, and she's real tight and gnarly."

"Oh yea, well I've got..."

This day waxed as yesterday waned: clear, sunny, and cold. We skied up the slopes above Bow hut and continued across the glacier to the col between St. Nicholas and Mt. Olive, abandoning our packs. Freed from their crippling weight the plan was to ski over and then scrambled up St. Nicholas, which provided us with a spectacular view of the Bow glacier and of the mountains surrounding the Whyte hut that were hidden to us the previous day. We returned to the col and then skied over to the west face of Mt. Olive, slogging up a snowslope in the baking sunshine. Stubbornly, I kept my skis on for the entire rock infested summit ridge while my comrades took theirs off (partly because I knocked off all the snow). From this summit there was a clear view of the inviting mountains and icefields to the south - the route for tomorrow. Below was the Balfour hut, and to the west Mt. Grey on which the party from Banff had left tracks - top to bottom. It was a good ski down to our packs despite a few crust induced crashes, but from here down to the hut was hell. This long downhill slope was already in the shade and the previously sunwarmed snow had turned into an ankle wrenching crust. We all persevered and using "survival turns" made it to the Balfour hut. Our red-necked friends were already there enjoying afternoon cocktails and amused by our uncoordinated descent. Dinner was flaming curry, guaranteed hot enough to make you sweat.

The cozy Balfour hut lies in a deep valley, encircled by Mts. Balfour, Olive, and Grey. The route for today was to ascend far up the southern glacier to the Balfour high col. This stretch was the only one on which we roped up choosing to avoid the dangers of the hanging seracs by heading out into the more crevassed portion of the glacier. This route was objectively much safer because it was protected from avalanches or seracs by a large crevasse which formed a protective moat. The high col made for a perfect lunch spot, and a place to rid ourselves of the burden of our packs. We joined up with the three remaining Banffites for a scramble up Mt. Balfour (the other two having returned to Bow hut). Ascending the unchallenging east ridge involved a lot of frustrating trailbreaking up an aesthetic snow covered ridge. Balfour is the highest summit in the Wapta area and from here can be seen the entire traverse, the Lake Louise ski area, Mt. Temple, and too many other famous sights to name. Balfour is almost always shrouded in bad weather so we were lucky to have made it up. Beautiful turns back to our packs and a long downhill tuck brought us to the NW flank of Mt. Daly where the new Scott Duncan Memorial Hut is perched. A hut so new it doesn't yet have an outhouse. We dug a sun pit, lounged around, made our world famous mashed potato dinner, and went to bed feeling very pleased with ourselves.

The plan for the final day of our traverse was to get an early start so as to get down to the highway before the sun's heat rotted away the solid crust and made travel awkward and

treacherous. We set the alarm idealistically early so that we could scramble up Mt. Daly before breakfast, but when the alarm went off at 5:30 AM the idea was unanimously vetoed. The crust was perfectly hard when we departed around 8:00, and supported big fast sweeping turns. We made our way down to Sherbrooke Lake although not everyone enjoyed this icy crust. Falling meant a long toboggan ride. From here down we learned all about isothermic snow, a phenomenon where the summer heat manages to start melting the snow from the ground up. Gliding down an innocent looking trail among the trees one might suddenly find that one foot would plop three feet beneath the snow. Stopped dead, the resulting faceplant enhanced by the full weight of one's pack drives the head deep under the snow, coming up with the inevitable mouthful of moss and pine needles. In masochistic bliss Rob and I refused to put on our skins and every hundred yards or so one of us would beef, but since it was such a warm day and we were in such good spirits we always came up laughing. Just as the novelty of this isothermic snow was beginning to wear off we arrived back at the West Louise Lodge. Panic set in quickly when the only key to the Rabbit couldn't be found, but luckily just as we were making plans to have another one sent out from Vancouver it appeared from deep inside a Gore-tex pocket. As tradition would have it this fine trip drew to an end with tall mugs of frosty ale in Banff's own King Eddy.

Participants:

Saskia Acton

Rob Driscoll

Ken Legg

Yosemite Valley (an Epic)

Eric Clemson

Spring 1989

Early this morning, before my 8:30 class, I sat in the VOC clubroom, having my muffin and coffee. Having a few minutes to spare, I picked up the copy of Yosemite Climber, and began to recall images of my trip to "The Valley." Sensations of warmth, excitement, and adventure eased their way into my mind. Why all this was happening before a Math class, I do not know. My previous conceptions of Yosemite Valley climbing were initially based largely upon the tales I had read in Royal Robbins' instructional book, Basic Rockcraft, which was also my first accurate description of what rock climbing was. Ever since that time, five or six years ago, I had acquired the growing desire to visit this place which was the home of features named El Capitan, and Half Dome, amongst others. Eventually, the "sixth year" arrived, and I finally made it down to Yosemite. Fortunately my image of the valley was updated from bold, pin-bashing assents up the overhanging walls of El Cap in the 60's, to a more contemporary climbing scene where routes of almost all levels of seriousness, difficulty, and length abounded. In anticipation of the trip, I had been questioning anyone I could find about what the routes-to-do were, while simultaneously almost putting the guidebook to memory.

Eventually, on May 11, six VOC'er's piled themselves and their mounds of gear into and onto an old Ford stationwagon, and headed south along the I-5. Many coffees later, we pulled into the valley, myself awed at the grandeur and beauty of what I was seeing, even if it was raining slightly. Part of me was quite familiar with some of the visual features of Yosemite Valley, yet the overall feeling of the place was very new to me. I had seen Yosemite before, but had never heard, smelled, or felt it. Without even stepping out of the car, I could tell I was going to like it here. It just felt right. I now started to understand why people like Muir and Adams valued this place so much.

Our first day in Yosemite comprised mostly of checking out the camping situation, and places like the interpretive centre, as well as stupid acts like emptying all our gear out onto El Cap Meadows, waiting for it to rain, and then putting our sodden supplies back into the car. We also had to deal with Andy (Mr. Coffee), who had either driven, or been awake throughout the whole trip. At some point during the day, Andy's brain had stopped working, without warning. Somehow, we managed to contain Andy, and soon left the park to find a place to camp, as all the campsites inside were full. After a decent dinner accompanied by Laura Scudders (she was to provide us with all our tortilla chips for the next two weeks), we took our well-deserved horizontal positions, as we had to rise early the next day, in order to get a campsite in the Valley.

The next morning we headed into the Valley, and secured what was to be our home, site #36 in Camp 4, the traditional Yosemite climber's campground. This being taken care of, we set out to explore the Valley, as it was still a bit too damp to climb. Rich, Jeff, and I went up the Yosemite Falls trail, while Andy, Muriel, and Scott poked around elsewhere.

The Falls trail led us up to the valley rim where we could view practically all of Yosemite Valley. What a place! I compiled a mental list of climbs that I wanted to do - a list of climbs that would probably take a valley local about three years to do. Oh well, at least I wouldn't run out of climbs! Speaking of which . . .

**Eric Clemson looking "classic" on the East Buttress
of Middle Cathedral Rock**



Middle Cathedral Rock

East Buttress

This was my first climb in Yosemite. After two days of showery weather, we were all itching like dogs to do some climbing . . . and lots of it. Thus, the two groups of Andy and Muriel, Jeff and I, decided to go for the East Buttress of Middle, a very popular moderate grade IV. Upon reaching the base, I was, well, "totally flippin'". Never had I looked up at such an attractive, clean expanse of rock just screaming to be climbed. And yet, unlike the mountains of B.C., it was dry and warm. The starting point also led a bit to the aesthetics of the route, as it was nicely covered by a forest of deciduous trees; spaced in such a way that lots of light was let through to the ground, yet once up on the rock, it looked as though there were no ground, just a green blanket of fog below.

Andy and Muriel set off just in front of us, and after putting on shoes, and harnesses, and the like, and after finally locating the topo map, Jeff started up the first lead, a 5.8. Once past a certain point, I could no longer see Jeff, as the trees were literally touching the rock, and obscuring the view above. After putting in a couple of pieces, Jeff breezed through the crux, and arrived at the belay. Jeff soon had the belay on, and I started up the 4th class rambling, carrying the pack on my back. All was proceeding fluidly until I reached the crux, which I had previously laughed about as being "just a 5.8".

This pitch, I realized, did not like being ridiculed. First of all, it decided to remove all of the holds for me. Secondly, it thought that I still needed to be taught a lesson, so seeking the big blob on my back, decided to close in on me so that I could not just easily stem up this "little corner." I was starting to have doubts about all the Yosemite stuff. Were all the routes going to be this horrendous? After a bit more nudging, elbowing, and wallowing, I crawled up to the belay where Jeff and Andy were smiling. Sweat was running down me, and I was swearing like a witness in court about climbing with a pack. They thought it was funny. Nine more pitches to go.

The next short lead was mine. Although only 5.7, this pitch was exponentially more enjoyable as I left the pack for Jeff to carry, and was able to actually focus on the climbing at hand, not like the previous pathetic attempt at moving upward. Fabulous stemming, underclings, and flake-grabbing led me to the next stance. Wow! Steepness without strenuousness. This was what climbing was supposed to be! Beautiful moves - the type that require a bit of thought, but not so much as to cause any delay of flow.

Jeff cruised the next series of thin 5.7 lie-backs with little problem. I followed with the pack, this time getting to feel more used to the balance shift that it caused, and the fact that my movements had to be more efficient than normal.

The following pitch was the supposedly "5.10c" crux pitch that started up a blank face, following a bolt ladder (5.10), then traversed left to a 5.9 overhang, which once turned, led to a 5.6 lie-back up a flake pitch to the belay. This was also the largest pitch of the route. I left Jeff at the very spacious belay ledge (an excellent tanning spot, by the way!), and started

up the bolt ladder in much the same style as Warren Harding had used in 1954. Warren, however, had no brand new 3/8" bolts staring him in the face. (bad pun!!) In any case, I turned 5.10c in AO, although regretted it, once I reached the last bolt. While on it, I noticed many possible holds, and considering its angle, looked quite doable. Oh well, next time! Traversing left from the last bolt, is where the fun started. I was glad to be using two ropes as I had to go down a bit, then back up to reach the overhang crux. An interesting combination of stemming, and finger jams led to a good finger lock above the lip where I could finally pull myself up and over. Again, this route was really showing its stuff. Great rock, great locations, and wonderful moves. After the roof, I cruised up this amazing, long, juggy flake for the belay. This rock was made precisely for this purpose, or so it felt to us. Jeff followed, yet had difficulty fighting the overhang with the pack on, much the same problems as I had encountered on the first pitch. This was my favourite pitch on the route, and if I were to return and free the 5.10c, it would be even better.

Jeff led a 5.8 slab traverse right to reach the next corner system, that would eventually lead to the top. The next three pitches, I found to be somewhat less interesting than the previous ones, although they were still, indeed, very good quality. One pitch that I think was Jeff's favourite, was a 5.7 groove that had to be stemmed and jammed simultaneously. I recall not having enjoyed that one too much, mostly because of the way that the pack was screwing up my balance, and the fact that I was also getting quite agitated about the thunderclouds that were moving in.

At the top of the eighth pitch, the shit hit the fan. The thunderclouds had moved in, and began to show just what lousy house guests they could be. Water started to pour down the corner of the ninth pitch, and spewed out into our laps. Andy and Muriel, who were on the ledge above us, offered to throw down a rope. I suggested, rather jokingly to Jeff, that it was his lead. He didn't think it was very funny. The straightforward-looking 5.8 dihedral had become a grade 6 kayak run. We took the rope. Andy and Muriel belayed Jeff up first, while I got wet. Soon enough I realized that there was some rain gear in the pack, however by this time, Jeff was already halfway up the pitch with the pack. Oh well, I was already soaked, and hey, this was California! After what had seemed like a long time, I was finally put on belay, and proceeded to do my best attempt at a front crawl. Even though I could hardly see through the three inches of gushing water to where the holds were, I wasn't having too much of a problem with the climbing, and made it up quite quickly, or so it seemed at the time. Even though I would never wish to repeat this sort of thing, I think it was one of my best moments in climbing. I was so focused on getting up this thing, that I no longer considered the dangers, difficulties, or any other particularities. I just moved for the top. I now figure that considering my frame of mind at the time, I could have led the thing if Andy and Muriel were not there. I was past common sense, anxiety, or the fear mode, and was set purely into a survival mode. I was also getting cold and uncomfortable.

There were four of us on a ledge with one seemingly meek 5.6 pitch to go. Andy started aiding up, and somehow, due to rope complications, fell a good distance when a piece popped. Hmmmm.

Andy was unscathed, and we suggested that he forget the aid, and just try and stem above the river flowing down the groove. This seemed to work, and soon he arrived at the belay, and

started belaying us up. One by one, we reached the top. The climb was over. By now, Murphy's Law of Weather was coming into effect, and the rain began to slow down, and then end. El Capitan looked sublime with a few rays of the western sun catching its features, as clouds rolled up its ramparts. Although soaked to the bone, I felt good.

After coiling the ropes, we made our way across the Katwalk, a series of ledges leading to Cathedral Gully, our descent route. Although some of us had been informed that the Katwalk was supposed to be tricky route-finding, we had no real problems by using pure common sense. During the descent down the Gully, we had to make a couple of rappels down 50 steps. One of these I remember quite vividly, as it involved a rappel through a waterfall - something none of us had ever done before (I think). We all had good laughs watching the others carefully rappelling a more gentle slope above, while trying to avoid getting one's feet wet in the creek. At a certain point, however, one reached a drop where the rock overhung. The water dropped vertically, as did the rope - right through it. Thus, avoiding the flow was impossible, and one had to do a free rappel with torrents of water running all through and around your clothes. In any case, this proved to be more comical than anything, and soon after, we reached the descent trail to the parking lot.

Considering our collective stench on the drive back to camp, there was a unanimous decision to head for the showers, this time with warm water and soap, and without our clothes on.

The East Buttress of Middle is definitely a route worth repeating. Providing you have good, consistent weather all day, it is a very relaxing, yet interesting climb. The length is just right for a good day, and no pitches are particularly threatening, or dangerous. If one is confident about oneself, and the weather, the climb can be done without a pack, which would dramatically increase the speed, and the enjoyment for the seconder. This is as close to being a "perfect" climb as any, and perhaps is why it is one of the classics of the Valley.

Days Off

After doing a long climb that requires a full day, one often feels like taking the next day off from climbing, and sleeping, and relaxing. Yet for some reason, I had the idea that this was wasted time, and that I should be climbing. Heck, did I travel all this way to hang out in camp, or wander around the valley every second day? I was bothered by this for the first week and a half, and felt that for some reason I was not climbing enough. Then I tweaked my shoulder, and realized what rest days were for. During one of these off days, I was able to coax some of the gang over to a nearby crag to do a couple of pitches. In the parking lot, before hiking there, I pulled a micro-muscle in my shoulder while lifting a pack. It hurt sharply, but I didn't consider it to be too much of a problem, and just didn't move it for the next half hour while hiking over to Sunnyside Bench. By the time we got there, my shoulder seemed to be okay, so I decided to lead a neat little 5.10 route called "Safe to Surf". My arm didn't have any problems with the route, and I assumed that my pains were over. After Andy and Muriel top-roped "Safe to Surf", we moved over to where Jeff and Scott were,

so we could t.r. a couple of thin 5.10 cracks. I followed Andy up a 5.7, and still, no problem with my shoulder. When my turn came to t.r. one of the 5.10 cracks, I started up the initial easy section with no problems. I then moved my right hand up, made a solid finger lock, then pulled. Yet instead of pulling, my supraspinatus muscle, a small stabilizing muscle in the shoulder, got pulled. I let go, and was lowered to the ground, this time in much more pain than before at the parking lot. I now realize that climbing during this "off day" was essentially what did me in. Because of this injury, I was not able to do any climbing which stressed the upper body for the rest of the trip. Fortunately for my shoulder, I had only about half a week left.

I look back now, and understand that there is much more to do in Yosemite, other than climbing, even if that is one's prime motive for going there. Heck, just leaning back in the hammock in camp while sipping beer on a sunny day can be the makings for a great holiday.

On our rest day after the East Buttress of Middle, "The Gals Next Door" moved in next to us. Apparently they had returned from a big wall, and were also in a lazy mood, sorting gear, and the like. One of these women was a fairly quiet person, yet had the biceps to make 5.12's seem like leaves in the wind. She seemed to mind her own business most of the times, and generally blended in with the Camp 4 scene of "severe mellowness." Her climbing partner, Ruth, on the other hand, was the complete opposite. In fact, she seemed to have quite the designs for Rich. Rich did not feel the same way; at least that's what he told us. On one occasion, when Rich had emptied the loose change from his pockets onto a stump, Ruth wandered over to check out the action - and Rich. Upon seeing the change, she demonstrated great glee at her finding. "Oh boy," she said, "I'm going to steal this money." Rich sort of fell into the seemingly joking situation when he "let" her steal the money. In the end, however, Rich did not get his money back. (In more ways than one!) In any case, this soap opera between Rich and Ruth (the rest of us single guys didn't really allow ourselves to get involved, and as well, we probably lacked Rich's Southern charm.) lasted until Rich left for Colorado, which was about ten days later.

One day Ruth somehow developed the idea that we had invited her and her friend over for lobster dinner. Rich assured her that this was not the case, although I suggested to Ruth that Rich might be able to "cook something else up." Again Rich assured her that it would not be possible. Poor Ruth, she felt so dejected; or at least acted that way. Apparently Ruth was a native of Toronto, and made her living making, as she called them, "climbing pants with little dinosaurs on them." She drove a little orange MG which she called "Repowoman." In any case, she had this persistent obsession for Rich, who, although saying to us that he had not interest in her at all, played along with many of her games.

One day, out climbing, Rich concocted a potential scheme to play a practical joke on Ruth. A friend of Rich's whom he had met while working in the Grand Canyon, was currently working as a Law Enforcement Ranger in Yosemite. Rich thought that it would be fun for his friend, Chris, to drive up to our camp on evening, and say to Ruth that he had received some "complaints of theft and harassment from neighbouring campers." Apparently Chris would not do it as he was starting to like his job here in the Valley, and didn't want to be given the pink slip. Oh well, it would have been funny!

Eventually, Rich left the Valley for Colorado, but before departing, he felt as though he should leave a little gift for Ruthie. Throughout the past week and a half of climbing, Rich had proceeded to essentially destroy a pair of pants that he had been using. By now, they were basically in tatters. As Rich strode out of the campground, he carefully placed the pants at the door of Ruth's tent. And thus was the end of a rather twisted romance in the Valley. Ruth never said anything to us about the pants, nor does anyone know what happened to them. Either she threw them in the dumpster along with any of the hopes she had about "Dr. Rich," sewed dinosaurs on them, or had them bronzed. It is interesting to note that after Rich left, she didn't bother us very much, nor was there much energy or noise from her. I guess Rich had stolen her heart.

Not surprisingly, there were other things one could do on off-days in the Valley, besides observing the interactions of Camp 4 personalities. Wandering around in the valley, blending in with the tourists, was one of my favourites. If the weather was slightly crummy, one could always check out the N.P.S. Interpretive Centre. Besides having a neat display and the odd movie, they stocked a large selection of maps and climbing guidebooks for most parts of California. Thus, if you didn't have a guidebook to the Valley on hand, there were always several to flip through in the museum.

The Ansel Adams Gallery was also a favourite haunt of mine for obvious reasons. Besides selling the standard assortment of posters and postcards, many of Adam's original prints were displayed on the walls. With fitting music in the background, and natural light beaming through the skylights, one could totally become absorbed with some of his works.

On days when I felt a slight bit more energetic, I often wandered the valley floor, exploring parts that I had not visited, scoping out any interesting routes. With my camera and a bit of food, I could spend the whole day taking in the Valley at a fairly relaxed pace. One time, while wandering up to the base of the Glacier Point Apron, I had the immediate desire to do some climbing, even though I lacked gear and a partner. But, having my light rock slippers in my fanny pack, and spotting an easy objective, I decided to solo up the right side of "Monday Morning Slab." Even though the climb was technically very easy (5.1!), it felt nice to move on such aesthetic and clean granite. Three pitches up, and at the top, I found yet another view of the Valley, one that I had not planned on at all that day. On the way down, I chatted with a couple of Aussie climbers who had been climbing across the Cathedral Gully from us the day before. One of them even knew Richard Howes! As I was getting somewhat hungry, I left the Apron, and found my way back to camp for a dinner in the evening sun.

Braille Book

When it all comes down to it, I think that this was my best climbing experience during the trip. From the bottom, the route looked kind of average. Things changed for the better from then on. After dawdling around with the gear, Jeff started up the first pitch, which was essentially the duller pitch of the route. I guess that is why I was not so impressed at the bottom. For this route we had decided to lead two pitches in a row, and then switch over.

This was supposedly more efficient, and would allow each of us to lead one of the 5.8 cruxes.

After two pitches of reasonably 5.7 on the most jugular type of rock you could imagine, we came face to face with the first crux, an overhanging 5.8 offwidth stuck in a corner. It looked ugly, and was about to prove itself so. Having breezed through almost any 5.8 that Squamish could throw at me, I figured that there must be an "easy" way to climb this thing. Up I went, clipping a couple of fixed pins, and then getting into the action. "How do you climb this goddamn sucker?" I whined to myself. Hmfff! I then looked to the right, and pondered the idea of climbing the "Braille" face on the right hand side of the Book. The only problem was that it looked to be about 5.10, and there was no hope of any pro. Hmmm. I climbed back down to the crack, and looked at it once again. I recalled Andy mentioning how well knee jams worked in these wide cracks. "Might as well try it," I thought, figuring that it would take a lot more than what I had fought with to make me back off from a "5.8." Again I started up the crack, this time using my legs in a much more effective fashion than before. With a solid knee jam, I was able to let go with both hands, and place them much higher, forming a bomber double hand stack. With slight thrashing, I moved my legs a bit higher, set them, and then reached up for a jug with one of my hands. Done! With the crux below me, I cruised up seventy feet of Utopian jugs; holds so big and positive that this must be the route where "jug hold" got its name from. Jeff followed, using one method or another, and came into view once he had passed the roof.

He was smiling. I was smiling, but kind of pooped as well. "This next one's yours!", I told him, pointing at the next supposed 5.7 flare. "You seem to like these things," I said, admitting that I found myself to be somewhat insecure on them. Jeff didn't seem to mind, and cruised this pitch as though it were a sidewalk. I followed, asking Jeff what moves I should do once we became within hearing distance. I just felt lousy on these flares! Maybe it was the pack - Naw!! I arrived at this small, but convenient and comfortable belay ledge where Jeff had a bomber belay set up. Somehow I had not really paid much attention to the next pitch. Once I did take a look at it, I wished I had kept my eyes closed. Above us was a gaping throat with a four inch crack at its back, hardly within reach. I pulled out the topo. 5.8. "I guess this is your crux pitch, Jeff," I smiled to him. I got the feeling that all along while belaying me up the last pitch, he had been thinking that I was going to lead this sucker. With a bit more smiling and encouragement, I got him psyched up enough to give it a go. "Remember Jeff, I don't want to cheat you out of what you deserve!" Throughout the route I seemed to be handing him the short straw.

After a quick check-over of the belay and the rack, Jeff boldly set off up this overhanging stemming problem. The first eight or nine feet was probably more scary for me than for him as he was directly above me, spread-eagle with no pro, no solid jams, and shoes squeaking away at the twin walls. After a wee bit more of this dancing back and forth, Jeff managed to secure a bomber hex, then a friend. Soon enough, he had a few pins clipped, and was cruising. "You got it made, man!", I rooted at him. After a rest at a mini "Thank God" ledge, Jeff was out and over the lip of this enclosure, and moments later I heard the call, "Off belay." I followed, finding it quite strenuous, and difficult to reach the crack with the pro. Very precarious climbing lead to the lip, which I somehow bashed my way around, almost getting the pack snagged in a corner. "Awesome!", I told Jeff. Once again we were both smiling.

I agreed to lead the rest of the climb, which was about three pitches of 5.7, or less. One of these pitches involved a wild, short traverse over a big drop of open space. After this bit of fun, easy scrambling led to the top, where we met Andy and Muriel, who had just completed the Northeast Buttress of High Cathedral. Jeff and I hiked up to the summit of Higher Cathedral Rock to pose for pictures, and take in the view. A great day! What truly made this route special, was that it called for a high degree of skill and concentration from each of us, on a route which we had no idea what to expect. Jeff tackled his crux flare efficiently, and effectively, even though it posed a great psychological threat, while I punched through my crux overhang by learning to climb it on the spot, even though I was initially quite guffawed by it. Braille Book is the best route of its grade that I have ever done, and I can't imagine a more superb line. Pleasant, juggy cruising combined with odd and varied crux moves make it an excellent outing for any climber. This is one route that I could go on for ages, expounding its virtues, but hey, go climb it yourself! Just be prepared to find some "interesting" cruxes.

Royal Arches/North Dome

Yosemite mornings are beautiful. It was so quiet compared to the mid-day hustle and bustle as we walked over to the Ahwohnee, where the Royal Arches began. Fresh spring smells permeated the air as we roped up at the first chimney pitch. The Royal arches is one of those well known "classic" routes that I had heard about, so I was looking forward to this day. So were two other V.O.C. teams: Andy and Muriel, team A, who were first on the route and soon out of sight; Jeff and myself (the Kiwi-Canuck Connection), team B, who started after them; and Scott and Rich, Team C, who followed. Although starting at much the same time, the three teams were to demonstrate their differences in speed throughout the day.

The first pitch was a nice chimney that I led. At only 5.6, it was actually quite interesting, as it was one of the first times in my life that I'd ever had to use this technique (Squamish is lacking in quantity and quality of these). At first it felt a bit awkward, but after I got the idea down-packed, I found it to be a very secure way of ascending the rock. This pitch being soon completed, Jeff took the lead. This was Jeff's third time on the route, and since he knew it quite well, we decided that we would 4th class most of it, since it was fairly easy and straight forward. This is where two people climb simultaneously with the rope and protection in between them and is considerably faster than the standard 5th class method, where one climber belays and the other climbs. It's also interesting to note that on each of Jeff's previous ascents he was with a different woman and due to "slow progress" had to bivvy overnight somewhere on the route. This time, however, with me, he had no such plans and wanted to be off by noon.

"That's fine with me!", I told him.

Progress up the middle half of the route was quite fast, and in no time we were at the 5.9 or A1 pendulum section. Jeff took a break from leading as I headed up to the fixed bolt to rig the pendulum. Being only 5.9, I thought I'd try freeing it for the sake of purity and

began climbing up the thin edges. This was definitely harder than 5.9! Almost peeling when an edge popped off, I managed to cling on and climbed up to the ledge, cursing about my oversized, but very comfortable rock shoes. Although it was somewhat more difficult than 5.9 (5.10-ish, maybe), it was nice to have a short spurt of interesting climbing on this mostly easy route. After another lead or two, Jeff began 4th classing and soon we were at the top. After only four hours or so, we had ascended 13 or 15 pitches and were at the Valley rim. I filled up the water bottles from a nearby creek, while Jeff coiled the ropes and we were soon hiking off toward North Dome.

Before coming to the Valley, I had been told that "Crest Jewel" on North Dome was recommended and thus had planned on doing it this trip. Jeff, on the other hand, had his heart set on North Dome's South Face route. We had discussed this at camp before, and since Jeff had been turned away from the South Face twice before (he hadn't even found the proper approach to the base), I agreed to do it. Besides, Peter Croft said it was a better route, so realizing that he knew much more about Yosemite climbing than I did, I thought that it must be good, even though it was only 5.7 compared to Crest Jewel's more challenging 5.10 rating.

Soon we were at the base and after a break for lunch, were off up the route, following Andy and Muriel, who were about four pitches above. I won't go into too much detail here except to say that the climbing was superb -- the best 5.7 you could find anywhere! Peter was right! Every pitch stood out from the others. Slab, liebacks, jamcracks, chimneys, and even an overhang were encountered -- all in an exceptional quasi-alpine setting. Not a spot of moss or lichen was to be found. Throughout the climb, Jeff and I swapped leads and progressed quite fluidly.

At about two-thirds of the way up, however, I began to get somewhat impatient and arrogant. I was belaying Jeff at an exposed stance when the wind started to pick up. Wearing only shorts and a T-shirt, I could feel the chill "rather well". In other words, I was freezing my butt off waiting for Jeff to finish his lead so I could put some clothes on and get moving. Jeff didn't take to my "encouragement" too well, as he was also feeling the cold and being blown around at the crux with dubious pro a little ways below him. When I reached the belay, Jeff bawled me out and I felt quite bad. Sorry Jeff.

The next pitch was mine and looked kind of neat -- an awkward slanting squeeze chimney tapering to off-width, then lieback. I squirmed up the slot, then liebacked the rest to a belay in rather quick time. Actually, the twenty feet of chimney did take some time as I dawdled around trying to place pro at it's back. In any case, as the chimney felt "awkward" for me, it was, shall we say, a "desperate wallow" for Jeff with the extra purple pig on his back or in tow. When Jeff did reach the belay, he felt pretty destroyed from this experience and thus the next pitch was mine as well.

This pitch, as I recall, was almost identical to the preceding one, except that it was longer. Actually, I think I missed the belay and continued to where I ran out of rope in the middle of a lieback. I love liebacking though! I yelled down to Jeff to "climb-on", and hurry. I did see some sort of flake fifteen feet up which would make a nice belay, as I had run out of pro for the crack that I was holding on to, quite far below. Considering the rather precarious situation, I felt great! I was crusin'! Never felt so good! Half Dome looked nice

as well! Then I thought about Jeff, 165 feet below me, attached to the same rope that was tied to my harness. He might not be so well, groping along in that chimney with the pig.

"Jeff," I called down, "Don't fall!" All I heard in return were a few un-interpretable noises, so still feelin' kinda' cocky myself, I proceeded upwards whenever there was a bit of slack in the rope. Eventually Jeff made it up a certain distance so I could make a belay at the flake.

"Hold on Jeff," I yelled, not considering that at that point he was in the chimney's cruz, probably quite exhausted. In any case, Jeff valiantly held on until he was actually "on belay" and made it up. I bopped up the last pitch as the sun was setting and in short time we were hiking along the summit slabs where we met an outdoors course instructor bivying on the summit. He seemed as surprised to meet us as we were him. After a chat during which he offered us water and the use of his group's tent a quarter mile sown the trail, we left hoping for a nice night's sleep. Wow! All this way, and we still have a tent to sleep in! After downing the last of our food --half a strip of fruit leather each, we tried to fall asleep using ropes and pack for a mattress and a space blanket for "insulation". Space blankets are not warm, but they do make a difference, albeit small. Although morning took a while (I don't think I got more than an hours Z's that night), we were up and off by about 5:00 A.M. Interestingly, Jeff and I had swapped conditions overnight, Jeff felling what seemed to me to be not too bad, but myself feeling like a Porche with a potato stuck up its exhaust pipe. I wanted desperately to go fast and get back to the Valley, but was experiencing significant loss of power. Coasting downhill was enough of a problem, never mind acceleration. During the eight mile hike back, I suggested to Jeff that he go ahead, as he was gaining speed, while I was losing it. At least it seemed that way. At almost every switchback down the Falls Trail, I stopped to take a picture as I seemed to need a break from walking at that rate. As a result I did get some nice images -- Yosemite Falls catching the morning light was particularly memorable.

After a year, which I will not write about, I made it down to camp, where I proceeded to eat and drink everything I could find --oranges and beer don't mix too well, mind you, but at the time, they felt like the best solution; and they were.

What a trip, though! Dawn 'till dusk of total quality climbing in a great location. Even though the walk down that morning had been what I assume hell would be like, the previous day made it seem worth it.

Mmmmm! Do it! Twenty five or thirty pitches of beautiful cruising is something I'm sure anyone can enjoy; and six V.O.C.ers did that year. By the way, team A reached the valley about twelve hours before us, and team C, twelve hours after. We made camp at 10:30 A.M.!

Half Dome - Snake Dike

On a beautiful Monday morning following a six hour feast at the "Ahwahnee Brunch" the Sunday before, Scott, Rich and I headed up the Little Yosemite Valley trail. Somehow we managed to separate on this approach hike, as Scott and Rich proceeded up the standard Muir trail, while I decided to check out a variant to this, the "Mist Trail". I had heard Scott

and Rich mention something about this route before, but had not quite caught what they were saying. As a result I found myself becoming quite wet, due to the crashing spray of Vernal Falls clouding over the trail.

"What the heck!", I thought, as it was obvious that I'd soon be in the sun and would dry out fairly quickly. Looking back, I'm kind of glad to have taken this route as it proved to be far more interesting than the standard trail.

At the junction where the Mist Trail met up with the standard route, there was no Rich or Scott. I assumed they had gone ahead since they were faster hikers than I and had taken what I presumed to be a more direct route. After five minutes on the trail, I came to the point where one had to turn into the bush in order to reach the S.W. face of Half Dome where our route was located. This Californian bush was a joke. No wonder climbers from down here have trouble when they come up north! After half an hour or so, I came into a good view of our route. In the distance I saw a few people approaching the base. Since it was too far away for me to get a good look, I assumed it was them and continued. After a bit more of this, I came to realize that the people were not Rich or Scott. Where could they have gone? I pondered the situation for a while and considered soloing "Snake Dike", as it did not seem like they were going to show up. Maybe they had kept hiking to the backside of the Half Dome. Before I came to any decision, a couple of figures appeared in the basin below. A few shouts indicated it was them. They had assumed that I wasn't going to take the Mist Trail and had waited for me somewhere below the junction on the main trail. After a few hikers had told them that I had gone ahead, they continued and thus met me near the base of the dome.

After casually getting ready so as to let the party ahead get some distance from us, we set off up the slab. The climbing was very easy, yet located in a spectacular setting. A couple of easy 5.7 slab pitches led us to the "Snake Dike", a juggy, curving dike that wound it's way up the side of the mountain. Protection on the dike was minimal with only a bolt or two per pitch, but the climbing was so straightforward, that even these were hardly needed. Several pitches of climbing this wonderful "knob job" left us at the very low angled summit slabs. At this point we unroped and scrambled up the long granite slope to the summit. Wandering along this bald blob of rock was like being on a "dry" glacier. To the south the rock dropped quickly away and a few moves in that direction would send one for a 2000 foot whipper down Half Dome's south face, a flank not often seen, but considered more difficult to climb than the classic Northwest Face that is seen from the Valley.

On the summit we posed for all of the cliché' views of peering off the Visor. We enjoyed a reasonably gourmet lunch, although I still didn't feel starved, as I was still going on the carbs from yesterday's "Brunch". The view down the Visor was pretty cool. Two thousand feet of air below your nose with little else to stop your glasses from falling off.

After a pretty casual time on top we were on our way down the cables, chuckling at the signs that advised against their use during a lightening storm. Half Dome is one of the continent's more famous lightening rods, and more than one individual has experienced the excitement on top during a storm. On the hike down, Rich and I talked about how he was going to have to carry a gun when he became a park ranger, while Scott sang. Lower down

our conversation degraded into imitations of Pace Picante Sauce commercials, while Scott walked down with a little kid who needed the encouragement after a hard day of hiking. Or maybe it was Scott who had to be encouraged! Rich and I greeted Scott in Curry Village with orange juice and tortilla chips. We then drove back to camp 4, ending another great day in the sun.

Lower Cathedral Spire

A couple of days after pulling my shoulder, I decided to give climbing a try as most of the pain had gone away. Scott, Jeff and I and a fellow called Tom, who was camped in our site went over to Middle Cathedral Rock to try the Central Pillar of Frenzy. Scott and Jeff started up first, then Tom and I followed. A few words about Tom: he was about 210 pounds (mostly muscle), a former college football linebacker, had spent three years in the marines (but did not really show it), had been climbing for about a year and a half, and was really quite a nice guy. Tom led the first pitch, a 5.9, while I followed. No problem with my shoulder. Then I tried to lead the next pitch, but found that my shoulder could not take it.

"The rest are yours, Tom!", I said, holding my pained shoulder. Tom cruised this pitch as well, claiming that it was his most difficult lead to date.

On the third pitch however, Tom had a bit of trouble and fell at the lip of the 5.8 overhang. Woompf!. Holding a fall of that force yanked me right up off the ledge. Tom was unfazed and climbed right back up and this time pulled over the roof successfully. I didn't find seconding any of these pitches to be too bad as I relied totally on my technique and the strength from my left arm. My right was used only for balance and the odd sidepull or push.

Two days later Scott and Tom were heading off to do Lower Cathedral Spire. Feeling somewhat bummed by not having done much climbing recently, I decided to ignore my aching shoulder and go with them. The first two pitches were very easy being about 5.6 or so and my arm felt okay while leading one of these. For the crux pitch, a steep 5.9 face traverse, I suggested that Scott give it a try. He seemed doubtful about being able to do this, but after a bit of fiddling around, he pulled off the crux and was on his way to the top.

After Tom and I seconded, a bit of easy scrambling followed and we were on the summit. Great views of El Cap greeted us across the way and a small meal was had before the rappel back down. A descent of the trail in the fading light led us down to the cars and thus our last climb in Yosemite was completed.

Reflections

Yosemite is more than a place of just steep rock routes, it is a place of discovery. Not only can one get to know one's own self and abilities, but one becomes more in tune with one's surroundings as well. Yosemite is a place where one can escape the typical trivialities in life, yet still keep in touch the realities of life. As I left the Valley, I took one final look about at the walls of Mecca -- walls that could never come tumbling down.

SUMMER 1989

The Accident Fall From Grace

Paul Kao

Summer 1989

Sunday, August 27th, 1989. I had made arrangements to go climbing with Chand for half a day at Squamish. I had a light workout and good stretch, and was primed for a leisurely afternoon of climbing. Although I hadn't climbed much that year, I was in great shape. Chand picked me up downtown in the afternoon and we drove to Squamish, discussing where to climb. Due to the limited time available, we decided on Crag X, since the approach was short, and the climbs good. I was thankful later on that I showed Chand the Chanel Road approach, a shortcut that runs by the bottom of Crag X.

I took the first lead, warming up on Talking Holds, with the intent of Trying Turbocharger after. Both climbs went by smoothly, and Chand got a taste of hard face climbing. Chand's lead was next, so he choose Picket Line, on the other side of Crag X. Chand had never been to the top of Crag X, so instead of stopping at the rappel slings around a tree, he continued up a little further to the very top of Crag X. I followed, and at the top, we debated about our descent; finally, we decided to forego the tangle of slings and rappel off an anchoring cable for a power line pylon at the top of the cliff, to facilitate rope retrieval.

The rappel off Crag X falls directly over True Love, a featureless wall (which is also a good face climb); double ropes are required for the 100 foot rappel. Chand went first (he's heavier) while I backed him up with a quickdraw and sorted pro. I had some initial apprehensions about the rappel, but as soon as I heard "off rappel", I unclipped my quickdraw, clipped my descender into the rope and prepared to follow.

Not five feet off the top, I felt a jerk and heard a "ping"; I looked up, only to see with disbelief that my rope was not around the power line cable. My mind raced for an explanation, but my only thoughts during the freefall were

"this is not good".

and

"express elevator to hell!"

No, my life did not flash in front of me (an omen of things to come?), and I scarcely recall the impact. Chand had been waiting at the base of the cliff, holding onto both ends of the rope for belay purposes¹. Unfortunately, he was witness to the entire fall, and had considered at one point trying to break my fall by catching me, but wisely didn't. At this point, I am not clear as to what exactly happened, but as Chand later recounted, I

¹ It is possible for someone at the bottom to belay a person rappelling by simply holding both ends of the rope taut.

narrowly missed all the rocks at the base of the cliff, bouncing several feet upward after impact, leaving a deep crater in the dirt. I then tumbled down the slope for a little while, until Chand stopped me with the rappel rope that I was still attached to. I was lying face down on my stomach, and winded. Chand shook me and I think he asked something along the lines of "are you okay?", while I countered with "what happened?"; he thought I might have untied the rappel rope before descending.

I could barely breathe, and told Chand to turn me around (face up, feet down) so that I could breathe. It was a gargantuan effort; he bearhugged me, but we were on a slope of loose dirt and rocks, and he found it difficult to get a secure footing. Finally, I was right side up, and he tied me off to some bushes to prevent me from sliding further down the slope. At this point, we both knew Chand had to go for help - was I ever glad I showed Chand the "short" approach to Crag X². I covered myself with my shirt, and Chand promised to be back with help as soon as possible.

Chand was visibly shaken by my accident; I wonder what he must have thought, looking at my bloodied body. I wondered also, and began to try and assess the damage. I knew my face was cut up, and I could only see a flap of skin which was my eyelid, out of my right eye. I tried to prop my feet up against some bushes to prevent my constant slide down the slope, and to also take some weight off my harness, but to no avail. My legs and feet had no motor control, so I propped my heels against the bushes by hauling my body up with my arms. Other than having difficulty breathing, I wasn't in agonizing pain, and found that I was able to look around and think quite calmly and clearly. There was very little to do but wait; I knew I couldn't go into shock, and tried to keep busy by loosening my harness and removing any loose gear/slings that I had carried down. At this point, I also looked at the ropes, to find as I suspected, that they were still tied together.

I could hear sirens; looking up, I was dismayed to see a police car racing southbound down the Squamish highway. Eventually, the sound of many sirens reached my ears, and I knew it would be soon. At this point, my face and eye had swollen badly, and I had difficulty seeing anything. Well, as soon as the paramedics arrived, I lost my alertness, letting the medics do their thing. A few things I do remember. I immediately got my oxygen, which helped my breathing, and it was hell for them to get me onto the spineboard because of the loose slope. Being carried down the talus slopes, I apologized several times for the trouble that I had caused by my rescue.

I was first taken to Squamish General Hospital (about 8pm), where I spent an uncomfortable three hours on a x-ray table. Nobody would tell me how badly I was injured, or what was damaged. At this point (11pm), I was deathly thirsty, but of course I couldn't have anything to drink, especially if I needed to have surgery. At this time, a decision was made to transport me via ambulance to Vancouver; the doctors tried to get me admitted to Shaughnessy (with a special ward for spinal injuries), but in the end I was sent to St. Pauls Hospital. I made it into Vancouver at about 1 am (the ride was pure hell - I thought it couldn't get much worse, but I was wrong), where I spent another few hours

² The usual parking lot for the Smoke Bluffs is at the end of Vista Crescent, on the other side of the entire Bluffs.

getting cleaned up, needing some forty stitches around my eye. The decision was to keep me under observation; no obvious internal injuries, so no operation. Finally, I had my much needed drink (non alcoholic, I'm afraid), and my first shot of morphine, drifting of into a nightmarish state of semi conscious sleep.

Learning To Climb

I awoke to find myself feeling fairly comfortable, and in a good spirits. obviously, the morphine is doing it's job. The extent of my injuries were few, but serious. I had little control over my legs, sustained multiple spinal fractures to L4-5, T12, and C2, along with an unknown amount of spinal cord injury. I also received a fracture to the lower right orbit of the eye, cracked a few ribs and developed a pneumothorax (but had no internal organ injuries), and sustained whole body bruising and lacerations; my backside was literally black.

I couldn't believe that I had visitors the morning after the accident. Obviously, Chand new about the mishap, but I didn't expect word to get around so quickly. Strangely enough, on the next morning of my accident, I had a callout from Search and Rescue for a lost victim, so they new about it immediately; I think Chand had also told Andy and Jeff (Pacheco and Greenwood respectively) about the accident the next day, and I was really surprised but heartened to see them the next day. I would just like to take the time now to thank everybody who visited or called (long distance) me (unfortunately, but incredibly far too many to name) for their support and love.

My lacerations and bruises healed quickly; Even I was amazed to see the progress from a day to day basis. Unfortunately, the rest of my injuries didn't heal as quickly. I had expected my legs to recover at much the same rate as the cuts. It's funny, but after the novelty of being alive passes, the reality of pain sets in, and you realize just how badly your body has been traumatized. In fact, my condition deteriorated in the hospital (about the time I was transferred from St. Pauls to Shaughnessy); I had serious headaches, fever, and a bladder infection. I also had a catheter for two weeks; during that time, I was worried that I would be in a state of permanent emasculation, definitely one of many low points.

In the end though, the pain began to subside, and finally, with much anticipation, I was placed in a full body cast (from one leg to the shoulders). I could soon be raised into an upright position (I had been in bed for four weeks), but was barely able to walk with crutches. As soon as I could walk on crutches, I gained strength quickly in my legs, but slowly below the knees.

Several months later, in December, the momentous day arrived (I was going to refer to it as a joyous occasion, but there was nothing wonderful or pleasant about it) and I had my cast removed. I felt incredibly weak, and wanted to be back in my cast. I was given a body brace to wear, which I am still wearing now as I write this; however, I'll soon be without the brace, and perhaps in another few months, I will be able to resume light physical activity.

During the entire duration of my recovery, I never really had any physiotherapy or rehabilitation program for my back and lower legs; I suppose I was fortunate enough not to need them.

Retrospective

A 100 foot free fall may be difficult to imagine, so to put it into perspective, it's approximately the height of the clock tower at UBC. Probability wise, I shouldn't be walking, or even alive. Looking back, if I had to suggest a physical reason for surviving, I'd have to say it was due to:

- 1) Falling in a relaxed position with no rotational motion
- 2) Landing on the lower back (where the largest vertebrae are)
- 3) And being extremely flexible and strong all over, especially in the back.

Will I ever climb again? I don't know. I imagine I eventually will, but my ankles and feet are weak, and I don't know how well I would be able to climb. I also don't think lead falls would be too good for my back. Mentally, it's tough to get motivated, because I was in superb shape and climbing well; at this point, trying to regain the level of fitness and commitment would be depressing.

As difficult and unpleasant as the entire experience has been, I wouldn't trade it away. I cannot describe how fortunate I feel; sometimes, walking outside in the sun, I still don't believe it ever could have happened.

Mt. Alpha

Raul Thomas

Aug. 5-7, 1989

When I first heard that Eric Clemson would be writing an article on the Alpha trip I made the decision to write one of my own, as for the most part Eric's perspective was from the inside of a sleeping bag.

The sky was clear when we set out Saturday morning in various cars en route to Squamish and the cable crossing of the Squamish river. In Marilyn's car Toto, (as in Aunt Em, Aunt Em, there's no place like home) was Marilyn, myself, Bjorn and a variety of music.

If the cable crossing is not a listed hazard on this trip, it should be: there are two parallel cables and if the cable car is not on your side of the river you must cross on the lower cable while hanging onto the higher one. The trouble is that if one stands on the cable, around the middle of the crossing one starts to sway violently and if you fall and still hang on, the higher cable is brought down below the level of the one you were standing on, thus making it impossible to climb back on. There is also a rumour that in one of the pylons, hanging from the top cable, is a wasp's nest. The actual method I suspect is to do what the army does: crawl over the cable, crooking one foot around the cable and hanging the other leg down for balance, in addition clipping into BOTH cables

with STEEL carabiners. Or you could do as we did: meet some people with a boat to cross over and bring back the cable car.

We eventually all crossed and started on our way. It was five hours of fairly steep uphill and blackflies and heat. Mercifully we were in the shade of the forest and the trail was marked and clear of bush. We reached Lake Lovelywater and had a short break, supplemented by a little Australian wine. Strangely, no one was taking advantage of the lake which was named appropriately, so I decided to go for a short dip alone. It was quite refreshing, and the only setback was the onslaught of the blackflies as I left the water. While we were eating our lunch we noticed helicopters landing beside and taking off from the ACC cabin nearby. We were to find out later that they were transporting search and rescue personnel; the reason for their presence was a tragic accident which had just occurred on a glacier nearby.

It was decided that we would hike around the lake and over a hill to Lambda Lake where we would camp, so everyone set off, except for Eric and I. The people with the boat had caught up to us while we were resting. We noticed that the group consisted of a few older men and some younger people, notably some cute girls. Eric and I kindly offered to row them over to where they planned to stay, using the ACC rowboat. Our offer was accepted, and then the fathers of these individuals offered to row us to where we would have only a short walk to Lambda Lake, which happened to be on the opposite side of the lake. Their offer was accepted and later that evening we found ourselves making a short bushwalk to the campsite. Greg, Sharon, Peter and Judy were set on reaching Tantalus and so had camped further on, at a spot capable of housing the entire Russian army.

A pleasant evening made lively by 'Pick up the Pace' Eric's antics and attempts to make a bear- and mouse-proof food and garbage cache (someone in the past had felt inspired to build a wooden cross in the bush, and if it had been a bit more sturdy it could have been put to good use) after which we called it a night.

The next morning we started up the bush covered slopes towards Alpha. Our aim was to climb up the sharply defined east ridge leading towards the peak and we set our sights on a point about a third of the way up this ridge: we would traverse the slope until we reached this point. The access to the ridge was really scrambling, but still quite tricky in places. At one point I found myself in a narrow cleft which started to overhang and with no easy way down since I had committed myself. Eric had gone around this part, fancying it too easy, and was above and out of sight. I found a small nook in the rocks and dug around in my pack for my rope. Using a bowline knot on a coil I tied in at one end and threw the other end to where I thought Eric was, judging from his voice. He tied in to his end and acted as an anchor while I tried to extricate myself. After some desperate lunging and scrambling I finally made it to the ledge where Eric was waiting. From there it was a straightforward walk to the top of the ridge. After a short scramble we caught up to the others who were waiting at the foot of a short pitch. We spent some time sunning while discussing the route. This was our first real use of ropes and quite justified. Also justified was our use of helmets - brain buckets as they are called. The rock in this area is quite loose and merely the rubbing of the rope was enough to send

large rocks down on those waiting below. At one point Jeff, who was just starting the pitch, received a glancing blow on the shoulder from a good sized rock, and it is a wonder he escaped without serious injury.

This and the next pitch were really the only stages where ropes were needed: the rest was some very interesting 5.4 (interesting in hiking boots). After a couple of false peaks we finally reached the summit where we shared some food and a summit pose. The summit registry also made for some light entertainment. After taking in the view and contemplating trying to reach Serratus we made our way down the tourist trail to the west - a series of gullies filled with loose scree. It was then a final bushwack back to the camp where we were kept amused by Eric's plans of an alpine start and a bagged peak before heading down the next day.

Next morning, we awoke and had a leisurely dip in Lambda lake followed by breakfast. If only every morning were like this. Around noon Eric decided he had better crawl out of his sleeping bag, as the shade he was in was disappearing and the sun was threatening to broil him as he slept. We then set off back to Lake Lovelywater and the trail back to the river where we met with the boat people again and collaborated on our crossing. We were joined belatedly by Peter and Judy who had missed out on Tantalus but had managed Pelops and the return trip in one day.

We collected ourselves and then drove back to Squamish to fill up on food and amuse ourselves by throwing pennies at a bedraggled-looking Peter Stone.

Participants:

Raul Thomas	Bjorn Wolgast	Jeff Greenwood
Rich Lechleitner	Marilyn Noort	Al
Eric Clemson	Michelle Reynolds	Greg Statter
Peter Stone	Judy Needham	Sharon

Hiking Through the Bendor Range

Peter Stone

July 1989

As soon as I finished typing my thesis, towards the end of July, I packed up food for a week and took the train from North Vancouver to McGillivray Falls. It takes a full day to hike from there to McGillivray Pass, as opposed to about an hour if you hike from the end of the logging road which approaches the Pass from the Bralorne direction. I had plenty of time, and was in a relaxed mood, so I didn't mind the long approach.

I left the valley at the first sign of an easy access line to the ridge on the north side of McGillivray Pass, and followed this ridge to the saddle below Mount McGillivray. Although clouds moved in to shroud the peaks for a while, as I headed across the upper part of the Connel Creek valley towards Whitecap Mountain, they had cleared away again by the time I had reached my camp-site just below and to the west of Whitecap Mountain.

When I camped at the same spot two years earlier, while on a trip with Francois Welt, there had been no logging visible. Now I could see a small patch way down Connel Creek. The Stein valley may be spared from logging, but elsewhere logging grinds on relentlessly up the valleys.

From my previous trip through this area I knew that the 7700' col to the West of Whitecap Mountain gives easy access down a mellow glacier to the head of Tommy Creek. Before making the descent the next morning, I made a short side trip to climb the 8300' peak north of Mount Piebiter, disturbing a few goats on the way, who were lying around on the remnants of a cornice, possibly as a method of keeping cool on a warm sunny day.

The peaks North of Piebiter Creek have impressive rock faces on their north sides. This was as much of an interesting surprise to me as when I first saw the steep ice face on the north side of Whitecap Mountain (climbed by Bill Durtler and Don Serl in 1987). My next camp-site was close to a small lake below Peak 8400', which I reached by hiking up alongside the creek which drains this lake, accompanied by a swarm of flies. Fortunately, this was the only time that I was really bothered by flies.

The following day saw me wandering over the 8000' bump to the North and traversing along the slopes above Hawthorne Creek to the 7500' pass South-East of Peak 8530'. (There are three peaks in this area all with their elevation given on the map as 8530', so designating a peak by this elevation could cause some confusion.) A young grizzly ambled past me, following the same route over this pass to the virtually flat square kilometre of alpine moorland to the North-East. The grizzly cub gradually gained momentum while heading down the snow slope and then crashed onto the rocks below. I made a more leisurely descent, kicking in steps with my heels.

Small ponds and patches of snow dotted the landscape; a few puffs of cloud drifted slowly past Whitecap Mountain, now 10km away to the South-East. From here I hiked over a 8100' bump and descended to the basin South of Mount Bobb. There could be a problem obtaining water for camping here late in the summer. Melting snow patches were still feeding the creeks, but they were shrinking fast.

Leaving my camp-site fairly early in the morning, I hiked up the long bare talus slopes of Mount Bobb. The hike got a bit more interesting near the top as the mountain has the typical steep exposure on the North side. The extensive views, similar to those from Whitecap Mountain, made the climb worthwhile. After a rapid descent I packed up camp and hiked past the knot of lakes at the head of Bobb Creek below the towering faces of Peaks 8720' and 8530'. My ice axe provided some welcome security for the snow climb to the 8000' col which gives access to the alpine area at the head of the West branch of Hawthorne Creek. A thunder shower arrived just as I reached the col, and ominous black clouds and lightning in the direction of Whitecap Mountain provided a brief contrast in mood for the mountains from that of the rest of the trip. Although I was tempted to hang around to try and capture this mood on film, I thought that it was probably wiser to get off the ridge as soon as possible.

The afternoon storm soon passed over and the view from my tent the next morning was of peaks silhouetted by a deep blue sky. I was rather intimidated by the steep snow

slope directly below the col leading to the head of Ferguson Creek, and so headed, with my pack, in the direction of Peak 8530'. (This is a different Peak 8530' now.) My idea was that the talus slopes below this peak would be more easy to negotiate. Since this route took me within a few minutes of the summit of Peak 8530', I naturally decided to pay it a visit, and left my pack for the last part of the climb. The descent proved to be rather unpleasant, so maybe the direct route down the snow slope would have been easier.

Further down the valley a remote weather station gave the first evidence of human activity for a while (apart from the unusually large summit cairn on Mount Bobb). I set up camp by the only side creek of Ferguson Creek, so that I would be assured of a water supply, and then headed off towards Mount Truax. Mount Truax proved to be a little too far away for an afternoon stroll, so I contented myself with climbing Peak 8980'. The ridge-top here is devastated by mining activity. Somehow this seems like an unfair impediment to the delicate alpine flora, trying to survive in circumstances which are already sufficiently challenging. However, the road did provide an easy route out of the valley, and the lower sections were grassy and quite attractive to walk along.

Two More in the Yukon

Nick Folkard

Summer 1989

The summer of 1989 was my second and last at Kluane. Unfortunately, this meant that there was a certain degree of urgency as far as my data collection was concerned, which in turn meant that opportunities for hiking were greatly reduced. Definitely a case of wrong priorities. Nevertheless, I did manage to get up one-and-a-half mountains in between my birdwatching and beetle-bashing:

1) Mt. Wallace

Wallace is a great pyramid rising to 7500 feet at the very south end of Kluane Lake. From across the lake, it is barely visible, the lower and closer Sheep Mountain hiding all but the top few feet of Wallace. However, from further away, back down the Alaska Highway, the picture is very different: the vast bulk of Wallace towers over Sheep's undulating summit ridge and dominates the view to the west.

My first attempt on Wallace was not an auspicious event: The truck ran out of gas 2 miles down the road and I had to trudge back to the research station to face general ridicule. The second time, I made sure that the truck was fully gassed up and succeeded in driving to the bottom of the mountain.

The quickest way up Wallace involves climbing Sheep first, dropping down to a col and then climbing another 2500 feet up to the summit. The ascent of Sheep was quite familiar by now, but no easier or less steep for that. The occasional grassy bench provided much-needed relief from the otherwise unremitting slog up loose scree. Once at the top, the effort seemed almost worthwhile. The view down to the lake and out to the east down the Shakwak Trench was quite superb, an opinion which the numerous Dall sheep all around me seemed to share. A glance in the opposite direction effectively

dampened my elation, however: the great triangle of Wallace frowned down at me, looking even bigger from close up.

I bounced down the few hundred feet of tundra to the col, wishing for skis to take advantage of the lovely corn snow which still lay quite deep on this side of the mountain. I didn't hang around in the col, as for some reason it struck me as a fine place to be if one was a grizzly bear; instead, I zig-zagged off up the slopes of Wallace stopping to chink my progress against sheep as often as my dignity allowed.

The loose, rusty shale-like rock was dotted with clumps of purple saxifrage, a remarkable plant which always seems to choose the most inhospitable places to brighten with its beautiful flowers. I was quite surprised to see how rapidly sheep was getting smaller, and soon the slope began to level off and narrow to a ridge. A few entertaining rocky outcrops and a final steep section later, I found myself on the summit ridge, where I was greeted by a large quantity of snow and a howling wind. All the clothes in my pack promptly went on, and I staggered along the ridge past a large green rocket; this, I was later informed, was not worthy of inclusion in the National Enquirer - it was merely a telecommunications relay station.

I finally reached what appeared to be the top, where I stood for several seconds before being blown off. I dug a rather pathetic scrape in what was supposed to be the lee of the summit, and crouched inside to eat my lunch. The view was magnificent - the low, rolling Yukon Plateau stretching away to infinity across the lake to the east, and high, rugged, dusty brown mountains marching away to the northwest down the length of the lake. Thoughts of photography remained thoughts, however, due to the bitter wind. This same wind was proving to be remarkably adept at blowing in three directions at once, and was depositing spindrift on me at an alarming rate. I soon gave up the unequal battle and stomped back along the ridge to begin the descent.

The retreat was uneventful except for the amount of snow consumed and the increase in temperature as elevation was lost. By the time I burst out onto the highway, enveloped in dust and sweat, the temperature was in the mid-twenties and there wasn't a breath of wind. I gasped like a fish out of water and grinned a grimy grin at the immaculate lady peering out of her immense R.V. in what appeared to be horror. So my hairdo wasn't as nice as hers, and my truck didn't have a satellite dish on its roof; I didn't mind - I'd finally done Wallace.

2) Mt. Cairnes

There are three mountains with permanent snow and ice cover in the Front Range, all of them around 9000 feet high. I had managed to get up two of them - Vulcan and Archibald - in 1988, and needed only Mt. Cairnes to complete the set. Sian was in the same position, and so we had no hesitation in declaring the first suitable weekend that presented itself to be "The Cairnes Trip". We persuaded Mark that he really ought to come along with us - not that he needed a great deal of persuasion - and spent Friday evening making up enormous bagsful of gorp, just in case we were forced to spend two weeks on the mountain.

At a suitably civilised hour on Saturday morning, we loaded ourselves, our packs

and our gorp into an aged red Suburban and wrestled with the first major decision of the expedition - who would have the privilege of driving this fine example of American craftsmanship? Mark won the day by the simple expedient of saying "I'll drive" faster and more loudly than anybody else. He settled himself behind the mighty steering wheel, turned the mighty day and waited for the mighty engine to roar into life. It eventually did so, after being asked some fifteen times, and we thundered away from the Base tracking a large cloud resembling that released by Chernobyl, only more colourful.

We soon left the highway and turned onto a mining road heading south across the tundra. The sun was shining, the flowers were out, and the long white wall of Cairnes gleamed ahead of us. There are far more pleasant ways to travel than sprawled in a Suburban as it galumphs its way along a grassy track on a perfect spring morning. Sadly, however, this delightful part of the adventure finished all too soon, as the rushing waters of Telluride Creek prevented even Mark from driving any further. He turned off the engine, not altogether happily since it was not at all certain that it would ever start again, and we roused ourselves from our torpor and put on our packs.

Groaning and cursing, we trudged down into the valley of Telluride Creek, a remarkably deep ravine completely invisible from the Highway. Sian happily informed us that Brett (who stands 8 feet 2 inches in his socks and has a habit of carrying people around under his arms) had almost been swept away by the Creek a couple of years ago, and that the Creek seemed to be a little higher now than it had been then. Spurred on by this challenge, Mark and I hurled our combined weight of 300 lbs. into the torrent, fully expecting to wake up in Haines Junction, or Purgatory if we were lucky. Instead, we found we were able to struggle across, barely keeping our knees above the water and wishing fervently for the services of an elephant all the way.

This terrific ordeal over, we strode fearlessly off up the bank of an unexplored tributary. After what seemed like an eternity - it must have been at least an hour - we decided it was time to break into our meagre rations - 2 weevil infested Ritz crackers each, with a pound or two of gorp to ward off scurvy. Worried that hordes of vicious grizzlies would scent these rare delicacies and descend on us from every direction, we did not linger but pressed on up the creek bed until our second major decision confronted us: should we take the left fork, which would involve an extra 200 yards of walking, or the right fork, which had a gradient 2% steeper? The right fork won, and we soon found ourselves on a perfect little grassy bench, creeks to either side of us, a view back down to the valley to the north and the peaks of Cairnes looming above us to the south. (Cairnes is more a massif than a mountain, and if it was anywhere other than the Yukon it would probably have several dozen names attached to various bits of its anatomy).

We lazed around in the sun for a considerable length of time, ate a little more gorp to anchor ourselves in case the wind got up in the night, and finally retired to bed. There was a strange, light pattering noise on the tent during the night, but it soon stopped and we slept soundly until awoken by the hideous beeping of a watch alarm. I poked my head out of the tent Mark and I were sharing to ask Sian to put the oatmeal on and bring us our tea and toast while we planned the days activities from the comfort of our sleeping bags. I didn't have a chance to make this request, nor to listen to the torrid of verbal abuse it

would have elicited in response, because I discovered that Sian's tent had disappeared, as had all the flowers and grass. Everything had been replaced by funny, lumpy white shapes. Mark, the learned glaciologist, blinked wisely at the scene and declared that it had snowed in the night. It took the three of us several nanoseconds to decide that this was unfair, and that we should remain in our tents in protest.

Four hours later we were driven from our tents by a combination of hunger, boredom, shame and (primarily) the call of the bladder. It was light by now, and the snow seemed to have stopped, so we decided we really ought to do something, vaguely connected with the mountain. Off we went, tripping over concealed boulders and grovelling up an endless slope of snow-covered loose talus, from the top of which a Dall's sheep eyed us with amusement. The slope brought us up to a ridge composed of the same wonderfully solid rock, up which we scabbled and gasped until we reached the main east-west ridge of the mountain.

Having attained the main ridge by an unnecessary and rather too exciting little traverse across steep, hard snow, we found ourselves in an eerie world of silently falling snow and for-shrouded rock towers. Each of us settled into our own little space, scrambling up and around the towers as we gradually gained height; nobody said much, and for the most part the only sound was the clicking of ice-axes against concealed rocks. Finally, we arrived at a steepish, glazed snow slope disappearing up into the fog; we couldn't see what was below us, but we knew that it was steep, long and certainly most uncomfortable to fall down. Mark kicked steps up the slope with his nice big boots, and the three of us tiptoed up until the angle eased and we found ourselves on top - at least a top. The real top was a little higher and perhaps a kilometre further along the ridge. Since it was now 2:30 p.m. and it was snowing again, we decided that lunch was a more sensible option than further thrashing about in the snow.

The return along the ridge was surprisingly quiet and easy, involving as it did a good deal of bum-sliding and the consequent ruination of a pair of \$13 Taiga windpants. We were soon back at the intersection of the main ridge and our nasty gravelly side ridge, and Mark suggested that we use a broad snow gully to descend the remaining thousand feet to the valley. This looked very inviting, and I leapt onto it intending to plunge step my way down. Unfortunately, the slope consisted of 8 inches of new snow sitting on very hard old snow, with the result that my first plunge step turned into a simple plunge and I whizzed off down the slope at an alarming rate. "Self arrest, self arrest!" shouted Mark, helpfully. I was trying, really I was, but I couldn't force the pick into the underlying icy snow. Suddenly, it bit and stopped dead, removing itself from my grasp and causing me to do a series of interesting aerobatic manoeuvres before the slope lessened and I ground to a halt.

Sian and Mark joined me in a slightly more controlled fashion, bringing me my ice-axe and thus saving me a climb of several hundred feet and earning my eternal gratitude. We continued down to the tents together, ate a few more pound of gorp, and packed up our things after removing as much nasty wet white stuff from them as we could.

We were astonished to discover that as soon as we descended from our little plateau we were below the snowline and back on the green tundra. The walk back to

Telluride Creek was sheer magic, bouncing along the tundra past little pools and clumps of willows. Even the Creek was being cooperative - for some inexplicable reason, it was lower than it had been the day before and we were able to boulder hop across it - not at all what we had expected following the amount of precipitation we had experienced the previous night. Back at the truck, we prostrated ourselves several times to Mecca before trying the key. At the first turn, there was a small but powerful volcanic eruption and the engine started - a miracle almost extraordinary enough to overpower the disappointment of not quite doing Cairnes. We leapt in before the best changed its mind, loaded the remaining 40 lbs. of gorp into the back and headed back across the tundra towards dinner.

Brandywine

Raul Thomas

June 24-25, 1989

I first met Bjorn Wolgast at the June VOC barbecue at Spanish Banks. Having just arrived from Sweden and working at the Pulp and Paper Research at U.B.C., he was keen to see as much of the B.C. mountains as possible. I was just finishing the Traditional Mountaineering course given by the FMCBC and wanted a weekend or so of rest before applying what I had learned. So we agreed to try Brandywine at the end of June. It would be a nice relaxing trip, an easily accessible peak.

We started early on Saturday morning. Richard Howes dropped us off at the logging road on his way to Wedge. We agreed to meet sometime late Sunday afternoon at the same place. The sky was clear and as we walked up the dirt road it wasn't long before we started to feel the heat.

I had skied up this road a couple of years before and thought I knew the way fairly well, but at the first fork I hesitated. I knew that at some point we should start on some switchbacks, but how far in? The years tend to cloud one's memory of distance. We chose the left fork, which lead straight ahead, and it turned out to be the correct choice. A good trudge further on, and after another forking decision I was starting to have doubts. We should have reached some recognizable landmarks by now. We met a few people who for some reason were digging up bushes and loading them onto a truck. They indicated that there was a gate further on, but I couldn't remember any gate. We did walk further on and came to a place I thought I recognized: a stream channelled under the road. We had parked our car here on the last trip. The switchbacks must begin soon, but after a short walk, I decided that on the last fork we had made the wrong choice. So we turned back and at the offending junction we started our way up the hill. Wrong move. After an hour we realized we were not getting any closer to our destination. The map showed that Brandywine was further to the west. I must credit Bjorn with all this time showing much patience and good humour.

We headed back in the direction we had abandoned, rationalizing that with this

method of forking we could eliminate any false branches systematically and be quite certain we were on the right track. Not half a minute from where we had turned back to waste two hours, the beginning of the switchbacks came into sight. Later we were to find out that instead of taking the switchbacks, the summer route to Brandywine consists of following the creek up to the meadows, but for now the road was the only way we knew.

After much slogging uphill we reached our first patch of snow; a welcome sight after the late June sun beating down on us. The snow gradually became more prevalent and as we crossed over the logged col and met with Brandywine creek flowing out of the meadows, we found ourselves walking through a continuous blanket of wet summer snow. Our next decision would be where to park ourselves for the night, as we hadn't brought a tent. Descending into the meadows however, we were greeted by quite a sight: the broad creek flowing sparkling clear through the snow, and several large boulders strewn over the landscape. We chose one which was quite flat and large enough for both our sleeping bags, our gear and with enough room to build a cooking fire at one end, as I had misplaced the working parts to my stove prior to the trip.

This was sheer pleasure: enough time to soak up some sun lying comfortably on one's back, and enough clean running water and dry firewood to handle any emergencies, such as lack of a hot meal. Bjorn swears he could live on macaroni alone but I prefer something with it, like powdered cheese. That and some hot chocolate as the sun went down, then into our sleeping bags to call it a night. There were not too many bugs, and it was just a bit on the warm side; all in all just another rough day in paradise.

The next morning we were up early enough on our approach to the peak. Bjorn's avowed goal was to climb higher than the highest peak in Sweden, which I think is Kebnekaise at some 2000 odd metres. Well, I remember Brandywine as being 2228m, or just high enough to clear the big K, so Bjorn was satisfied and off we set.

It was quite pleasant climbing up the slopes making up the bowl. One had to be careful not to fall through the snow into the creek below, and this hazard was hard to avoid because the creek was actually several runoffs from the snowpack above to which we were heading. As we had started that morning I was again faced with a forking decision: which gully at the top of the bowl to aim for. In the end we decided to just head in the general direction of Brandywine and see what happened. Reaching the top of the bowl we were rewarded with quite a view over the way we had come, but now that we had reached the icefield below the Brandywine peak we had to make yet another forking decision: there were actually two peaks side by side. My memory was playing tricks; it seemed to me that the one on the right was the one I had climbed, yet map and compass pointed systematically to the mound on the left. From our perspective the one to the right also seemed higher, so abandoning the scientific method we made our judgement and went for it. About a third of the way up, and after some climbing that was trickier than I had remembered, the view to the left peak changed from the different perspective and it became obvious that it actually was the higher peak and therefore the actual Brandywine summit. That, and the fact we could make out two skiers heading for it made the truth obvious. However, it seemed too much effort to climb down then up again only to share the peak with other people, plus the climbing was actually becoming interesting: just a bit

better than scrambling. The only disappointment would be that Bjorn would after all not be higher than Kebnekaise.

We reached the top and were rewarded with a beautiful view in all directions. There was plenty of room to walk about then stretch out and relax over lunch. I brought out the map and counted contour lines. Wait a minute: we were only 100 feet lower than Brandywine, so Bjorn after all that was higher than anyone in Sweden.

After the obligatory summit pictures we started down and after some boot skiing down the gullies reached the meadows. We packed up our extra gear we had left on the rock and contemplated walking down the logging road in the heat and dust. As we were thus occupied we were overtaken by the two skiers we had seen at the top. After an exchange of pleasantries they continued down and we after them. We were somewhat puzzled as to how they had caught up to and overtaken us in one day: we hadn't noticed anyone else staying overnight in the meadows. The answer was made clear as we descended the col on the logging road side: they had driven all the way up and were just now packing their skis into their four-wheel drive pickup with canopy. We stopped to talk to them some more, and they divulged that they were employees of the forest company which logged this area, and so had keys to the gate.

Part of the agreement which sees taxpayers' money go to forest companies subsidising their road construction is that these roads provide the general public with access to areas such as this during non-working hours. The companies take the money and, in this case anyway, build gates to keep the general public out. I suppose that if you devote enough of your life to the company you are rewarded with perks such as getting the keys to the gate for the weekend. Anyway, these two nice gentlemen offered us a ride back to the highway and we accepted. They dropped us off and went on to Whistler where they were living.

We still had a few hours left before we were to meet Richard so we finished our food and walked around. In the next few hours we found a patch of blueberry bushes in the forest with some very early fruit and witnessed some police officers gathering and comparing their hauls of confiscated beer. They had enough to keep us happy if they had offered us some, but they didn't. We got some amusement out of seeing them chase some forms they were trying to fill out but which got blown about by the wind. In the end we decided Richard wasn't going to make it and settled down to waiting for the bus which was due.

We didn't have to wait long before we were given a ride. A geologist and his wife had been looking for silver crystals in an abandoned mine near the logging road. They somehow fit us in to their back seat and drove us back into town, taking me to the bus depot to catch a bus back to Mission and Bjorn almost to his doorstep.

So this turned out to be a pleasant introduction to B.C. for Bjorn, and all in all a forking good trip.

Participants:

Raul Thomas

Bjorn Wolgast

The Bugaboos - Mt. Sir Donald

Jeff Greenwood/Lisa Moody

Summer 1989

Have you ever been on one of those trips where the weather was perfect and everything went according to plan? The sort where someone or thing seemed to be watching over you and all you needed to do was be there and see it all unfold? Well, no, neither have we, but this one came pretty damn close. So do you want to hear about it? We bet you do.

Both the Purcell and Selkirk Ranges in the B.C. interior are steeped in mountaineering history and regularly appear on the "must do" lists of aspiring climbers. In particular, Mt. Sir Donald in the Rogers Pass area and the Bugaboo group are popular objectives, not only for the superb climbing they offer at all levels, but also for their brilliant locations and the ease of access (no bushwhacking here). The scene unfolds for a summer VOC trip.

Rabid Rich Lechleitner, having recently graduated as Dr. L. in bug butts, was trying to wind up his student visa with as many bagged peaks as possible. Lisa was finishing at the Banff Music School at the end of July, and Jeff could afford time off work if a good trip presented itself, so we fell easily into his eager hands. The important number four wasn't too hard to find either. Michele was keen, and also had a car that worked. It was all go.

Rich, Michele, and Jeff headed east with car, gear, hopes and aspirations, and Rocky, our stuffed raccoon mascot. We spent one night with Richard Howes, ex VOC president, at the Vernon Army Camp, where he had a summer job. Unfortunately, not even the Army could save Richard's organisational skills, or lack thereof, but these tales are best kept between close friends. The alternator crapped out at Revelstoke, but we were lucky to find a mechanic who could and would replace it for us, on a Sunday no less. Then to Banff, where Lisa treated us to a viola recital on the night of Jeff's birthday and we all illegally crashed in the residence following the show.

We were now a complete team. After making a brief stop in Golden to drop off Lisa's viola for safekeeping with Bruce Fairley, we cut south down the Columbia River valley to the Bugaboos. The turn off is at Brisco, about 80 km south of Golden, and the gravel road winds for 45 km into the mountains. If you plan an extended stay in the car park, take chicken wire to wrap around your vehicle, as the porcupines and snafflehounds have a nasty habit of eating the tires and electrical cables. We opted to leave Rocky behind in the car to keep watch and scare the buggers off. The huge, monstrous and heavy packs were shouldered and we commenced battle with the steep trail, frequently cursing Rich's revolting level of fitness. Fortunately the trail was not too long, about two hours, and we did not rupture under the strain (double carries would be worthwhile for extended trips). We were often tantalised by the sight of partially obscured granite spires in the distance. The Bugaboo Glacier tumbled and twisted down the valley to our left as we ascended towards the Conrad Kain Hut. By late afternoon we reached the huge hut, and spent time discussing the weather and climbs with Chris Atkinson, the resident ranger,

On the Summit of Pidgeon Spire
Photo By Jeff Greenwood



and studying the extensive range of route topos on display (take a pencil and paper when you go!). The Kain Hut holds at least 50 and has great facilities for \$6 a night. This will be appreciated in times of bad weather, a common occurrence in the Bugaboos. Blessed with a good forecast, we decided to forge on to a camping area about 45 minutes up the talus, and that much closer to the peaks. Be warned that "Tim" the packrat lives here. He will chew through almost anything, so hang up your food from a suspended rope. Jeff's jacket sleeve, much to his distress, was the victim of such a Tim onslaught.

Our camp was surrounded by an amphitheatre of granite spires; Snowpatch, Bugaboo and Crescent. The open air loo hosted a spectacular view of all three. Campsites were flat and numerous and a nearby water source provided Rich with ample opportunity to use his new water filter, which he did with unrelenting enthusiasm.

Climbing day one dawned crisp and clear and we took advantage of a head start over those beginning from the cabin. After a snow slope slog to the Snowpatch-Bugaboo col, the other Bugaboo peaks, invisible from below, suddenly thrust into view. Elegant Pigeon Spire and the proud line of Howser Towers away to the west. The west ridge of Pigeon Spire (III,5.4) was our objective that day, chosen for its classic reputation and easy climbing. Leaving the col far behind we trekked across the expansive ice-field to the base of the climb. Roping up formalities completed, Lisa led off along the superb and solid rock of the west ridge. Moving in groups of two, we fourth-classed the bulk of the ridge, pausing frequently for photographs. We belayed the crux pitch, a traversing crack around the north side of the summit block, and scrambled up the final slope to the Pigeon's crown.

This seemed almost too good to be true, on only our second day after having left Banff. Rich was ugly and ecstatic as he always is in the mountains. The trudge home was uneventful, but on reaching camp that evening we really felt the effects of the days effort. Michele opted for a rest day on day two. Rich, however, was rabid and filtered water late into the night in preparation for Bugaboo Spire.

Day two dawned crisp and clear. The climbing season for the Bugaboos was almost over. Thanking our lucky stars for our incredible timing, we retraced our steps towards the Snowpatch-Bugaboo col. The Kain route on Bugaboo Spire (III,5.5) follows the line of the south ridge. It begins with blocky scrambling until the ridge proper is gained. From here the exposure increases and the climbing becomes more technical. Climbing as a threesome, we slowly worked our way up the ridge until we reached Kain's famous impasse, known as the "gendarme pitch." Jeff volunteered to lead the quivering pack past the gendarme. The pitch offered intense exposure and some challenging moves. A descending party suggested that Jeff "dive for it" in reference to the crux move, a blank slab traverse one step further than he would have liked. Rich itched to lead the summit pitch, and soon we were on top, ensconced in our sandwiches and questioning the stability of the weather. This seemed almost too good to be true. Already two peaks in only three days after leaving Banff. The topo map should be consulted for the airy descent rappels past the gendarme. Incidentally, this isn't the best way up, as Richard Howes discovered some weeks later. The return to camp was celebrated by Rich running off to filter more water, and a group decision to get out while the going was good.

On the following day, the descent was more than Lisa's already swollen knee could handle, so a stop at Radium Hot Springs was included into the day's itinerary. The already steamy water started to boil around Rich as he planned the next climb, the northwest arete of Mt. Sir Donald. Lisa and Michele had by this time moved to a cooler pool, but the heat was on Jeff, and he was in it up to his neck.

We slipped into Kootenay National Park for the remainder of the day, eventually choosing a comfortable campsite at McLeod Meadows for the night's rest. The weather seemed to be deteriorating, and we took the opportunity of our relaxed surroundings to sit back and reflect on the previous four days in the Bugaboos. Rich, however, would not sit still. With plenty of clean water available and no need to filter anything, he was champing at the bit for action, and you could tell that the words "Rogers Pass" and "Mt. Sir Donald" were dancing on the tip of his tongue and nestling in amongst the bushy hairs that graced his moustached upper lip. There was an atmosphere of uncertainty as everyone settled down for the night.

The next morning we returned to Golden to collect Lisa's viola, and continued on to Rogers Pass, weaving between the maze of tall peaks which were sometimes clear but often bathed in tufts of cumulous cloud. The news at the ranger station was not good. 200 lightning strikes in the park last night, 300 the night before, and 60 percent chance of thunderstorms for tomorrow. The ranger offered us an account of his ascent of Mt. Sir Donald, in which thunderstorms turned the descent into an 11 hour epic of rappelling almost the entire 2500 feet of the northwest arete, as footing on the wet lichen-covered quartzite rock was too treacherous to allow down climbing. We detected a word of warning in his voice, and in the light of the weather forecast, our respect for the mountain deepened greatly. Nevertheless, we registered for the climb, but not even Rich thought that our previous luck would hold out. After an afternoon of clear skies, however, the turning point came as Lisa and Jeff hockey taped Jeff's rain jacket back together, and he was transformed into a waterproof entity once more. Rich and Jeff decided to at least ascend to the base of the peak that night, so as to be in position for an early start should the weather hold. A hive of planning and packing activity ensued, and Lisa and Michele accompanied the gear-laden twosome for some distance up the trail to keep the psyche level high. Jeff was enjoying his improved fitness and almost matched Rich step for step up the "moraine from hell" which led to the steep meadows beneath the peak's west face. At this point several flat bivouac sites had been constructed, so we chose a suitable one and set to work constructing a tarp shelter for protection against the impending downpour that night.

The next day dawned crisp and clear, and the warmth of the rising sun welcomed us at the Bugaboo-Uto col. We paused to don rock shoes and harnesses, and as we roped up our eyes were drawn up the line of the jagged northwest arete, which stretched relentlessly upward, almost seeming to pierce the blue sky above. We fourth-classed up the ridge, initially deviating onto the easier ledge systems on the north side and regaining the ridge crest higher up. The blocky quartzite provided plenty of hand and foot holds for easy scrambling, but the potential for loose blocks made the security of the rope always

Looking towards Bugaboo Spire

Photo By Jeff Greenwood



welcome. We threaded our way upwards, occasionally congregating to redistribute slings and protection, but for the most part climbing alone, linked only by the stretch of rope snaking over and around the obstacles we passed. The mighty shadow of the mountain jutted far out into the distance, the sharp summit just touching the Rogers Pass Highway way below us. We joked about where our shadows would be projected down there, as we stood silhouetted on the ridge crest.

Eventually the steepness eased and by late morning we reached the summit, celebrating with a hearty swig of Rich's fine filtered water. On three sides we were surrounded by ominous thunderclouds, but stretching westwards was a window of clear sky which had sealed the success of the climb for us. Way below Lisa and Michele were spending the day hiking and soaking up the scenery. Following a relaxed lunch we slowly descended to meet them, carefully downclimbing the route we had ascended. Back at the col and after 11 hours in rockshoes, Jeff's poor feet were finally allowed to breathe in the open air; a momentary respite before being thrust back into socks and hiking boots for the journey down the descent trail. Rich must have been tired; he had even lost interest in filtering some water on the way down. Down by the river an indignant porcupine wandering along the trail refused to let Rich and Jeff pass, flashing its quills if they ventured too close. In the fading evening light, the strange procession of a porcupine followed by two climbers wound its way slowly along towards the campground. As the porcupine drifted towards one side of the trail, Rich and Jeff seized their opportunity and nipped by, appreciating the humour of the situation at the end of a tiring day. Reunited at the campground, we all ate, laughed and shared the days stories, before retreating into warm sleeping bags with the memories of a great adventure fresh in our minds.

Participants:

Rich Lechleitner
Jeff Greenwood

Michele Reynolds

Lisa Moody

Cathedral Lakes

Tom Baumann

Summer 1989

This summer was not getting any better and was almost over, so we decided to go to Cathedral Lakes Park no matter what the weather. The catch was that you had to book a ride in for \$40 per person in advance and then stick to it. Sure enough the weather report was predicting worse and worse weather, but I was confident, as it had been nice in the Interior all summer while it was raining at the cost.

I left friday evening and was in the Okanagan within four hours to catch up with Cheryl. Early saturday we drove to the trailhead which is about 17 km from the highway at Keremeos on a very good forest road. A group of maybe 30 people was waiting already to be taken up to base camp. I had this strange feeling that it would be as crowded as in Stanley Park up there. The ride up was spent listening to stories of questionable truth told by our driver. Halfway through the trip up a very steep and rough private logging

road I was glad not to have listened to some friends and hiked up instead. The one hour ride was over soon due to the entertaining stories and I was anxious to get to see all these 2 feet tall chipmunks and 3 feet long trout!

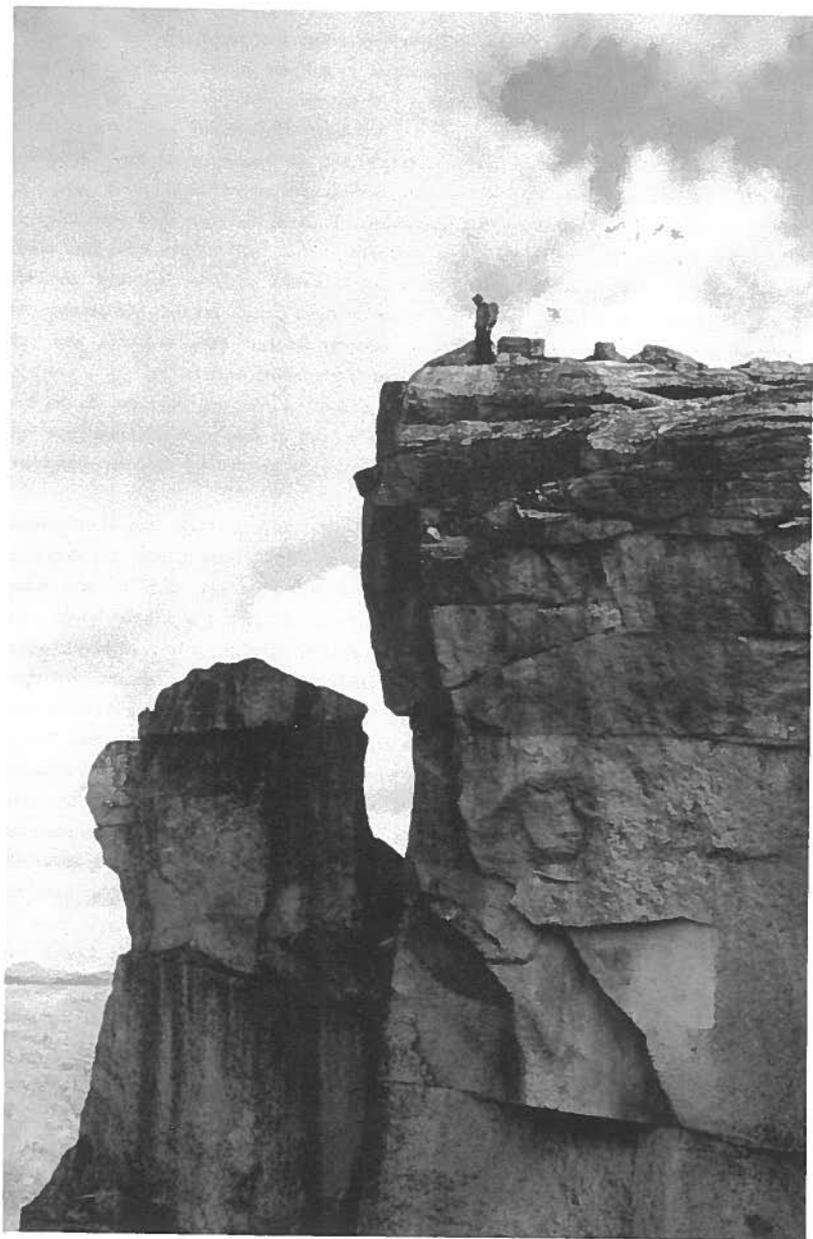
Once arrived and forked out our money for the trip, we were greeted first by the Park Ranger, who sold us permits for the campsites (a rather new institution that you have to pay), then by hail. We found our campsite nearby at Pyramid Lake and first put up our tarp to fight off the hail that by now covered the ground. The tents were put up quickly and the sun came out. We decided to use our good fortune and left for Goat Lakes. The trail wound steeply downhill, much to my despair, as I dislike going up at the end of the day. Two hail showers later, in beautiful sunshine we arrived at the lakes, which are really waterholes, but the scenery was incredible. 20 slides later we were sunbathing on the rocks that had fallen between some crippled larches. Waterfalls from high above added music to the landscape and although we didn't see any, we imagined mountain goats grazing on tiny patches of shrubs way up on those ragged peaks. All too soon the sunlight went behind the peaks and we reluctantly trudged back to camp, and sure enough, I had my problems climbing those last few hundred meters.

One fascinating thing with camping high up and late in the year, you can do the best stargazing of the year. Even the Andromeda Galaxy can be seen with the naked eye (and also with some imagination). A starlight dinner wrapped up the day and the tired hikers found rest and sleep at last.

Not bothering much with breakfast, we headed out toward the Parks "tourist attractions" early in the morning. Again, just like yesterday, where did all these people go, that came up with the trucks? A 500 meter climb on a very well defined trail got us up to Lady Slipper Lake. We were greeted with sunshine and puffy clouds reflecting off the lake's azure water, what a sight! Only then, did we meet some people, heading to their fishing grounds armed with rods and reels. The next several kilometers led up to the ridge above all these small lakes. The view of the mountains along the path and the lower lying areas became increasingly awe inspiring. Already at the level of Lady Slipper Lake we had left the vegetation behind and only here and there would a lonesome patch of flowers greet the hikers. Pretty soon another roll of film had been pushed through the camera. The sharp contrasts of light brought about by the sun and clouds made for excellent picture shooting.

Walking along the ridge through rock formations that aptly have been named Stone City we hiked along the ridge. Then suddenly we arrived at a precipitous drop-off with Smokey the Bear looming above. After a short lunch at the cliff, we couldn't resist to recreate the Park brochures title picture and a picture was taken of me standing above Smokey the Bear (holding on to the rock as to not fall past the bear). The next attraction, just a mere kilometer away, but across several cliffs, we reached the Giant Cleft. It's an awesome crack in an otherwise solid rockwall and looking down to the bottom made me dizzy.

**Tom Baumann above "Smokey the Bear"
Cathedral Lakes Park**



The way back was taken via a different route after a short snooze in the sun. Back through Stone City we weaved our way toward Devils Woodpile, where some strange lavaflow left columns of dark rock that resemble stacks of wood.

Carrying on further along the ridge views of all the lakes below had to be captured on film. A major snowshower drove us down toward Glacier Lake, where the sun again managed to come through. Past yellow glowing larches we made for the lodge at Quenesco Lake, where we booked our trip out for the next morning. Very tired, but filled with memories of these great views, we reached camp. In the morning we took the trip down to the Ashnola river and drove off to Penticton, where we were greeted by pouring rain. Back in Vancouver the same day, I found out that the coast, probably for the first time this summer, had had a sunny weekend, while it was wet in the Interior. Well never mind, the park couldn't have looked any nicer and unspoiled. There are so many ridges in open alpine country to be explored yet, I think I'll be back there next year.

Participants:

Cheryl Zurowski

Tom Baumann

From Sky to Sea: Meager Creek to Jervis Inlet

Jan Palaty

Summer 1989

Conception

Let's go do something interesting this summer for two weeks or so. Somewhere with lots of glaciers, Class 3 peaks and well off the beaten path. Use a couple of air drops but avoid air support for approach and exit. Peter suggests a traverse through the Clendenning Creek area: sure, it's been done but not very frequently. Certainly not often from Meager Creek to Princess Louisa Inlet. Next week OK?

Execution

Day 0

Judy, Dave, Peter, Jan and what they hope is enough food for two weeks are sitting in a truck in the middle of motionless traffic jam on the Stanley Park causeway. A jolly way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Suddenly, disaster strikes: Peter realizes that he has forgotten two bananas on the fridge. This prompts Dave to recall that we have also forgotten five days' worth of lunches. Five hours later we are in Pemberton pigging out at Phil's, enjoying our last grease fix for quite a while. We drop our two food bins and extra gear off at Pemberton Helicopters and drive to Meager Hotsprings. Apart from

nearly colliding with a Great Horned owl and almost driving into a washed-out section of road at 60 km/h, the trip is uneventful. The ground crew is deposited outside the locked gate and the air party returns to Pemberton.

Day 1

The air crew had set its alarm clock to ensure that it would be ready for the 7 AM departure but this turns out to be unnecessary as the sound of a helicopter taking off 200 m away at 6:30 is far more effective. Finally, at 10:30, the food bins are loaded on and off we go. Ah, the only way to travel! None of this mindless bushwhacking. However, the number and menacing nature of the glaciers below is making the passenger turn an interesting shade of green. Forbidding granite cliffs everywhere, dropping several thousand feet to the valley floor. Regret everything I'd ever said against the Prairies. The glaciers are simply icefalls, with the exception of the ten-kilometre river of ice known as the Clendenning glacier. Looks like something straight out of Alaska. We're toast. Why are we doing this?

Airdrop # 1 (actually our second cache) is in the 6500' col at the head of the Clendenning glacier. Crevasses everywhere. Pondering how on earth we're going to come up here on foot, I hop out, remove the bin and proceed to make a foot-long gash in its side as I try to force it into the snow. Oh, dear. Never mind, the clock's running at \$11 a minute. As we fly down low over the glacier for a preview of upcoming attractions, I have a terrible sense of dread about the bin. If ravens find it... But there's no time to worry: concentrate on the terrain, look for obstacles and feasible routes. Minutes later we arrive at Racoon Pass, the site of our first food cache. Three enchanting deep blue lakes surrounded by meadows and granite cliffs. I jump out and tenderly place food and fuel on the grass. Then it's back down the Clendenning and up the Elaho to our rendezvous on the meadows above Devastator Creek. The exit, the wave and I am alone. I am afraid. If I can rupture a food bin so easily, what could a bear do? A few minutes ago I was flying over some of the most intimidating terrain I have ever seen. How are we going to pick our way through? Has my ambition exceeded my ability?

Twenty minutes later, the ground crew emerges on the horizon with Dave, as always, leading the way at a brisk trot. No concern at all when I try to generate some apprehension in the party. A quick lunch then off across the flower-covered meadows. I have been here several times before but it's always a pleasure to return. Dave leads the way up the Manatee glacier to the col at 7800', with the ropes still in our packs. No problem on the bare ice lower down but a bit worrying as we cross into the accumulation zone and see many half-covered crevasses around us. Oh well, let's just hope that we don't fall in. Eventually, Dave makes a concession to the mortal three-quarters of our party and stops at the col. It is late afternoon and the weather is looking very ominous. Peter and Judy soon show up and Dave is soundly berated by Judy for his casual attitude towards glacier travel. "But they were just wee cracks! Not like the Real Crevasses on Logan!". Camp is set up on the glacier and Dave prepares supper: a rather hideous stew of lentils, tofu, dried mushrooms and God knows what else. Ex-pathologist Judy remarks that the tofu bears an interesting resemblance to a preserved colon. Thank you Judy, for

Jan doing what he does best
Photo by Peter Stone



sharing that with us. The nameless concoction was preceded by soup and dried seaweed: after a small sample, I declined to touch the latter again. This opinion was shared by our unofficial fifthmember later.

Day 2: Winter Camping in August

Wake up to find a raging (sort of) snowstorm outside. A couple of inches has fallen already and a lot more seems to be on the way. I am sharing Peter's tent, which seems to be holding up much better than the other structure, whose occupants are complaining that it's rather damp inside. We spend most of the day sleeping and poring over the maps. The Dave and Peter have a fascination with peaks which are remote, glacier-infested and offer no obvious lines of ascent. Mt. Albert, near the Inlet, fits these requirements admirably. The clouds clear late in the afternoon and we all tumble out of the tents. We go for a stroll along the ridge and try our hand at ice climbing on the steep glacier wall nearby.

Day 3: Welcome to the Coast Range

It is now raining for a change but stops by mid-morning so we quickly pack up and depart, with optimistic plans for climbing Manatee that day. Needless to say, it's raining by the time we reach the base of the peak so we proceed to the upper Toba Valley. In the mist, the area at the head of the Meager glacier is quite attractive. Peter remarks that it's a good deal like the Pennine Way in Britain (except for the crowds) while I find it to be reminiscent of the Oregon coast. We set up camp on a meadow beside the river minutes before it starts to rain in earnest. The rest of the day is spent in the tents. We occasionally stick a head out and assess the weather by giving a visibility rating to a group of trees about a hundred yards away. Peter eventually cracks under the strain and goes off to explore the fog. Judy is reading "Heart of Darkness" or a similar culturally-elevating text while Dave makes furtive attacks on the powdered milk supply between bouts with Dostoevsky. Supper is very good (cooking by Judy, unsolicited advice by Dave). A feeling of gloom hangs in the air as we retire for the night.

Day 4: Snow and "O Canada"

Foggy and wet but clears up by 7:30 so off we go. We follow the valley to the Elaho glacier and then up to the broad pass between Elaho and Mittleberg. Some tricky navigation is required to thread our way through the crevasses to the big basin below Elaho but it's better than trying to follow the ridge (see VOCJ '88). We climb Elaho by its E ridge (fun Class 2) and spend a few minutes on top pondering the Clendenning Glacier Problem far below: a glacier ending in a kilometre-long lake with cliffs on one side and steep talus on the other. Back down to our packs and the long, long slog across the "Elaho Icefield" to the Approach glacier below Racoon Mtn.. We're all thinking "If only we had skis...". Peter, true to form, insists on nipping up to Racoon Mtn., an insignificant irregularity on the ridge with packs and all. We then blunder down into the valley fog, hoping to collide with Racoon Pass. High on the ridge, we go down some fascinating terraces formed by huge slabs of granite with streams of water pouring down. An hour

later, we stumble out of the fog and see the Pass a thousand feet below us. I make my way down as fast as I can as I am anxious to know if the bin is still there. Several hundred feet above the Pass I can clearly see the exact location where I deposited our supplies but I still can't see the bin itself. I panic and accelerate down the hillside, neatly losing the rest of the party in the process. After scrambling and sliding down a few gullies I arrive at the lake. I walk around the corner and there, a hundred yards away, is a juvenile grizzly with its head buried in the bin and apparently having a grand time. Promptly reversed my views on big game hunting. I am downwind and vaguely recall hearing that bears have poor eyesight. Besides, what sensible bear would leave all that cheese, margarine and other goodies for an indigestible hiker? I sit there for ten minutes looking at the bear's gluttony and trying to think of something intelligent to do: nothing comes to mind, so I walk up to a rocky knoll above the lake which affords good views all around and should be of limited interest to the bear.

Ten minutes later I see my Big Brown Friend running away. Now what would drive him away? A bigger bear (see "Wahoo Tower")? The rest of the troops arrive a quarter of an hour later and it is suggested (not by me) that we mount a salvage operation to recover what's left. It is rather dark now and very foggy. It is also suggested (by me) that we make some noise so that the bear would be well-informed of our approach. My companions turn out to be a singularly quiet lot (I attributed this to their repressed British upbringing) so I make most of the racket with a heartfelt rendition of "O Canada", frequently interrupted by gasps for air.

Fortunately, the bear has left a surprising amount of food but the cream cheese, cheddar, half of the margarine and Dave's film are gone. The bear took an exploratory poke at our plastic bags of rice, sugar, etc. so that was essentially the last of them. Significantly, the dried seaweed is untouched: so much for the theory that bears will eat anything. In the end we manage to recover about half of our provisions and return to our proposed camp. It is now 11:30 and I feel absolutely finished, physically and mentally. Sleep claims us promptly after supper (prepared by Judy, bless her).

Day 5: Bush and Bugs

No hurry getting up. We lounge in our sleeping bags while Peter goes off to take some photographs. Peter is a notoriously early riser who believes that a tent should already be dismantled and packed well before dawn. Anyway, we then return to the food bin to clean up the mess. We salvage some dried potatoes and Peter, throwing dignity to the winds, gets down on all fours and manages to eat a grazing-style breakfast from the remains on the grass. We make our way down the valley and cross Clendenning Creek. Nothing major but bloody cold. We thrash our way through the bush before turning right and following Doolittle Creek for about a km. It is a hot sunny day and the bugs are everywhere except on the photographs we'll be showing the folks back home (who will say "What beautiful meadows!"). We cross the creek and set up camp. It is only early afternoon but since we want (?) to climb Mt. Doolittle tomorrow (a full day from here) there's no point in going further. Dave and The Nipper, however, elect to continue up the valley in order to feed some more bugs and do further damage to the willows and slide

alder. Judy and I retreat into the tents and read for the rest of the afternoon. Supper is Judy's usual pine needle-flavoured affair.

Day 6: Mt. Doolittle

We rise at some unmentionable hour and make our way up through the bush (Class 2; A1) to the ridge with great clouds of flies in hot pursuit. Some fun Class 3 up here, on impeccable granite. Our route leads through terraced meadows separated by cliffs of varying heights: the route finding is rather finicky here so we set up cairns as we go along. To reach the top of the ridge, Dave, Judy and I go right while Infallibility Stone, who was behind us, goes left. We run into some interesting crevasses on a steep slope above a cliff and after roping up (a concession to Judy) we eventually catch up with Peter. We amble along the ridge, climbing every damned bump along the way (a concession to Peter) and ascend Doolittle by its NW ridge (Class 2). Quite easy but the knife-edge snow ridge leading to the main summit is a bit unsettling with its steep sides and very generous exposure. Mt. Tinniswood looks real neat from here: a huge dark pyramid dominating the southern horizon. On the way back along the ridge, Peter falls into a crevasse up to his waist. I move to one side and a leg vanishes up to the knee. The hills are alive! The offending crevasse turns out to be a cavern of impressive dimensions. No evidence on the surface of its existence. The alarming part is that we had crossed this same section a few hours previously while unroped.

We make our way down to the valley (the cairns turn out to be an excellent idea) and are back in camp by 7.

Day 7: Isn't This Fun?

We follow the Clendenning valley to the lake at the snout of the glacier of the same name. A ruthless morning of bugs, slide alder ("But they really did look like meadows from the helicopter! Honestly!"), boulder-hopping and bugs: enough said. The traverse around the lake to gain the glacier is a real horror show: first a kilometre (at least) of steep and very loose boulder slopes going directly into the lake. No bench or beach: just scrambling at the water's edge on loose rocks which occasionally give way and send the hiker into the water up to his/her knees. This is the easy part. The final 0.5 km involves scrambling first on atrociously loose dirt and gravel and then on gravel perched on smooth ice. To add to the fun, the route is on steep slopes perched above ice cliffs which drop 10 m straight into the lake. Several hours later we sink on to the friendly blue ice of the Clendenning Glacier with sighs of relief. We then start plodding up the glacier: it's easy going but there's a lot of it and some of us are rather drained from our battles with (physical and otherwise) with the alder and gravel slopes. We pitch the remains of our food bin into a suitable crevasse, without a murmur of protest by the Scourge of the FMCBC, and continued up to the great cliff which divides the two arms of the glacier near its head and about 2 km from our food cache. We set up camp here, a couple of hundred yards away from a (very barely) hanging glacier. We can see streams of water on the rock just a few feet from our outstretched fingertips but because of the "bergschrand problem" they might as well be on the moon. Consequently, we have to melt iceworm-rich

snow. Close your eyes and think of the protein. Supper is an awful mix of lentils and anything else that Dave could find. There is very little food left but it shouldn't be more than a couple of hours to the cache. Our nearby hanging glacier makes its presence known several times during the night, once in a very dramatic manner.

Day 8: Welcome to the Coast Range

Rain and low cloud. Brunch of overcooked potato bits. Morale good. Peter says that it's a very long day from Tinniswood to Princess Louisa and I'm sure that we can make it to the Big T from here in a day. When you have almost no food left and strong doubts about your food cache you start to think like this. Finish reading "East of Eden". Rains solidly all day except for a few minutes around sunset.

Day 9: More of the Same

Still raining: harder than ever, if anything. I produce an indigestible breakfast of dried onions, Pesto sauce and partly-cooked rice which shatters any myth about chemists being good cooks. Start reading "East of Eden" for a second time. Around midday we sense a certain hesitation on part of the weather, a fleeting uncertainty of purpose. Our spirits rise with ten whole minutes of no rain but then it's back to the precipitation for the rest of the day. Dave gives a lecture on the nutritional virtues of lentils to a very sceptical audience. A banquet of dried peas, onions and spices (barely enough for an average mouse) is cheerfully predicted for this evening. Unnamed members of the party have taken to licking out the empty plastic bags of tomato paste, egg powder, etc.. No signs of cannibalism yet, though. We are all beginning to look very disreputable but we have no hope of overtaking Dave even here. Supper time sees Peter transform a promising stew of peas, granola, cracker crumbs, yeast and Italian seasoning into something pretty lethal by dumping in a whole bag of what turns out to be chili seasoning. "What is this, by the way?" Only Judy manages to finish her portion, putting the three males to shame.

Day 10: Food!

Up at 6:15 AM. It is NOT raining so we gulp down breakfast (disguised as warm and very dilute lemon pudding) and off we go. Judy puts her foot through a snow bridge with a scream. We decide/are decided to rope up. Painfully slow progress, as we're all pretty wasted from lack of food. Actually, we don't feel very hungry, just weak. Takes us an exasperatingly long time to reach the air drop because the area is infested with crevasses, mainly of the "honking big" variety. The food bin, thank God, is OK: it's split nearly in half but is untouched. Dave, like an unkempt Santa Claus, happily distributes the food from the large orange garbage bags. Cream cheese! No-Name ginger cookies! What delicacies! After an hour's gluttony we rise and stagger down the Glomach Glacier to its snout. We pick our way down the steep rock face beside an impressive waterfall pouring into the Tinniswood Glacier below. We have to lower our packs for one section but otherwise it's straightforward. At our lunch spot lower down I discover that one of my two cans of beer (intended for the summit of Tinniswood) has been pierced by a crampon point and emptied itself over my clothing inside my pack. Damn. We finish the other beer

on the spot, just to be safe, and start another long and tedious grunt up several km of glacier ice. We regret that the cloud level is so low and thus depriving us of what must be a spectacular view of the N face of Tinniswood: 4000' of black cliffs rising to a pyramidal peak high above. We set up camp in the notch N of Mt. George Edward. After dinner, the clouds lift and we have some rad views of the Big T ("We've got to climb that thing!") and, across the valley, Mt. Alexander and Blastus Ridge. The other three suddenly change into rabid photographers and run amok in the heather, snapping everything in sight. Some of us prefer to look at the sights directly rather than through a viewfinder. We gather around the maps and, our spirits now fully revived, talk in the late-November-over-a-beer manner about all the peaks we're going to climb.

Day 11: the Big T

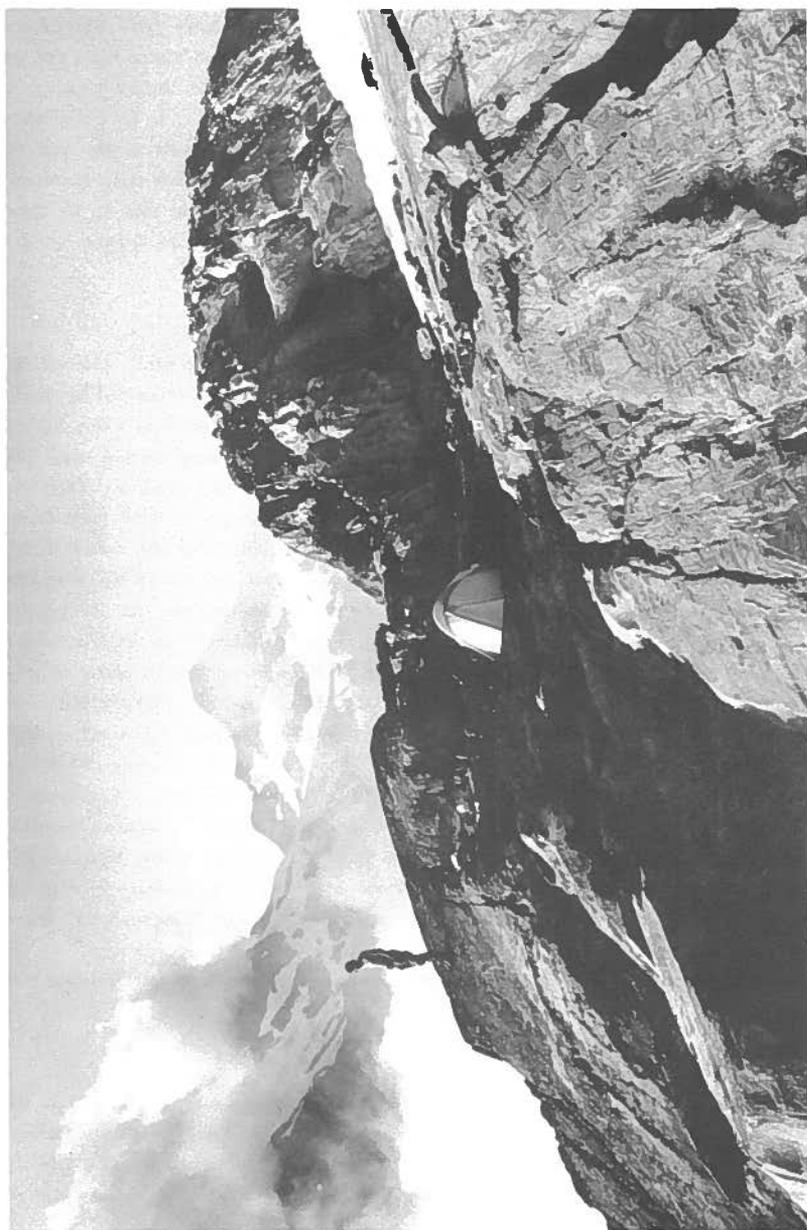
Wonderful cloudless morning. Departure was somewhat delayed in order to let the photographers do their thing. Steep climb to the plateau below Tinniswood. We ditch the packs and head over to bag George Edward. We are faced with two very similar bumps: which one is it? Judy unwaveringly leads us the one which is stiff and loose Class 3 and (once we're on top) lower. We take our packs a further km S, empty excess gear and ascend Tinniswood by its E ridge. Pleasant Class 2. We lounge around on the summit for an hour before descending. Since it's only 4 PM we decide to continue and camp below Mt. Casement (a neat but unfortunately rather low peak). The map says that it's steep but doesn't suggest any obvious way down. In truly democratic fashion we descend by three different gullies. We spot a rather scruffy mountain goat. Camp is on a wide gravel stream bed with Casement towering over us.

Day 12: Indolence and Inertia

Another wonderful morning. A few hours of climbing take us the broad and gentle ridge leading to that noble pinnacle, Peak 6045. On the way we have excellent views of Mt. Albert, an impressive glacier-hung massif which looks a good deal like Tantalus. One member declares "I WANT that peak!". Several hours are spent on 6045 and why not? It's sunny, the views are wow and there's no hurry anywhere. We're also within an easy day of the Inlet. We set up camp on the ridge at 6000' about an hour SW from 6045 and just across the valley from Albert. It's a lovely spot: a small patch of grass on a narrow ridge top with cliffs on both sides. Totally unimpeded views. Rather like camping on the top of a high mountain.

Camp by Mt Albert, Tinniswood in the background

Photo by Peter Stone



Day 13: Albert or Bust!

Early start. All features below 4500' are buried in cloud. Up and down along the ridge for 2.5 h to reach the base of the mountain itself. Neat area, with those huge slabs of granite everywhere. Feels like walking along the spillway of a large dam. Then it's up to the high ridge which nearly encircles Albert itself, across the broad glacial basin and up the easy snow slopes to the summit itself. A rather exciting snow bridge crossing is involved: not much snow but a lot of air below it. Albert turns out to be an insignificant bump but it's satisfying all the same. On our way back, the cloud starts to clear and we can see Princess Louisa Inlet 7000' straight down below us. We return to camp at sunset, tired but content. For the record, it was 7300' of vertical, 27 km and over 13 h. Peter stumbles in, collapses on the grass and stays there, motionless, for ten minutes. A rare sight indeed.

Day 14: Of Jellyfish and (Probably) Christian Trail Construction

We rise at a civilized hour, pack and bid adieu to our lovely campsite. After several hours of pleasant ridge-walking we reach the Contact Lakes, two greenish-blue lakes surrounded by absolutely flawless granite. Now, I am not a rock climber by nature but the sight of all that beautiful rock in those alpine surroundings very nearly converts me. This area makes the Smoke Bluffs and even Smith Rocks look extremely common. There are also many curious channel-like formations in the rock which strongly resemble those found by the sea. We pick up the trail which leads us down to Loquills Lake and, several hours later, sea level. We are very grateful that we're going down and not up this wretched thing: whoever built it (possibly that Young Life lot from Malibu, who use it regularly) obviously did so with the intention of inflicting maximum punishment on the user. Peter remarks that he can't imagine any novice from Malibu brought up this horror of ever wishing to hike again. If it was possible to go up, the trail did so. Likewise if it could avoid dry land and go through a swamp. One section involves several 5.7 moves (really!) while another enables Peter to give a convincing Tarzan impression. A couple of hundred yards from the sea the trail sort of vanishes: with a few choice comments, we inflict some heavy damage to the salmonberry bushes before suddenly tumbling out on to an Interstate of a trail. We follow it to the wharf of Princess Louisa Marine Park where, dropping our packs with a crash and ignoring the curious gazes of the numerous boaters, we dive into the sea. What a feeling! It is not until later that we see the sign "Danger: Lion's Mane Jellyfish. Swimming not Recommended."

There are over a dozen boats at the wharf. Hopefully we'll be able to get a ride out with one of them.

Day 15: Princess Louisa to UBC

Up early for no logical reason. We do our best to get a lift: Judy turns on the charm and goes from boat to boat pleading our case with Peter (the Respectability Factor), while the scruffy half of our party stays well-hidden in the background. One by one, though, the boats leave the wharf without us. Nevertheless, the persistence paid off and one couple kindly agreed to give us a ride to Pender Harbor.

Well, that's about it ("At last!", sighs the reader). We are dropped off at Pender Harbor after a pleasant afternoon's cruise, hitchhike to the Langdale ferry terminal and a couple of hours later are back in Vancouver.

During the trip, we asked ourselves many times "Why are you here? Do you really enjoy being cold, tired and hungry?". As we walk along Granville St. (10:30 PM, Sunday night) to our bus stop, a silent but satisfactory answer is obtained.

Analysis

The main problems were the food bins. High and remote glaciers seem ideal for their location. I have been told that a bear can break into virtually anything so the key to success is probably in choosing the site wisely rather than armour-plating the food cache. Using two caches instead of one turned out to be an excellent idea mainly because our packs, as a result, were never particularly heavy: I can think of no way to make a trip truly miserable than to be burdened with seventy pounds on one's back. It may be macho but it ain't fun. Our virtual absence of technical gear (apart from crampons, ice axes, etc.) was also of great help here. Incidentally, plastic boots are very highly recommended as they can be dried quickly and are unbeatable for stream crossings.

Finally, I would like to thank Judy, Dave and Peter for making the trip so enjoyable: may I always have such good company in the mountains!

Participants:

Judy (Heli-hater) Needham

Peter (The Nipper) Stone

Jan Palaty

Dave (Horizon) Williams

Two Days Near Mt. Gilbert

Craig Hollinger

August 1989

Day five dawned in fog. We were hungry, for we had no breakfast. The last of our three day supply of food was eaten the day before. The food cache we carefully placed five days ago was 8 km. away. Between us and it were crevasses, ice falls, and a 2700m peak.

The sun was up, we could see it overhead, yet the horizontal visibility was scarcely a rope length. Weather is unpredictable in the Coast Range. Two days ago, a violent storm boiled up over the ridge above our campsite, and struck us, in less than half an hour, out of a blue sky. It raged through the night then left as quickly as it came. In its wake, a day behind, came the fog.

We packed the camp slowly, procrastinating, hoping the fog would lift by the time we were finished. The whiteout persisted. We couldn't put it off any longer, we

Ken scrambling in the Mt Gilbert area
Photo by Craig Hollinger



had to move. Ken and I were given the duty of navigating through the thick sea fog. We stepped into our skins, shouldered our massive packs, and checked the map once again for the bearing.

"Contact?" Ken asked, glancing at me. I replied, "Contact!" and skied into the void.

We travelled through the mist, Ken following me with a compass in his hand. The rope stretched between us was, at times, the only contact we had with each other. The silence was broken occasionally by Ken calling out to me, "A little to the left!", or, "A bit more to the right!", depending on how far off the line I had drifted. We shuffled along, dreaming of the culinary delights tucked away in the food cache that we'd soon reach.

Each time we came to a crevasse, I would call back, "Crevasse!", then veer off the track to find a way across. Once I was across, Ken would follow, and once he was across he'd backtrack along the edge until he picked up the original track. We would then realign ourselves with the bearing and continue on. We repeated this procedure several times. Eventually our first objective appeared. A black nunatak rising up out of the wind cirque surrounding its base. A brief conference was called.

"The last time I was here," Bruce said, running his finger along the map, "we followed this ridge, and dropped down into the basin at the low point in the ridge, then skirted around to the right of Peak 9017." He looked off into the distance, then added, "Course, there was more snow then."

A compass was no longer required, a line of rocks protruding out of the snow led the way. On the other side was a cliff, its walls disappearing into the murk. We wondered if there was indeed a way down into the basin at the bottom of the wall. At the low point in the ridge we stopped, dropped our packs and clambered up into the rocks. This was a lunch stop.

We didn't linger long, there was nothing to eat. We stared into the fog, hoping to catch a glimpse of what lay ahead. All that could be seen was the white flank of Peak 9017. After another discussion with Bruce, Ken led off and I followed. More crevasses to cross, only these weren't as moderate as the last few. The slope here was steeper. Gravity's tug on the flowing ice tore open the surface of the glacier, exposing its cold, dark heart. As we crossed one slot, another would appear in the mist ahead. Each crossing forced us higher up Peak 9017, when we were supposed to drop 50m down its slope. Eventually we found ourselves on an ever steepening slope. I looked up to my left, and could make out the vague outline two avalanche chutes carved into the snow cliff above. Ahead of me was Ken, each step he took sent a slow wave of slushy, wet snow sliding down into the murk. The hissing sound of the flowing snow could be heard for many long seconds.

"Let's go back," I called to Ken, "we're getting into trouble here." At that moment his skis slid out in a surface slough and he fell on to his side. I stepped back and pulled the rope tight, my axe ready to plunge into the slush at my feet. He slid no further. He picked himself up and we made a quick retreat to a sheltered ledge on the lip of a large crevasse. Anything coming off the slope above would be absorbed by the gap. Another conference. We decided to return to our lunch spot on the rocky ridge and await better visibility.

We erected our tents, all the while looking over our shoulders at the obstacle that lay between us and our food. Standing on the highest point of the ridge we peered into the mist, hoping the weather would change and at least give us a glimpse of the way around the peak.

A stove was lit and a pot of water was put on to boil. As each man came and sat around the communal pot he added whatever scrap of food he could shake out of his pack. Preceding our meal, we dined on some crumbs of crackers dipped in peanut butter and marmalade. This was supplemented by a small chocolate bar, divided into eight pieces. Bill dipped his cup into the gruel and prudently measured out each person's portion. No one touched their soup until the last serving was dished out, lest there was not enough to go around.

Day six dawned under clear skies. We looked out from our tents and stared in awe at where we had been the day before. Our blind wanderings had taken us into a jumble of ice towers, the way through blocked by a black rocky ridge tumbling down from the summit. No time was wasted in breaking the camp. Again, Ken and I were entrusted to find the route over the peak. The rest of the group waited.

We struck off at a quickened pace, our spirits heightened with the knowledge that soon we would be having a feast. It soon became apparent that our route over the peak would not go. A large crevasse stretched across the upper flank, near the summit. We headed left, toward the rock of the east ridge. The slope steepened, so we removed our skis and strapped them to our already over-weight packs. Our companions, having seen our choice of route, headed off in another direction to find a better way. We continued our ascent on the rock. It was a fine morning, the early sun glancing over the horizon, a sea of cloud below us covering everything but the highest peaks.

The route was probably no more technical than the occasional 5.7 move, provided one was wearing only lycra and rock shoes, but doing it in duck boots and 50lb. packs made it feel like 5.10c. This prompted an interesting climbing style. The leader climbed without his pack, and forced the route. After he set up a belay, the second climbed up with a pack. When difficult moves were encountered, the second called up to the belayer. The belayer then hauled in the rope as hard as he could, essentially yanking the second up the rock. Once the second was up, the leader down-climbed to retrieve his pack. The same procedure was followed again until the leader was back up. We reached the summit in this manner a couple of hours later. There we found a cairn, possibly left by Clarke or Baldwin.

The other side of the mountain was a gently rolling slope of firm, summer snow. We scrambled down to it and donned our skis. A few dozen perfectly carved telemark turns later and we were at the end of the snow. And once again we strapped the skis to our packs. Foot prints made by the others, lead the way to the top of a steep scree-filled gully. On the glacier below we could see our companions (they had obviously found a faster way) sitting amid open buckets and boxes of food, stuffing their faces. With due diligence we dashed down the unstable mix of rocks and dirt to the top of the snow field above the new camp. Once again we donned our skis. We carved another dozen or so

telemark turns and alid into the camp past Bill,grabbing the freshly cracked cans of beer he held out for us. We were home and it was time to dine!

Introduction to Index, Solree at Smith

Paul Kao

Summer 1989

Having not been on a trip of any sort for over eight months, my only contribution (tripwise) goes back to the spring/early summer of 1989. I've noticed that there is a dearth of rock climbing articles in the journal; bearing that in mind, this article hopes to remedy this situation by giving prospective climbers a few ideas. In the early summer, Bill Durtler and I found ourselves with a weeks worth of spare time in which to go on a little climbing tour of the west coast, hitting Index and Smith Rocks. Leavenworth was missed because it is a usual VOC haunt during thanksgiving.

Index (2 hours south of Vancouver) is probably the closest area to climb at other than Squamish. The Index Town Walls were primarily known for their aid climbs until recently; an explosion of new routes and aid routes gone free now give rise to some high quality climbing, most commonly aretes and laybacks, but plenty of cracks from thin fingers to wide jams, and face/slab climbs at the higher levels, due primarily to the steepness.

The Lower Wall is comprised of several regions; the Lower Lump, Inner Wall, the Country, and of course, the Lower Town Wall. Of these areas, the Lower Town Wall is the most accessible (and therefore the most popular) area to climb at. The Lower Wall is a little like the Smoke Bluffs, only that the climbs are more continuous, and less spread out, offering climbs of up to three pitches in length. The Upper Walls were passed over because of lack of time (and the long bushwack), but the routes there normally are longer and some require aid. In the years to come, as the aid portions are freed, the Upper Walls should offer superb but difficult climbs of a more continuous nature. Private Idaho is another band of cliffs below the Upper Walls that provides good quality face climbing, mostly bolt protected.

It seems that many of the climbs at Index are short in length; Bill and I missed several of the belay anchors (unknowingly), opting for more excitement by linking the shorter pitches into a continuous pitch. A few of the climbs were a little run-out (don't forget to get insurance climbing across the border), but for the most part were acceptable. Actually, it's probably a good thing that the pitches were short, because what they lack in length, they make up for in steepness. Index climbers like to think that there ratings are a doublet above Squamish, and look forward to sandbagging visitors. I felt the routes may have been a grade more difficult, only because of their steepness; once you adjust to the verticality, the ratings are comparable.

Bill and I drove into the town of Index late in the evening, circling about endlessly for a place to sleep until we found a little side road that we could pull into for the night. Bill's a hard man, so he decided to sleep outside, while I opted for the protective womb (against mosquitoes) of my station wagon. Bill then started something of a dangerous precedent by waking up at 6 am to go climbing. Actually, it was great; no crowds, peacefully tranquil, and the weather cool. We did one or two routes, and then went for breakfast at a restaurant just outside Index, hanging out with the locals as they came in for a day's climbing. We stayed at Index for only two days, but packed in plenty of climbing; it would take quite a while before we exhausted all of the potential climbs that we could do.

Some of the routes that I can recommend at the easier grades (below 5.10) are Aries, Princely Ambitions, Toxic Shock, and G.M. Actually, we didn't climb G.M. in its entirety; it was to be our first climb, but we went off route (see Heart of the Country below). Some other good looking routes are Roger's Corner into Breakfast of Champions, Taurus, Great Northern Slab, Lamar's Trust, Nazi Love Camp (only for the name--it's a 4" offwidth), and several wide cracks on Private Idaho, too numerous to name here.

For those more comfortable with harder climbs, we liked Voyage to the Bottom of the Verge and On the Verge (in one long pitch), and then TR(toprope) Sonic Reducer and Terminal Preppie, Racer X, Godzilla and Slow Children, Go For Soda and Model Worker in one long pitch (we could never remember the name Model Worker, and simply referred to it as "that stupid climb"--however, that could be due to the fact that we stopped for a late lunch and ended up drinking beers by the river), and Heart of the Country. Bill and I didn't plan on doing Heart of the Country for our warm up, but we went off route on G.M. and ended up on the former. Faced with the prospect of doing a 5.11 thin fingers, or a 5.9 offwidth to get back onto G.M., we made a prudent decision and chose the thin fingers. Some other climbs that looked enticing (and easier than their grade suggests) are Ten Percent, Japanese Gardens, Numbah Ten, and City Park, along with a host of newly bolted but nameless face routes.

Smith Rocks was our next destination (eight hours from Vancouver). I had been to Smith Rocks as late as November, and as early as February, but never in the summer, due to the heat. Smith Rocks State Park lies in the Oregon desert, with an annual rainfall of 10" per year, usually in the winter months; climbing in the summer was a little tricky, but fortunately Bill was there to rouse me for those early alpine starts at 5 am, in order to beat the heat. Who says climbers don't start before noon?. The rock at Smith is welded tuff, consolidated from volcanic ash, and consequently can give rise to the phenomenon of the portable hand/foot hold. Not surprisingly, the majority of climbs that aren't cracks are protected by closely spaced bolts. Although the Park has crack climbing, the area is renowned for its superb quality face climbing on vertical and overhanging rock. Techniques range from thin edging to pockets to nubbins to side pulls, often requiring deadpoints (dynos are for buckets, deadpoints are for everything else).

There are numerous cliffs to climb at Smith; I will only mention the most accessible and convenient routes (usually the ones with the most traffic). If you climb in the Park in winter, you'll want to hit the cliffs with sun, especially in the morning. Morning Glory Wall,

Picnic Lunch Wall, and the west face of the Dihedrals are normally viable; later on in the day, the Dihedrals, Christian Brothers, Wooden Ships (east side), and Mesa Verde Wall are good bets. In the summer, you're in a race against the sun, so the plan is to keep moving, climbing wherever there is shade. The other area worth mentioning is the spectacular 400' Monkey Face spire; when seen from the highway, this unmistakable tower signifies the light at the end of the tunnel. Something out of the ordinary always seems to happen at Smith. Once, as we drove in from Vancouver, we could see lights on the Monkey Face at midnight. Apparently, two climbers were stranded on the spire (rope jammed in a rappel), and ended up being rescued by helicopter. The helicopter then decided to announce its arrival to everybody in the Park by landing a few hundred meters from the bivouac site at 1 am. Needless to say, these bumblebees masquerading as climbers were not graciously received. Another time, it had snowed the entire night, yet we were able to climb comfortably in T-shirts all next day. Other trips, I've seen great climbers (Edlinger, Moffat, Franklin) do first ascents of routes that only a handful of people are capable of climbing.

Okay, I'll admit it. I'm lazy. Instead of cooking in the cold, I would persuade everybody to go to a warm cafe for some coffee and breakfast. In the evening, we would be too tired to cook, so we'd head into Redmond for dinner, although I suppose it is feasible to cook at the park, if one so desired (or had a VW camper). The only problem with eating out is the need to watch your weight when you climb at the Park; it's pretty hard to keep yourself in positive nitrogen balance without overindulging, especially at the Golden Corral³.

Many people complain that there are no easy routes at the Park; however, I disagree. There are plenty of easier bolt protected climbs below 5.10a⁴, such as Zebra to Zion, Gumby, Light on the Path (all found on morning Glory Wall), most of the climbs on the Fourth Horseman, Christian Brothers (except for those climbs), Combination Blocks, and Spiderman Buttress. Other good climbs include the classic Moonshine Dihedral, Phoenix, Bunny Face, Cinnamon Slab/Toast, and the Pioneer Route on the Monkey Face, which goes at 5.7 C0 (bolt ladder) or 5.12d.

Having sampled almost all of the bolted 5.10's and 11's at the Park, the best 5.10 has to be Moons of Pluto, although Powder in the Nose and Fred on Air are also good. Among the 5.11's, the Touch, Suicidal Tendencies, La Siesta, Almost Nothing, Monkey Space, Toxic, Vomit Launch, and Overboard are all excellent; however, Toxic is a must do for the aspiring hardman (right Eric?). Easy 5.12's include Spartacus, Freebase, Take a Powder, Latin Lover, Heinous Cling (first pitch), Spank the Monkey, and Chain Reaction.

Having said all that, I hope I've inspired a few climbers to constantly test their limits, and explore new climbing areas. I don't know when I'll climb again, so I'd just like to thank all the climbing partners (far too many to list) that I've dragged on these road trips for all

³ The Golden Corral, an all you can eat buffet, was commonly referred to as "the Golden Trough".

⁴ See Oregon Rock A Climber's Guide, by Jeff Thomas, for a guide of easier climbs (mainly cracks) that require protection.

the good times-its the people that make the trips memorable, not the climbs.

Hiking the "Range of Light"

Saskia Acton

June 12-27, 1988

The high Sierra, "RANGE OF LIGHT", inspiration to Ansel Adams, Galen Rowell, home to John Muir. Another climbing season beginning for Rob: a climbing career beginning for myself. So why give up the challenge of a vertical granite face, put on a 20+ kilo pack and embark on a 380 km hike from Yosemite to Mt. Whitney?

In Yosemite we met a climber, quick to jump to the conclusion that Rob "must have a new girlfriend" to undertake such a miserable feat. It was his idea, though. We had already got a taste of the Sierras; first in the valley sitting on half dome, later climbing in Toulme, Cathedral Peak and then further on to the heart of the Sierras climbing Charlotte Dome. I was hooked on the country and wanted to see more.

The hike takes a lot of planning, so says the trail guide, but we were lucky to get organized enough for one food drop made from Bishop, Calif. We were the first party of the season to sign in for the permits from the Yosemite end hoping that record low snowfalls would have pushed the summer ahead a bit.

It was overwhelming to actually begin the journey walking on the asphalt path along the Merced River amongst hundreds of tourists elbowing their way up to Vernal Falls. Soon enough you're high above the throngs who stay limited to the 7 square miles of roads and cafe's and into the high country. A detour for supper at sunset on Cloud's rest with a whole new view- Yosemite was behind us and the expanse of unknown country ahead. This is bear country, renowned for its persistent crew of black bears who seem to keep a research team constantly updating their knowledge of human bear-proofing technology. This country had many things to teach us.

The first leg of the hike from Nevada falls to Toulme Meadows takes you back into the days of Sierra Club outings and mule trains. We found little appeal in the location of Sunrise High Sierra Camp set in a boggy meadow carved up by a muddy trail often 4 tracks wide made by horses travelling side by side. It was mosquitos which impressed me the most as I ran along the trail swatting frantically at the beasts. We realized we did not have enough bug juice for 16 days. It was only 2 days to Tuolme but we were already glad to see civilization again so that we could iron out a few quirks in our gear. The stir-fried pancakes didn't work out too well and we needed a frying pan or more porridge. The pan was lighter and so on we continued with our new purchase dreaming of real pancakes as we hiked along the Lyell fork of the Tuolme River gazing up at Mt. Lyell, the highest peak in Yosemite Park. The scenery got more beautiful by the minute as we rounded the bend and came upon a herd of deer grazing by the river. But the beauty of the valleys can't be matched by the wide-open splendor of the alpine. It was time to get up there, out of Yosemite Park by climbing to Donahue Pass at 11,056 ft. This is real high country - thousands of jewel-coloured tarns, rolling granite, glaciated peaks in

all directions, and challenging hiking. We picked up our pace, averaging about 24 km per day, each day in new and very different country. By day 4 we were into a volcanic region much more barren and rocky but still populated by numerous lakes with great camping. It was always hard to push on leaving each perfect little spot behind. I wish I could have stayed around most camps for days.

The topography of the John Muir Trail is like a roller-coaster ride with a total of 13 passes to cross, numerous deep valleys between. The ridges to climb always lead to new ground; beyond each pass is another spectacular view. Going southward we came across Reds Meadow Hot Springs at an opportune time, had a natural shower and worked on our callouses with pumice we'd found along the way. There were even tourists offering us cold beer just before camp! From then on there's no more civilization and you become submerged in the Sierras. You leave the region of cinder cones and sparse hemlock forests to more pristine scenery. By day #6 we were well limbered up, had abandoned ideas of quitting because of sore feet and were getting used to each others smell. Then our stove packed it in. This we saw as an added challenge to our culinary abilities and fire-lighting skills. We now had to camp below the 11,000 ft. fire lighting limit and getting used to cold food. Thus began our days of cold porridge breakfasts, long evenings descending to tree line so we could light a fire, and persistent nagging of people we met to trade with us some of their cold snack food and mosquito repellent.

It was still unforgettable scenery. One evening we happened upon some real "mountain light" after hiking over Seldon Pass in a thunder storm. The sun was setting on a peak across the lake from us making a double rainbow in the black clouds while lightning flashed around the peak. We went on a photographic bonanza overcome by the quickly changing light. Only about 3 of the pictures ever made it through developing as the next day, lured by the promise of Blaney Meadows hot springs, Rob attempted a ford of the San Joaquin River, camera and shoes around his neck and soaked the lot in the raging torrent. Spirits were dampened from this episode as we plodded through the rain along the river bank until we were uplifted once again by the beauty of Evolution Valley just past the halfway point of the trip and real paradise. We met people coming in the other direction advising us to turn back and forget about crossing the armpit deep snow of Muir pass but ignored their Southern Californian warped fears and topped the 11,955 ft. pass without more complaints than wet feet. It was barren, stark but gorgeous beyond the pass and the next day was food drop day and chocolate chip cookies!

We had worried for 10 days about our food hanging in a tree near Bishop pass - at the time we had hung it up there we knew very little about bears. To see our big blue bag swinging from the branch that day was reason to celebrate - time for a feast! We sat down and opened up the trail mix and started munching. I though I tasted mosquito repellent, spat out my mouthful. It wasn't. Our entire bag of food had been overcome by the escaping fumes from our white gas supply. Oh boy - from now on it was cold porridge with a white gas aftertaste.

Six more days of rugged, steep terrain. The "Golden Staircase" up to Mather Pass (12,100 ft) in the rain, another pass just beyond the last. Our nerves were getting frayed by this time as we sat in the pouring rain eating gas-flavoured instant potatoes cooked on

a borrowed stove. But getting to Rae Lakes and seeing the multicoloured peaks Fin Dome, Mt. Rixford, Dragon Peak and Painted lady was a spiritual cure-all. This more southern region is a lot drier and more sparsely treed with plenty of tempting granite peaks. We continued into some familiar territory around Charlotte Dome, a must in the "50 Classic Climbs" book, and began the climb to Forester Pass, the last and highest pass to surmount (13,180 ft.). The trail beyond is cut right into the cliff face, an indicator of the high standard of trail construction we found throughout the trip. The other side of the pass opens out into the incredible expansive Bighorn Plateau with its foxtail pine clad sides and views without equal. We were alone in the wilderness as we climbed up the west side of Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the "lower 48" states (14,495 ft.) and the designated end of the John Muir Trail. As we joined with the trail from the east we suddenly encountered hundreds of tourists out to climb the famous peak. The sun was shining on the summit as we sat eating the last of our food watching hang-gliders soar in the Owens Valley below.

John Muir wrote "I am well again, I came to life in the cool winds and crystal waters", and we felt the same as we descended into the oppressive heat and highways of Eastern California.

Participants:

Rob Driscoll Saskia Acton

Brew to Brandywine - an Alcoholic Traverse

Nick Folkhard

Summer 1989

The hike started with a somewhat uninspiring trudge along the railway tracks at Brandywine Falls. After twenty minutes or so mutinous mutters were heard to the effect that Stuart had hatched a mad plan to hike all the way back to Vancouver along the tracks. The sudden appearance of a large sign saying "Brew Lake" silenced the mutterers, and we headed hastily into the trees, glad to be away from the danger of being squashed by tons of thundering steel.

According to the book, the trail was not supposed to be very long either horizontally or vertically. This proved to be a case of "lies, damned lies and statistics". We gasped and grovelled our way over ridge after ridge, stopping frequently to exclaim how wonderful the view of Black Tusk was. Stuart's poor sister, whose last experience of hiking had been some five years earlier, had turned an unhealthy purple colour and appeared to be searching for just the right words to describe how she felt towards her loving brother. Fortunately, she was too out of breath to actually say the phrases she finally came up with.

The trail eventually deposited us on the shores of Brew Lake. The sun went in as soon as we stopped moving (of course), and the lake looked almost forbidding in its

bleak, boulder-strewn basin. We spent fifteen minutes or so eating lunch and trying unsuccessfully to persuade Stuart to go for a dip, and then it was time for the others to head back down.

Once they'd gone, I headed around the lake and up towards the ridge upon which Brew Hut was rumoured to sit. I was more than a little anxious about playing hide-and-seek with this elusive structure, and was therefore absurdly relieved to see it sitting quite still exactly where it was supposed to be. I dumped my pack at the hut and scrambled up through man-eating juniper bushes to the top of Mt. Brew, where I stopped to admire the view. The familiar peaks of Garibaldi Park rose across the Cheakamus valley to the east, but the view to the west was very different and completely new to me. The big black triangles of Tricouni and Cypress to my left were mirrored by the equally dark dome of Brandywine far to my right. In between ran a sandy brown and grey ridge system, looking very barren and wild - as if it had been lifted out of a rocky desert somewhere and plonked down in the lush mountains of B.C. The nightmare towers of Mount Fee were clearly visible, dominating the ridge like a ghostly ruined castle. The view was framed by glaciers - the Tantalus Range to the south, the remote peaks on the far side of the Squamish River to the west, and the Cayley icefield to the north.

I retreated to the cabin feeling suitably awed, and dined on powdered crackers, a bit of cheese spread and a tin of tuna of indeterminate age which was occupying the cabin when I arrived. I spent the rest of the evening reading old VOC Journals, watching the sun go down and enjoying the knowledge that there was no-one within several miles of me.

The next day dawned just as perfectly as the previous one had ended. After a slightly unsatisfactory breakfast of a Mars Bar, I trotted off along the Brew divide, doing my best to warm up. As soon as the sun hit the ridge, the temperature rose about twenty degrees; I peeled off most of my layers and drank about a litre of water. At one point, the crest of the ridge formed a sharp boundary between dense stunted forest to my left and bare sandy soil to my right; just beyond this, I descended to a creek and then trudged painfully up towards the main divide.

As I reached the top of the main ridge, the snowfields across the Squamish River burst into full view against a cloudless blue sky. I decided that I couldn't think of many places I would rather be, and turned right to begin the simple and enjoyable traverse along the divide. As the ridge neared Mt. Fee, it narrowed abruptly and it occurred to me at more than one point that I wouldn't like to be skiing on this particular part of the ridge crest. Mt. Fee grew steadily larger and more terrifying - something about its tottering, crumbling spires gave me little adrenalin surges even as I looked at them.

Quite suddenly, I found myself at the foot of the south tower of Mt. Fee, having followed the ridge all the way instead of taking a short cut across the little glacier which surrounds Fee's west side. From close up, the tower appeared somehow smaller and less ominous, although the ridiculous overhang of the east face was now obvious. I slithered and boulder-hopped my way around Fee's west side, and rejoined the main divide just beyond Fye, Foe and Fum. I found a convenient rocky knoll to sit on and stopped to eat lunch and admire the scenery.

From my vantage point, I had a clear view of the remainder of my route. I was also close to Cayley and Pyroclastic, which appeared very shapely but extremely loose. Vulcan's Thumb was somewhat dwarfed by the two main peaks, completely inaccessible and highly unpleasant.

A couple more kilometres of ridge walking brought me to the edge of a very black cliff, not very high, but quite high enough. I retraced my steps a little way and scrambled down to the base of the cliff. From here, an easy snow gully led up to the base of a large pile of boulders, which, on inspection, turned out to be the top of Brandywine. I squatted down behind the cairn and peered down the precipitous north side of Brandywine at the glacier far below.

There were some fairly serious clouds hanging around, and things were altogether cooler than they had been, so I soon left the summit and headed down the ridge towards civilisation. A steep slope carpeted in thick vegetation led down to Brandywine Meadows, which took me completely by surprise - I hadn't expected them to be nearly so beautiful. Describing them wouldn't do them justice - suffice it to say that if I wanted to go and sit in a tent for a few days, Brandywine Meadows would be very high on my list of places to go. The beauty of the place was enhanced by the complete absence of people and the feeling of being tucked away in the mountains, far away from highways and towns and other such unpleasantries.

I left the meadows with the greatest reluctance and pounded down the steep forest trail until I emerged at the logging road. Heaven to hell in a few short minutes! The road went on for several years, until I no longer had even the sight of Mt. Fee high behind me for inspiration. Eventually I reached the highway, where I was soon picked up by a construction worker in an old but remarkably fast truck. His flamboyant driving style involved steering with one hand while drinking Kokanee with the other. Nonetheless, he got me back to Vancouver in one piece - and I suppose it was an appropriate end to a walk from Brew to Brandywine.

Participants - whole thing: Nick Folkard, to Brew Lake: Suzanne Rao, Stuart and Leslie MacDonald, Jennifer(?) MacDonald and two others whose names I have forgotten.

Rubble Bunny Awete (North Face of Stonerabbit Peak)

Andy Pacheco

Summer 1989

I had been intrigued by the north face of Stonerabbit since 1987 when I first read Don Serl's Canadian Alpine Journal article⁵ in which he touts it as a project worth considering. Even without having seen the face, the description of its size and

inaccessibility captured my interest. Still, the promise of a major bushwack for an as yet unseen goal made it difficult to find enthusiastic partners, and so the project languished on the backburner. Then in the summer of 1988, while climbing on Judge Howay, Muriel Kobus and I spotted a small but impressive peak to the east, sporting a very long and aesthetic looking north arete.

A look at the map confirmed that it was Stonerabbit, and suddenly the project for the next summer was born.

Well the summer of 1989 started with very unstable weather for doing major alpine routes, and one by one our plans had to be cancelled. By the time the August long weekend rolled around we were all pretty bummed; nevertheless, the weather seemed promising, and so we decided to risk an attempt on Stonerabbit.

The approach, though long, was not too bad. We drove up on Friday night, got an early start, and were pleased to find that a trail now extends all the way around Statlu Lake. According to Kobus who had been in the area some years before to do the Tuning Fork on Mt. Bardean, the worst bush had been encountered going around the west end of the lake. From the west end of the lake a roughly flagged track led us to a wide open basin in about one hour, which greatly buoyed our spirits. Of course having had the start go so much more easily than we had expected meant that the rest of the approach felt harder by comparison; still, we were able to keep hard bushwhacking to a minimum by following streambeds for long stretches up the right hand side of the basin, and by late afternoon we had reached the summit of the minor peak on the ridge immediately north of the Ratney-Stonerabbit col. Here we got the first look at our objective.

"Hm".

"Hmm.."

"HMMMMM..."

"Well, we are looking at it straight on, things always look steep when you look at them straight on.."

"Yeah, we really can't say anything until we get up close. Sure looks steep though..."

"Hmm."

"Uh oh, looks like clouds gathering to the east!"

"Nah, just afternoon fog. Let's get down and set up camp."

"Yeah. Well at least the arete's real..."

Wordlessly we headed down and set up camp. The wall loomed huge in front of us, and it looked pretty scary. Still, every now and then as the light changed we could pick out features, and could clearly see the great arete which had captured our imaginations a year earlier. As we cooked supper we plotted our strategy.

We decided to carry no extra shoes on the climb to save weight, and left a pair of running shoes at camp to allow us to retrieve our boots from the base of the route (about one hour's hike from camp) on our return. Just as we were roping up we spotted a mountain goat very close by on a seemingly inaccessible ledge. We marvelled at the incredible musculature of its body as Kobus snapped pictures. This was one of the highlights of the trip! The start of the route involved a few meandering pitches up

moderate unprotected slabs to the right of the arete. This we expected, and hoped that once we gained height rougher rock and more features would make up for the increase in steepness.

At last we were able to traverse onto the arete. It was Kobus's lead and it took a while. Muriel and I were beginning to get apprehensive when the call came: "off belay!" We soon found out why the pitch had taken so long. Much steeper than the previous pitches this one was wet and bushy; worse, whereas bushy pitches usually offer good pro, this one offered slimy grass, serving only to fill any cracks. At solid 5.9 the lead must have been pretty nerve-racking!

The next lead took me up some pretty tricky fist cracks and offwidths, all either wet or filled with precariously balanced rocks which had to be bypassed. This was not getting any easier! As Muriel and Kobus followed, Kobus dislodged a fairly large block which narrowly missed Muriel's head. We all decided that we weren't having much fun. As I started the next lead, up yet another vertical fist jam capped by a roof of loose boulders, I cursed.

"If it doesn't get better after this I'm outta here!"

Muriel and Kobus knew better than to make any comment, and I continued in silence. The pitch didn't let up, and got no better, but circumstances conspired to make me back down from my stated desire to abandon ship. Up until this point, although the climbing hadn't been great, we had at least had good belay stances. Now I had only a poor stance with a dubious knifeblade, rickety bush and tricam as an anchor. Moreover, I had just reached that point which arrives in every climb when the ground seems a long way off, and going on looks more feasible. Now clearly visible a few pitches up was a large ledge which we had seen in our photos from the year before, and appeared to lead to the west ridge above all its difficulties. Muriel was still doubtful, but Kobus and I were now both in favour of continuing. Finally Muriel agreed to continue, proposing that the route, which we had thus far decided to call "Pebblebunny arete", would more aptly be named "Rubblebunny".

Kobus led a long pitch up the obligatory loose rock to a belay on a boulder just perched on a pile of rubble. Muriel glanced around at this inspiring site.

"So what do you guys think of 'Rubblebunny Awete'?"

Kobus and I agreed with this name, and our team had a new sense of purpose: to finish off "Rubblebunny Awete". A short pitch led us to the base of a prominent rock scar which we had seen in our photos of the awete. It looked really hard, and the sun was just setting, but Kobus decided to at least give it a shot. I belayed while Muriel started to clear our cramped ledge (the first we had encountered in a while) for a probable bivouac. Kobus led off across a high-angled face and then onto a lower angled ramp. Leading out about thirty feet from the belay, he finally managed to get a tied-off angle in before negotiating a vertical, horrifically thin looking corner, about ten feet high. Clearly worried he eyed this thing for a bit. He was able to hit a knifeblade part way into a seam at about hip level, but it didn't really inspire much confidence.

"I want my mommy!"

"Maybe you could aid off the knifeblade" I suggested hopefully.

"I don't trust it; It's probably A4! I'll just have to free it..."

This seemed strange logic to me; I guess times have changed when we free something because it's "too hard" to aid! With the sun now set Kobus started to stem up the corner. He was managing to get some holds, and with a couple of grunts, reached his fingers up to the ledge above. It looked like that was it, but what we couldn't see from below was that the ledge was piled high with boulders and rubble. For what seemed like an eternity Kobus fought desperately to clear the loosest rubble out of the way. Rocks crashed down the face, sparking as they went; fortunately our ledge was well to the left of the firingline. Finally he managed to belly-flop onto the ledge, and get a bomber series of stoppers into the crack above. We all breathed a sigh of relief; the crux of the climb had been solved, and Kobus lowered off for the night.

Our bivouac was reasonably comfortable, at least for Muriel and me. We couldn't lie down but we could sit together and relax our bodies without slipping off our ledge (unlike a recent bivouac in Yosemite where I had to sit upright in perfect posture all night or slip off). Kobus was not as comfortable, but he survived the night alright, and at first light we set off again. I took over the lead, hauling up the rope past the crux to save time. The next bit was an interesting flaring corner which was actually reasonably solid. This soon gave way to some wet stuff which led to the base of a vertical slanting thin crack, opening into a tiny triangular pocket before heading straight up. Although wet, the first bit proved quite neat, and quickly I found myself with both hands and a foot in the pocket. This was surprisingly secure due to the geometry of the pocket, but the crack above was running with water and chocked with dirt. I managed to bang in a small angle on which I hauled up. Oh well, the climb was no longer 100% free, but this pitch had been the best so far! I had to step in etriers to make the last move onto a perfectly flat ledge, which would have been great for a bivy except that it was soaked. Up came Muriel and Kobus. Now we could see the prominent ledge just above us. One last wet corner followed by a desperate dripping mantle and we reached it.

Now we had a decision to make. Should we continue up the arete or escape along the ledge to the west ridge? The next few hundred feet of the climb looked fairly straightforward, but we knew the last pitches would be hard, and we had long since run out of water. On the other hand, maybe the top segment would be better than the bottom, and anyway, we knew that if we didn't do it we would regret it as soon as we were back in the comfort of our homes! In the end though, there really was no question; we were tired, very thirsty, and had the opportunity to escape quickly. We took the ledge.

Within half an hour we were on the west ridge, enjoying the sun and the excellent knobby boulder problems which sometimes appeared on the otherwise heathery path to the summit. What a contrast to the gloomy face we had just left; here everything was easy and fun! In less than an hour we reached the summit. We didn't stay long since we really wanted some water, but just down from the top we found a patch of melting snow and settled down for a rest.

The descent down the east ridge turned out to involve some pretty tricky route finding, and we marvelled at the alpine quality and inaccessibility of this small peak. We finally threaded our way down into an attractive slabby amphitheatre which allowed us

access to the west side of Ratney. I'm sure we followed the same route as the first ascent party, and quite honestly there may be no other easy way up the peak.⁶ As we headed up Ratney's west slabs we heard a sound from above. We looked up to see another mountain goat looking down at us intently. We watched in fascination as it moved along the tricky terrain. Suddenly, whether deliberately or by accident, it sent a volley of loose rocks down! These passed us well on the left, but was it our imagination or did the goat now wear a mischevious grin? Then, as if to make it up to us, the goat headed up an obscure water course showing us the way up. Warily we followed it up, and in another hour we were at the top of Ratney's north ridge, which was our planned descent route.

Kobus had used the north ridge to descend from Mt. Bardean some years before and we got down uneventfully, although by now all the walking in rock shoes was beginning to take it's toll; Muriel especially, wearing new, snug fitting rock shoes was in veritable agony.

From here to base camp was a short walk, and soon we were eating dinner, looking back at the shadow of Rubblebunny. We had seen it from many angles since we had last stared at it straight on, and it hadn't looked any less imposing. Oh well, if the climb itself didn't turn out to be the classic we had hoped for, the line and indeed the mountain proved to be inspiring; with its bushy defenses low down and its big walls above, it was another little giant of the west coast. And now that I'm home safe, I want to go back and finish the damn thing!

An account of the ascent of the north face of Stonerabbit peak. Difficulty 5.10- with two points of aid.

Participants:

Kobus Barnard

Muriel Pacheco

Andy Pacheco

FALL 1989

Longhike

An Introduction to the VOC

Eric Nodwell

Fall 1989

This being my first year at UBC, I decided to get involved in some of the more interesting aspects of university life. So I joined the VOC, without really knowing what they did except that it seemed rather exciting. Had I known at that time exactly how exciting it was at times, I might have joined the chess club instead. Anyway, as every VOCer undoubtedly knows, the first trip which every new member goes on is the fall "longhike". I have yet to find someone who can tell me what is "long" about it. For us complete novices, there is of course, the prerequisite "dry school". This is another funny name. It seemed by comparison to imply that real rock-climbing was always done in the rain. I was much relieved to find that the only thing wet about the longhike was the hot-tub. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about many trips which I have since been on. Some of them were, to say the least, soaking, raining, drenching, pissing miserably wet, and on not a single one of them have I come across another hot-tub. I must therefore conclude that the longhike is false advertising: a deliberate attempt on the part of the VOC executive to dupe poor, unknowing novices.

Dry school was held in the chemistry building the Thursday evening before the longhike. I arrived about ten minutes late, and found that about a hundred people had arrived before me. (They must have been novices! How many VOC hardcores arrive on time for anything?) Everything appeared to be in a state of disorder and confusion. Not knowing exactly what to do, I joined a line-up which was approaching the front of the room. Some other lost soul asked me what the line-up was for. As if I knew! When I reached the front of the line, I was issued, in return for a small contribution to the VOC, a "Basic Rock Climbing Manual" and several meters of "webbing". Another funny name! This one however, is highly appropriate. It turned out that one took the webbing and wrapped it several times around one's legs and hips, until one was hopelessly entangled, giving a sensation which I imagine is not unlike that experienced by a fly who has flown into a spider's web. The purpose of this, we were told, was to create a point of attachment for the rope. I rather suspect that it had the additional purpose of handicapping and hindering us so that the leaders, who were vastly outnumbered, could more easily manage us hundred or so novices. This technique of tying oneself up is not easy, and most of the dry school was devoted to perfecting it. It is equally difficult, if not more so, to untie oneself and because of this, I wondered what one was to do when Nature called? I suppose that the only thing to do was take a message and ask Her to call back later, and hope that it wasn't urgent. There was also some discussion of anchors at dry school, but since, as far as I knew, we weren't going anywhere near any boats during longhike, it

seemed rather irrelevant at the time.

I must say a bit here about my mode of transportation to longhike. I decided that it would be a good idea to ride my bike. So on Saturday morning, I rose bright and early... very early... so early that it was not bright, but pitch black, and I was certainly not feeling very bright at that time of morning either. In a kind of stupor I clipped my panniers (thoughtfully packed the night before) onto my bike and set off down the road. The cold air (thank God for wool tights!) and exercise quickly woke me up. It's not often that I wake up to find myself pedalling across the Lion's Gate bridge. That ride was one of the most exhilarating which I have ever done. It was completely dark, and overcast, so there were no stars and no moon. Once I passed Horseshoe Bay, there were no lights of any kind, except very infrequently the headlights of a passing car. The world was limited to the small stretch of road faintly illuminated by my feeble headlight. Nothing existed except me, my bike, the road and the wind. Then, without it seeming to get any lighter, I could discern a greater blackness to my left which outlined the mountains. Gradually, the world was revealed in gray, ghostlike form, shrouded in the morning fog.

I arrived at the Murrin Lake parking lot, the appointed meeting area, to find it deserted. Surely I couldn't be the first to arrive? Finding a picnic table, I sat down to eat my breakfast, of which I consumed no small amount. As you might imagine, I had developed a sizable appetite. Very soon carloads of people with climbing gear began to arrive: fellow VOCers. Much later, carloads of people were still arriving. I could have slept at least another hour. Now came the task of trying to remember how to tie a harness out of webbing, as we had done at dryschool. After many hopeless tangles, and consultations with people equally befouled, I managed to tie a harness which I was reasonably confident to trust my life with. Organising so many beginners was a monumental task for the leaders, who pulled it off admirably. Nevertheless, it was quite a while before we set off to do some climbing.

I ended up in a group at the Smoke Bluffs with Eric Clemson as leader. There was further delay in finding a suitable climb, during which time Eric demonstrated the principles of an anchor, and I at last came to understand what anchors had to do with climbing. When everything was at last ready, Eric went first to demonstrate and set up a top-rope. The climb was not very steep or very long. He used no protection and made it look as easy as walking up a flight of stairs. "This is going to be easy!" I thought to myself. The next person to ascend seemed to take an inordinate amount of time. "What's taking her so long?" I wondered. Well, she finally made it up and I got a chance to go. I tied in and approached the base of the climb. Suddenly, it didn't seem at all easy. I was facing a rock wall and was somehow expected to go up it. What was I supposed to hang onto? Or stand on? I made a false start, came back down, and then managed to get a fair way up. Climbing, I discovered, is not the same as walking. If you are walking, and lift your foot off the ground, you expect to have no difficulty in putting it down again somewhere. Not so in climbing. If you lift your foot, or your hand, you suddenly find that there isn't any other place to put it. And if you try to restore it to its former position, you discover that while you weren't looking, the hold which you had previously used has mysteriously vanished, leaving a smooth slippery rock face, and leaving you hanging by only three

appendages. Such was the position I found myself in about halfway up, except that I had made the critical mistake of trying to move both an arm and a leg at the same time, leaving myself hanging by only two appendages, and those only by minute indentations in the rock. So, with a dubious look at my novice belayer, and a thought to my improvised and as yet untested harness, I did what any reasonable person would have done... I fell. I am eternally thankful (and somewhat amazed) that both my belayer and harness proved to be true. Oddly, my fall gave me new confidence. It wasn't scary, or painful. It was even a little fun (I am sure that there is a ride at the PNE which gives a similar experience). And I learned that I was secure.

I managed one more climb that day, and then, foolishly scorning offers of a ride, I started the long trip up to Whistler on my bike. The road from Squamish to Whistler is a gruelling marathon for a cyclist at the best of times, and I will not dwell on that trip too much except to say that I considered more than once how agreeable it would be to just lay out my sleeping bag by the side of the road. I did however, arrive at the Whistler AMS cabin, after having missed the turnoff, which occasioned much bitter and obscene language when I found I had come too far and had to turn around and reride some of the road which I had struggled so hard to leave behind. I entered the cabin with my bowl and spoon in hand, and by some lucky chance the line-up for dinner was just beginning to form. It is said that hunger is the best cook, but some credit must be given to the volunteers who helped with the cooking. I don't remember having tasted better spaghetti (or was it lasagna?). And after dinner, yes! the hot tub! Ahh! There remained nothing that I desired but to roll out my sleeping bag and go to sleep. This, however, turned out to be much more difficult than I had anticipated. The number of bunks was somewhat less than the number of people desiring bunks, and had all been allocated long before I arrived. I considered sleeping in a stairwell or some such place, but even these had already been claimed! The only suitable unclaimed spots in the cabin were in the main room, where several boisterous individuals were carrying on a noisy party, and showing no signs of turning in anytime soon. Since I had considered the possibility of sleeping by the side of the road, I was well prepared to sleep outside, and this seemed the only option. I rolled my sleeping bag out on the porch on top of a tarp which I'd brought. It was a clear night and the stars were brightly shining. The chance of rain during the night seemed minimal. If it did rain though, I would simply pull the tarp over me. As a matter of fact, it did rain, but I slept through it and woke up with a wet sleeping bag. Oh well! I only needed my sleeping bag one night anyway.

I didn't go on any of the hikes the next day because the ride back to Vancouver was exercise enough for me. Since Squamish is at a lower elevation than Whistler, one might expect the ride in that direction to be easier than the ride the other way. This is only slightly true. The road goes up and down and up and down so much that if in the end you are slightly higher than when you began, you have actually climbed much higher than you are, only to lose most of it again. Such is also the case going "down", except that there is a slight net loss. Besides this, there was a punishing headwind. I am convinced that there is a universal law about cycling (call it Nodwell's first law) which holds true no matter which direction you are riding: "The wind shall blow in thy face and impede thy

progress". By the time I reached Squamish, I was so exhausted that I called my parents to see if they could come pick me up. They could, but not for an hour or so. I decided that I might as well ride the rest of the way, taking my time and riding slowly. I stopped a long time at Murrin Lake, and went for a swim (a very short one - the water was cold), which was very refreshing. After that, the ride wasn't too hard. It seems however, that I did overdo it, because my knee became inflamed as a result of the trip, and I was unable to ride for a couple of months. The good thing about it was that, since I was off my bike, I had time to go on more VOC trips.

Longhike didn't make epic status, but it was certainly a very memorable introduction to the VOC.

Oh yes, one more thing. In preparation for my next trip, I purchased a real harness and cut my webbing up into slings.

Participants:

Lots...

"The Camel" -- Crown Mtn.

Joha McCarter

Labour Day Weekend, 1989

The Camel (1945 m) and the Pyramid (1503 m) are the highest summits of Crown Mtn., located above the Capilano River and visible from Vancouver. After an earlier attempt on Elaine's birthday left us wandering in a foggy drizzle somewhere around Goat Ridge, we returned on a (hopefully) sunny day to do some rock climbing on a few of the Camel's many short routes.

Taking a 10:00 a.m. gondola up Grouse Mtn., we followed the trail to Goat Ridge then dropped NW into Crown Pass. Here the trail forks. A path leads off to the right into a valley at the head of Hanes Creek. The left fork winds steeply up Crown Mtn. Not really knowing which way to go, we took the right fork, passing below some cliffs on the left and moving up scree slopes around to the north side of Crown. Some interesting possible routes here, though the rock is wet and greasy in parts. But we guessed this was probably not the usual approach to the Camel and scrambled back to the fork.

It was a warm and sunny day but by this time it was 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Marty and Nicola had to get back so Elaine and I, determined to at least find the Camel, stormed up the trail to Crown Mtn.

After an easy scramble to the top of the Pyramid (with spectacular views of Vancouver and Garibaldi Park), we stood overlooking the Camel, which is separated from the main summit by about 20 ft. of 4th Class downclimbing. An easy, bushy (but rather exposed) ledge runs along the NW side of the Pyramid and then drops down to the base of the Camel.

I led the usual route (5.2) from the NE corner, then traversed right via an easy (but awesomely exposed) crack to reach the top. The view was great, and was particularly

striking because the sun was presently setting behind the summit of Crown. As we prepared to rap off in the growing dusk, I wasn't sure if the rope (a single 50 m 11 mm) was long enough to reach from the rap block on the top of the "hump". So we rappelled down to the

"neck nape" then used the fine collection of anchor slings there to reach the ground (a rather neat free rappel). A nifty little peak.

We returned the way we came, going up the steep, muddy trail to Goat ridge in total darkness. Somehow drawing energy from the lateness of the hour, Elaine flitted up the hill while I staggered along behind her. "C'mon. The trail's this way," says Elaine. We reached the gondola in an hour and a half, phoned Elaine's parents and enjoyed a hot meal that I can't remember very clearly.

Participants:

Elaine Kerr

Marty Tipton

John McCarter

Nicola Tipton

Been There, Done That

Something Different on the North Shore

Rob Driscoll

Fall 1989

So you're bored and you want to get away from the books? A day in the mountains sounds nice but you can't face the early morning start. I've dealt with this conundrum on many an occasion during my years in school and made numerous trips up Cypress Bowl, Seymour and Grouse Mountain.

One of my favourite trips for an easy day involves hiking up under the old chairlift and then on up the Cut. Contouring left of Grouse Mtn. you can climb over Dam Mtn. and Little Goat. If I've more energy I continue onto Goat Mtn. or scramble down to Crown Pass and then up Crown Mtn. From the latter two summits I've gazed across the Upper Lynn Creek to the peaks on the E side of the valley: the Needles, Coliseum Mtn. and Mount Burwell. Burwell, in particular, looked interesting as above tree line is a vast expanse of meadows, small tarns and great slabs of whitish granite. With the opening of the watershed some four years ago, I thought it was time to explore a little further afield the next time the urge for a one-day getaway struck.

On a frosty September AM the four of us met at the civilized hour of 0900 in the Lynn Valley Regional Park parking lot. Our group consisted of three pasty-faced medical students: myself, Saskia and Andrea, all out of shape after a summer of slaving in the wards. Andrea's husband Eric and their dog Arrow had considerably more energy than the rest of us but this was just supposed to be an easy reconnaissance of Coliseum Mtn.. The first 1.5 or so of the hike is easy level walking in the forest alongside Lynn Creek.

When you arrive at NorVan Creek (marked by a large bridge) you turn directly up the steep hillside. You then proceed to climb 800 m up a rough route. The route is well-flagged and would be hard to lose but it is certainly not a well-groomed trail. Don't be concerned if you can't find where to start up; anywhere on the right bank (as you look up) will quickly intersect the flagging.

The climb is nice and shady as it climbs through mature second growth forest (this valley was logged near the turn of the century). There are many giant moss-covered stumps complete with notches for the springboards. A little more climbing brings you into some first-growth forest: giants that escaped the first time around. Part way up the slope you will come across a sign which points left, down to the NorVan Pools. Deep, clean pools with warm rocks. A great spot for a break on the way up or down.

Once you reach the Needles/Coliseum col, the trees thin and you hike in amongst the heather although there are a few steep, bushy pitches. At one point we ran into a steep headwall but managed to outflank it on the right. There is some flagging about but once on the ridge it becomes sketchy and can't be relied upon.

We reached the summit of Coliseum Mtn. (a non-event) early in the afternoon. It's only a short drop down the ridge to a series of beautiful tarns set in heather and granite. Perfect for an afternoon swim: the tarns are shallow and the water warm. The remaining stretch to Mt. Burwell is a pleasant ramble in the high alpine. From the summit, views of the Seymour and Capilano watershed spread out before you. Beyond are the summits of the Sky Pilot group and the peaks in Garibaldi Park. Close by and looming some 200 m above Mt. Burwell is Cathedral Mtn.. The Fairley Guide calls it "the most interesting mountaineering objective in this group of peaks". A project for another day.

Our day ends with a few beers and a couple of toques on the summit followed by a painless descent that saw us to the parking lot by dusk. A pleasant day and recommended trip.

Glacier School

**(or: How To Keep A Dozen Students Entertained And
Their Instructors Warm For A Weekend.)**

Craig Hollinger

October 14-15, 1989

Throughout the VOC's long history, many people received their introduction to mountaineering from the Club. Some of these people went on to forge brilliant mountaineering careers, Bruce Fairley is the name one who comes to mind. His first mountaineering lesson came when, at the start of his first trip, he was handed an ice axe and told "If you fall, stick it in". Beginners should get a bit more instruction than this before they venture for the first time into the mountains. It's up to the 'old guard', those who have spent their lives in the mountains, to pass on their ideas, their experience, and give guidance to those new to the sport. Today's novices are the future of mountaineering.

Eric Nodwell dressed to kill at the VOC Glacier School
Photo by Craig Hollinger



Although the largest part of climbing a mountain (at least in terms of time) is just simply hiking, a glacier is what usually separates the hiker from the mountaineer. An introduction to mountaineering, therefore, starts with the ice axe. It is on the ice where the axe becomes a true mountaineering tool. It isn't just a walking stick or a place on which to hang a pair of wet socks. A novice must practice with the axe until it becomes an extension of the body, there all of the time, ready for immediate use. If, when on a glacier, the novice feels naked without an axe, then the axe has been mastered. After the ice axe, a novice can try on crampons. If, after playing with them, tripping and falling with them, all on safe slopes, the novice can dance a jig on 40 degree ice, he is ready to try them in the mountains. Next come the anchors, the belaying techniques, routefinding, wilderness survival --there is so much to learn, it takes a lifetime.

The concept of a VOC glacier school is not a new one, but some of the previous schools lacked structure and organization. During the past summer, with the hope of alleviating these problems, a basic format was scribbled out. It was further refined by conversations with mountaineers from the climbing community.

The problem of what to include in the course and what to leave out had to be solved. A two day weekend was about all most university students could be expected to commit to the course. Once the purpose of the course was decided, to introduce the students to mountaineering, this problem became easier to deal with. But, due to the severe time constraints of a two day weekend, a lot of material had to be left out. Even still, there was a large volume of subject matter left to cover. The emphasis was to be on the basics. If the students came away from the course having only practiced ice axe arrests, then the course would be considered successful.

In the past, Glacier School proved to be very popular, with thirty or more eager people wanting to experience a glacier. Herein lay another problem. It seemed that it was the Club's mandate to reach as many interested people as possible, but numbers such as these make it difficult to safely and effectively conduct an outdoor school. A way to limit the numbers was needed. Since mountaineering is not for everyone, some form of commitment from the participants would help to turn away those who were only curious. The idea of a nominal fee, donated to the Smoke Bluffs Fund, or some other worthy charity, was tossed around, but it was soon dispensed with. We are dealing with poor students here, it was felt, who have already spent twenty bucks to join the Club. Still, the venerable dollar is a strong form of commitment. The requirement that each student bring along four carabiners was eventually decided on. If they bought them, that would be about a twenty dollar commitment. If they already owned them, then they probably had an interest in the sport.

Because of the volume of course material to be covered in just two days, a certain amount of experience was required by each participant. They should be able to tie a few basic knots, tie themselves into a harness, and have some backpacking experience. Attendance at the rock school during Long Hike was considered a minimum requirement. In order to save time on the field trip, the mundane yet essential chores of adjusting crampons and prussik loops would be best done during the dry school.

With all the preliminaries laid out, the writing a student's guide began. After a couple of days, a 15 page document emerged. It could have easily been twice this length. There is so much to teach. The guide was meant to be just that though, only a guide. The many books written on mountaineering, ice climbing, crevasse rescue, rope handling and other related subjects, could be consulted if the student wanted any more information.

With their "Guides" clutched in hand, their appetites whetted by an intense evening at the dry school, the students were eager to learn the skills of ice axe and crampon. They were met at the trailhead early Saturday morning by their instructors. After the load of ropes, carabiners, ice screws and other mountaineering paraphernalia was distributed amongst the students (Rule #1: Instructors do not carry ropes), the approach march began. It ended about two hours later at the appointed campsite. Over the rest of the weekend, the students busied themselves learning ice axe arrests, ice screw placements, crevasse rescue techniques, and ice climbing techniques. Some learned even more than this; what kind of boots to bring (or not to bring), what kind of clothing to use, that it really is cold sleeping on the snow, and other subtleties of the mountaineering environment. With the cooperation of the weather, there was enough time to cover almost everything laid out in the course, and, contrary to VOC tradition, get back to the cars before dark.

Thanks go out to those who helped with the development of the curriculum, the instructors who gave up a weekend to stand around in the cold, and to the participants who brought along their enthusiasm and energy.

The participants were:

Eric Nodwell	Sonia Bozzi	Brant Dorman
Patrick Ouellette	Harold Traeger	Patty Aroca
Dick Repasky	Fern Horowitz	Paul Meuten
Bruce Dupuis	John Paul Sweeny	John McNern
Kevin Setter		

Their instructors:

Judy Needham	Steve Dodds	Jan Palaty
Wendy Waters	Leslie MacDonald	Craig Hollinger
Ken "but I've watched many films" Legg		

Waiting for Godot

at the Bottom of a Crevasse

Steven Dods

October 14-15, 1989

"Excuse me, Mr. Dods, sir," asked Jan, "if you are not doing anything at the moment, would you care to be our next victim?" (Don't worry about the excessive formality, that's just the way Jan is.) I agreed, tied myself to the end of the rope, and

OK...on the count of three...PULL!!!

Photo by Craig Hollinger



lowered into the crevasse. Above, Jan's students went about setting up a Z-pulley system to pull me out. It takes time. Snow absorbs sound very well, and although my 'rescuers' are not far away, I can't hear a thing. There are occasional tugs on the rope. Across from me there is a nice girl who is also waiting to be rescued, but from the other side of the crevasse. I strike up a conversation.

"Been here long?"

"About half an hour," she said.

"Cold yet?"

"Not really, the sun happens to be shining at the right angle so it reaches the bottom of the crevasse now. But it's going to go out soon."

A few minutes go by.

"Did you know the people on my side of the crevasse tie Munter hitches differently than they do on your side?"

"Really?"

"Yeah, it seems Craig was teaching on one side and Ken on the other. They start the knot differently but it comes out the same once you're finished. I haven't figured it out yet."

There is a sudden tug on the rope, and she rises a foot into the air.

"Oops, I guess it's time for me to go!"

"Yep, you gotta go when you gotta go," I say. A few minutes later she disappears over the edge and I'm alone down here. I wait and wait, nothing happens. Then another body appears over the edge and slowly lowers toward me. It's Leslie.

"Hey Leslie old pal, I haven't seen you in --well, it must be 20 minutes now. Have you heard about the Munter hitch controversy?..."

We talk for a while and then I feel a sharp tug on the rope and I begin a very slow ascent up the ice. I'm being rescued! Hallelujah!

The Road Trip is Half the Adventure

Fern Hietkamp

Fall 1989

I don't know about your trip back for Smith Rocks this Thanksgiving, but ours was memorable.

We stopped at the corner climbing store on the way out to the highway to--pickup some climbing gear?--no, to leave Lisa with her German homework...

Then Eric (Nodwell), Marilyn (Noort), Scott (Philips), and I jumped back into Eric's orange kingdom on wheels (a VW van) to begin our trek in earnest.

As Eric took the wheel, Scott got us off to a rousing start by leading us in all the old favourites: "King of the Road," "Jamaica Farewell"; all those old tunes that just make your heart glow.

The dauntless Eric pulled us through raging snowstorms across the pass. We were glad to know that he is a cross country skier and knows something about moving along

a horizontal snow-ice surface, especially after seeing two accidents and four ambulances quite close together.

Supper was a gorgeous pizza at a Pizza Hut in Portland--Scott converted us to the delights of anchovies.

Then Marilyn took the wheel. By this time I was quite drowsy and I cannot be sure now if I believe what I think was happening. I might have been dreaming, but I believe that before we got onto the highway we did a number of interesting things with that van. At one point we were headed back to Smith Rocks.

"Marilyn," we said, "are you sure this is right?" Then, in an attempt to turn around and face the other way, we found ourselves in an underground parking lot with a very low overhead. I remember wondering if we had wandered into a scene of Highlander (you know that movie where these incredibly strong immortals have a sword fight in an underground parking lot?).

"Ah, Marilyn," I mumbled nervously, "Let's get out of here." She obliged, but next we were taking a scenic trip through suburban Portland.

Oh well, I thought, looking at my watch. Two hours till midnight. "Third boxcar, midnight train, / Destination Bangor, Maine;" words from the song we had sung earlier, ran through my mind. I close my eyes. Maybe next time I opened them we would be on the way home? I relaxed, dozed off, and sure enough, about 20 minutes later, familiar signs in the right direction were whizzing by. I began to hum Scott's tunes again; the words somehow twisted themselves around in my mind: "Two hours of driving with no clue, / Buys a bit of Portland view, / She's a driver of means, by all means, / Queen of the Road."

Thanks for an exciting trip Marilyn. I'll go on a road trip with you again anytime. (I've read this article to Marilyn and she's given her unqualified permission for you to print it.)

Participants:

Fern Hietkamp
Scott Philips

Eric Nodwell

Marilyn Noort

Smith Rocks--Hot Times in the Shade

Eric Clemson

Fall '89

A couple of years ago I wrote an article for the VOCJ '87 that was literally full of lies. I did, however, let this fact be known, as each lie was annotated. Pick up the '87 journal to see what I mean. Recently, it was suggested to me that I write another article of the same style. Initially, I hesitated, but then realized that, yes, the use of this writing style could be applied to some recent climbing trips of mine (and could probably be used in the future as well). This time I've decided to leave the lies unmarked just to see how much bull I can get away with. This article is based on a couple of trips to Smith Rocks this past fall. They did occur and everyone did lots of climbing. Some of this stuff is true and some

**Eric Clemson on "Ring of Fire"
Smith Rocks Oregon**



isn't. Various degrees of exaggeration are used. You figure it out!

On a fine sunny Friday afternoon, Greg, Michelle and I sped off to White Rock on my mom's overheating French car. After all the French were currently the hot climbers at Smith. With the red light persisting, even with the heater on full, we aborted the "Red Fury" and hopped into Greg's father's king-cab Mazda PU. Steve met us in White Rock, as he had not been waiting long. Down to the South we went, Greg almost getting busted at the border crossing as a result of wearing a Blue Jays hat.

After a totally filling dinner at Ivar's on Seattle, we cruised on, absorbing the more than ample leg room that a king-cab provides. Portland was reached, then, in turn the sweet smells of the Oregon desert -- as I look up the spelling for the word "desert" in the dictionary, I come across "demigod" at the top of the page and recall the reputation I had and did live up to.

Arriving at Smith Rocks, we pitched a tent or two (this was baseball time of the year) and fell into deep long slumbers, in preparation for the rads of morrow. Everyone awoke honed and with a few pops of Stanazolol were ready to crank. For warmups, we decided to start off with a few classics. These, of course began at the 5.12b range. Realizing this, we opted for something a bit harder.

In the midst of changing into proper climbing attire (fluro-flora-faunallycra bodysuit), I flashed "Rude Boys" 5.13c. They were rude as well. Michelle followed, cleaning the 'draws with her feet, while reading a Physio text with her right hand. Gotta know how to treat that mono-doigt induced tendonitis! We both agreed that it felt pretty easy for a 13c. 12c maybe. I left a tr for a few French climbers to dangle around on, as we went in search of something more difficult to work on. "Tammy Baker's Face" appeared in the guidebook and being curious, I decided to solo it. It turned out to be something that should only be soloed -- with caution!

Feeling pretty motivated and confident, this being her second time climbing, Michelle decided to have a go at leading "Heinous ling" 5.12c on sight. She made out quite well, although somewhere after the first bolt I remember her asking what to do with "these little brass things." "They're your pro!" I answered, suggesting that at Smith Rocks they were much more secure than a half-inch bolt. She didn't believe me, so traversed left to ace the multiple cruxes on "Darkness at Noon" 5.13a. The redpoint being done, Michelle lowered, pulling the 'draws, as I was still to mellowed out after TB's face to climb anything tough, especially since it was afternoon and I would have to do the route in the shade -- Ugh!

After a change of lycra, I felt totally revived (or was it the 'roids kicking in?). "bunny Face" (5.6) looked interesting, so I set off to climb one of the most inspiring routes at Smith. After 3 bolts, I began to shimmer and shake. My hands began to ooze off the "petite" holds and the inevitable occurred. The rope caught me just in time and I lowered the remaining 2 feet to the ground. What a sandbag! We pulled the ropes and left the quickdraws in place for a redpoint the next day. A Asterisk (or is it Asterix, the French comic book character) Pass, Michelle and I sat down to feast on a wide range of culinary delights as the sun danced its way into the Oregon Cascades.

On the walk back to camp, we noticed the moon spying at us through the

gendarmes of the Smith Rock group. With further inspection, it seemed that there was an outline of several gangsters on the top of the rock. What would the French think if their gendarmes became gangsters? After a few llama and bear sightings, we made the rest of our trek through the wilderness to the parking lot, where we were greeted by Andy and Muriel who had prepared a Pace and Tortilla chip smorgasbord atop the roof of their Toyota. After the Pace was finished off (there were a few chips left) and since we had no beer (tragic, but true), we decided to turn in.

After a long and pleasant sleep, most likely induced by the scent of Sagebrush and Juniper on the desert air, we rose promptly and early in order to get as much climbing done as possible. I was feeling great this morning, so great that I decided to trade in the lycra for shorts today. The climbing proceeded very quickly and by noon we had ticked off 10 routes, swapping leads along the way. Michelle had really got into leading after onsighting "Darkness" with stylish ascents of "Split Image" 12d and "Churning in the Ozone" 13b and a near flash of "To bolt of Not to Be" 5.14a/b. "Toxic", 11b was a route that I really enjoyed and even considering its easy rating, it provided me with some nice pump, overhanging face climbing.

With the day going well and my technique getting much more solid like the rock, I decided to have a go at "White Wedding", Smith Rocks' latest 5.14. The initial overhang proved to be less difficult than I had anticipated. All over, holds appeared in places unforeseen from the ground. I was feeling quite controlled, yet was beginning to feel my arms hint at fading. "Gotta move," I told myself, and explained to Michelle that I was going to run out the next bit until I found a possible rest where I could clip some pro. A bit of chalk and I proceeded upwards to face the triple 5.13 crux sequence. Toe up and out. Crank on the left index. Pull. After fifteen feet, I still had the third crux to go before I could stop and clip a bolt. Wasting no time I continued, pulling with whatever strength I had left. My fingers were slipping. No chance for chalk. I linked a couple of dynos, but began to get out of control as I fiddled around trying to place my right foot on a meek dime edge. So close to the top. Come on kid! GO! I lunged for the final key 3 finger hold, but due to my waning concentration, was only able to get half of a fatigued finger in. Not enough. I plummeted out into the void and with a sudden, yet smooth jerk was caught by the rope. Simultaneously Michelle was pulled up to the first quickdraw, but luckily was still able to keep a good hand on the belay. "Merde", I shouted, emulating some of the hotshot French climbers that were currently visiting the rocks. I lowered and while taking off my shoes, noticed a large flapper on my right index finger, most likely caused by the preceding missed dyno. Oh well, no more climbing today.

After belaying Michelle on her redpoint of Agra Monkey (5.13c), it came time to leave. I said goodbye to the gang and the rocks and headed back to meet my parents, who had been holidaying at a resort 40 miles away, for a delicious, 4-course, reindeer steak dinner. It made up for the tacos the night before. What a trip!

Participants:

few who will admit to it!

minutes this rough lot proceeded to discuss the climbing fatalities that had occurred in the area over the last few years. But in the end we were reassured, as one of them said, "but we like you guys commin' here - 'cause we can bet on ya! Heh, Heh!" The cheerful waitress sent us off with shots of some kind of Swedish herbal extract designed to liberate us from any ailment of spirit, mind or body. It was bound to be a good day.

As we were sorting gear by the side of the road a truck approached pursued by the local constable, who wasn't getting out of his car, came over the loudspeaker "Come 'ere, and bring yer license 'n registration, - did you boy's get your coffees?" We gave an affirmative gesture and he made out a ticket to the unfortunate lass from the other vehicle.

Finally our tardiness caught up with us. When we got to the base of Guinness Gully there was already a couple on the first pitch. Luckily the gully is quite wide and we were able to climb up alongside them - though they had the preferred line. The third pitch was the steepest and longest sporting a vertical section in the middle. This was the first pitch I used up all the eight screws that I brought along and when I ran the rope out I still had about 30 feet to go before reaching the belay, so Ken started up while I finished. We only completed the first four pitches, but the climbing was superb and I would highly recommend this route. We rapped off and caught the Rocky Mountain Express to Golden hoping to get a room at the Chez Bruce.

Bruce must have known we were coming because he had lamb chops sizzling on the stove when we arrived. We offered to supply a tin of sardines and some trail mix to the feast, but he wouldn't have it. We ate well, had hot showers, and spent the rest of the evening listening to Baroque Masterpieces and pouring over Bruce's edition of The Origin of Consciousness and the Bi-Cameral Mind. Sleep came easily.

We departed early and headed back up toward Field. This being our last day, we planned for our grand finale to take a bash at Carlsberg Column, a grade 5 sporting a 60 meter vertical section. But again, when we got to the base of the climb, there were already a couple of climbers already there. These guys had the rough looks and filthy language of really experienced climbers. The column was wide and they didn't mind us climbing along side them, but after looking up at it, we weren't really sure if we wanted to. The climb looked horrendous, very chandeliery like a billion ice octopi piled vertically one on top of the other for 20 stories with each tentacle dripping - the overall effect was that of one of those cold pressureless showers. We decided to give it a try. By pure, sound logic, the lead was Ken's. He went up ten feet, the other guy went up ten feet - and they both backed off. Everywhere the ice was mushroomed; all you could do was to clear away icicles only to find more icicles and nothing solid behind. To make it worse, there were no possibilities for a solid screw placement. Some finale! We trudged back down to the Sports Loaf and zoomed off back towards Golden. On our way we stopped beside the highway, did a greasy railroad approach, and climbed some unaesthetic and anticlimactic three pitch route that overlooked a river and was named after a mental institution.

Participants:

Ken Legg

Bruce Fairley

Tom Hamilton

WINTER 1989-90

Rocky Mountain Madness

Tom Hamilton

Dec 26 - Jan 9 1990

The European Sports Loaf sped north along the Banff-Jasper highway like a green blur dissecting the white and rugged landscape. Upon glancing into the rear-view mirror I noted, not surprisingly, that Bruce had nodded off. His neck muscles were slack and his head, having slumped over onto his shoulder, bounced slightly with the irregularities of the road surface. Unthinkingly, and as it turned out inconsiderately, I informed Ken of our friend's blissful state forgetting that when certain situations present themselves Ken has been known to perform fiendish pranks. Our present situation triggered the fiend in him and he set to work immediately.

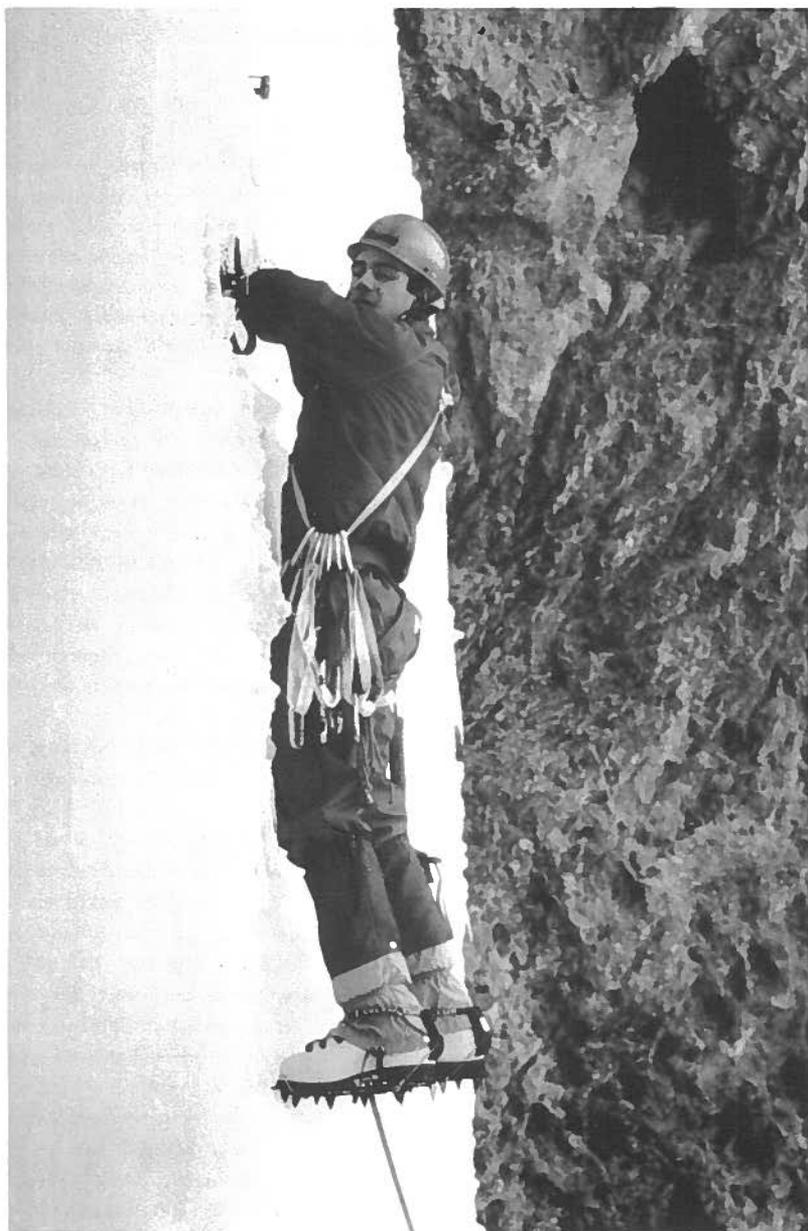
From the glove box in front of him, he withdrew a small, hard plastic envelope and upon opening it produced a black rectangular wafer-like object which he carefully inserted into an appropriate slot in the dash board just to his left. When the wafer had clicked into place, he reached over and got hold of a control knob which he then turned, according to my estimations, approximately 270 degrees. There was an instant dead silence.... **"TWENTY - TWENTY - TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO GO -- I WANNA BE SEDATED"** Bruce was instantly blasted from dreamland into a state of hyper-consciousness; jolted by a million decibels of hard noise from fantasy to reality, or perhaps the other way around. His eyes burst like flash bulbs and the look on his face suggested shock, perplexity and euphoria all at once. Yes, his blood was changed; he was definitely back to life. The Ramones will do this to you! Ask anyone.

It's impossible to say what led to this madness, but at some point Ken and I had decided to go to the Rockies and climb ice, which is a form of madness in itself, and, well, one thing led to another.

Our first day at it was somewhat trying and I honestly believe that if we had not served our mountaineering apprenticeships in the dense bush, quick sand, and vertical slide alder of the coast we would have gladly exchanged our tools for a guided tour of Banff and reservations at the Chateau. Earlier on, in a discussion about the nature of ice climbing in the Rockies, for which I'll admit I am no authority, I ensured Ken that, in general, the approaches to the climbs were simple and practically nonexistent by coastal standards. In the interest of decency the appropriate words cannot be used to describe what Ken must have thought of my simple, practically nonexistent approaches. We spent as knackered hour wallowing chest deep in bottomless snow to progress only about a 100 feet to where the ice began --100 feet an hour! However our exhaustion and disgust eased off a little in the face of Rocky Mountain ice. We spent the next hour or two chopping, hacking, and kicking gleefully at small bulges and curtains of ice.

The prospect of doing a pitch or two here was poor. The ice further up

Tom Hamilton "looking good" on Professor Falls
Photo by Kea Legg



was steep, ill formed and exposed to the sun. In fact at about this time, large chunks of ice were beginning to bombard us. We opted out and traversed thrashed, wallowed, and grunted) right hoping to find a gully around the next corner. Amid - thrash we were interrupted by a mountain goat and for some minutes we engaged in a staring and blinking session at close quarter with the brute, Ken muttering the equivalent of "mind your own business" in the rocky dialect of goat tongue which he mutters fluently. Around the corner we found our climb -- a gully incorporating a wide band of gradually steepening ice that rose for two pitches ending on a narrow ledge. We third classed the first pitch which went in large steps of good ice, the angle fluctuating between about 50 to 75 degrees, and roped up when the ice became consistently steep. I led, and for the most part the ice was in good condition and provided excellent climbing. However, the last 30 feet or so involved a rather hairy traverse on thin rotten ice which I delicately chipped and hooked my way across finally gaining the belay ledge. Ken steamed up in a fury and in no time we were off in a glorious rappel a la Gaston Rebuffat. The slick fabric of our weather proof overtrousers made the descent of the previously obnoxious snow slope a simple exercise in backside tobogganing. This climb -- that we figured was Grovelling Gully -- provided an excellent "first day back at it" climb which pleased us and reduced any qualms that we may have had to spending another night in the transitory VW hotel.

The next morning found our hotel rolling north along the Icefields Parkway. After stopping at Weeping Wall and gawking until our necks kinked up, we consulted the guidebook. A detailed reading of all the descriptions left us with the agonizing task of deciding between two climbs. We were both keen to have a go at Riptide which is described in Albi Sole's guide as "a 5 pitch horror sporting sustained technical climbing on thin and otherwise unprotectable ice", the only grade 7. However, not being the types to leap blindly on to just any climb, we faced the hard facts that a climb such as this was bound to be immensely popular and thus draw large crowds which neither of us particularly like. This considered, we reluctantly opted for Bridal Veil Falls - two pitches of grade 3 on good ice and no bolt kit required. It turned out to be a short but good climb, involving two tiers of steep and good ice - definitely a confidence booster. We returned to the VW hotel in fine spirits. However, the hot showers were out of commission and a cleansing roll in the snow was not first on our minds so we procured a room at the Chez Bruce in Golden.

As it turned out the proprietor, Bruce, was a keen alpinist with a long list of "things to do in the Rockies". Herein the three of us decided to join forces in an attempt to reduce this list by one. Ken and I were made privy to a few options and the three of us repeated the agonizing decision making process. The nickel came up heads and it was decided that we would have a go at Mount Whymper - in the footsteps of Eddy! Early the next morning we fuelled ourselves with a dog's breakfast at the Golden Husky Station and took to the road.

The prominent Mount Whymper was visible from the Radium Highway and there was no shortage of snow, we could begin skiing immediately. The route we chose was the SE ridge and from our perspective it looked as though we would have to contend with two rather large rock steps in order to gain the summit ridge, so we added two climbing

ropes and a few extra pounds of iron mongery to our already heavy winter packs. The ski-in began leisurely enough -- up gentle slopes through open trees; however, as is always the case, the further we went the steeper it got, and too soon we were thrashing in deep and baseless snow up ever steepening inclines. We took turns breaking trail and kept to the steeper treed ribs to avoid the potential avalanche slopes. At any given time, amid the sounds of heavy breathing, I could hear Ken and Bruce on either side of me muttering oaths of defiance. It was like the steep snow slopes and heavy loads of the Klondike; we were in search of summit gold and kept steadily at it.

Before dusk we arrived at tree line and, found a flat and somewhat sheltered place to pitch our tent. That evening my MSR (more study required) stove was not functioning as usual, It took us three hours to make a pot of soup and a good deal longer to melt enough snow for tomorrow's water supply. We agreed on a 6:00 AM start and, as we were unsure of what lay ahead of us, planned to turn back if we did not make the summit by 2:30 PM - no one liked the idea of a winter bivy. I think we all slept well.

We left camp at 6:00 AM as planned and trudged up the slatey ridge under headlamp. the air was cold and clear, the sky was speckled with stars, and a low fog filled the valley bottoms. As it turned out the rock steps we had seen the previous day were easily surmounted by scrambling around their back sides; however, I'm sure that if we had left our technical gear back at the van they would have been stiff fifth class obstacles. Having grossly overestimated the difficulty of the climb our 2:30 PM turn-around plan was no longer applicable - we reached the summit at 8:00 AM. After some great views of the surrounding peaks during the sunrise and a shivering summit feast of smoked oysters, christmas cake and Gator - Aid we descended, trudging and sliding, back to our camp. 10:00 Am and we were snoozing in the tent. Whymper probably found the Matterhorn a little more difficult.

What was a hellish trudge up became a hellish ski down. As I mentioned previously, the snow was deep and baseless which meant that each time that you flexed into telemark position and attempted to turn, your skis would dive down acting like anchors while at the same time your heavy pack, obeying the laws of physics to a T, would continue on, hurling you head long into the snow. The amount of energy required to get back on your feet under these circumstances is tremendous - I could hear Ken and Bruce on either side of me delivering oaths of defiance to the unrelenting hills.

During our way back to Golden we played twenty questions, and covered such topics as the wheel, the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (a household item according to Ken), and the hornpipe.

New Years Eve - the power was out and we couldn't find milkshakes anywhere. We went to bed at ten.

We awoke early New Year's Day, and over a "foul brew of lumpy porridge" decided to celebrate by having a go at Bow Falls. We threw our junk into the Rocky Mt. Express (also known as the European Sports Loaf) and sped off toward Icefields Parkway. The next part you already know and I'd rather not regurgitate it. Bruce gets assaulted and ultimately recharged by the Ramones - remember?

The approach to Bow Falls was undoubtedly the most aesthetic approach of our

trip. We skied directly across Bow Lake, up some gentle forested slopes and over moraine to the base of the climb. The climb itself rates Grade 3 and runs up a wide fall of about three rope lengths that splits a broad, rocky precipice. The first pitch was a rather uninteresting snow plod which we bypassed by third classing up some icy outcroppings to the left and eventually traversing back right when we got to the steeper climbing. Ken led one of the more aesthetic of the many possible lines which involved continuously steep climbing on good quality ice. As I was about to start up the last pitch, Ken confided in me his "most depressing thought": To accidentally chop the rope in half while seconding. I agreed and started up. Speak of the Devil, just as I had reached the crux I kicked a front point straight through the line I was tied into. This was most depressing. As it turned out I had severed the mantle but luckily the rope stayed intact. At this point all I could do was continue, and continue I did though now the climbing was somewhat more exhilarating than originally anticipated. I reached the top without further complications. By the time Ken and Bruce reached the top it was dusk and we repelled back down under darkening skies. The ski out provided good fun and occasional crashes here and there. We took the Sports Loaf back to Lake Louise where we consumed beer and a hearty Goulash generously paid for by Bruce. A great beginning to a new decade.

Later that evening our trio split up. Bruce, being responsible and respectable, headed back to Golden where his work awaited him. Ken and I, not wishing to spend another wretched night in the old VW hotel, made tracks to the Canmore Club House.

When we arrived at the club house, we were told that all the rooms were booked, which is not surprising at this time of year. However, unbeknownst to the custodian, we managed to procure for ourselves the best room in the house which, as far as we could tell, had no nightly rate prescribed to it. The room was enormous and well furnished with a piano, bar, easy chair, and a large stone fireplace. Pictures depicting classical mountaineering scenes hung on the walls and relics of climbing gear from a past era were placed artistically here and there. Just down the hall were showers and a sauna. We did well for ourselves - as usual.

The next morning we rumbled into Banff and purchased a new Stubai Tirol. Now that we each possessed two of these marvels we felt ready to tackle some of the Banff area classics, and where better to start than cascade.

Probably the most popular ice climb in the Banff area is Cascade. It is close to town, has an easy approach, and a striking line. We started late and as it turned out another party was hot on our heels. In order to distance ourselves from them we had to practically run up the easy lower pitches. I was steaming so hard that sweat vapour was condensing on the inside of my helmet, running down, and forming icicles around the rim. Ken led up the first serious pitch sending frozen messages to the party below who shortly thereafter abandoned the climb. The next patch was mine and I found it mildly terrifying in places as there was flowing water clearly visible through glass clear windows in the ice. I selected the thickest looking areas in which to place my picks and never had a problem breaking through. It was actually quite exhilarating and I now understand that this is the normal condition of the climb. After one more pitch we rappelled the route and returned to the Club House where we were allotted much more modest quarters than the previous

night at an infinitely higher price. We consumed gross quantities of spaghetti and passed out sprawled on the kitchen floor - beneath the humming fluorescent tubes. Early the next morning we checked out and made for the professor.

Our greatest difficulty was finding it. We ended up driving around a golf course for half an hour where at one point we witnessed a herd of at least 50 mountain sheep. At length we located the trail head and set out soon to find that the most dangerous part of the climb was actually the approach. The level trail, which parallels the swift flowing Bow River, was in some sections glazed over with ice. The banks on either side of the Bow were completely iced over and sloped at about 20 degrees forming a perfect slide out into the middle of the river which was open and flowing swiftly. To slip and fall on the bank would be the end. No wonder we were following crampon tracks.

The climb itself is a true classic - a picture perfect waterfall sporting 6 to 7 pitches of sustained climbing up to Grade 4. The weather was mild and the ice was for the most part wet and plastic which made for good placements. However, by the time I was up the first pitch both my gloves were drenched and the rope had become a glazed cable - I was forced to improvise with alternate and occasionally questionable belay methods. Ken took the next pitch and in placing a pick at the top produced a gusher which haunted and drenched me all the way up. I repaid this favour on the next pitch. We continued in this manner up until the last pitch where we decided to take a lunch break - procrastinate. In contrast to the previous pitches, this pitch was dry, brittle and a little evil - looking. It was without a doubt the crux pitch and by some obscure logic, it was my lead. I set out with a healthy fear and progressed with great care - to this point it was the steepest and hardest thing I'd led. Soon my sodden gloves and hands began to freeze so that eventually I couldn't feel my tools, which made wielding them a bit awkward. However, despite this minor complication, the pitch went well and provided a hairy finale to a tremendous route. Shortly Ken emerged and spent a good ten minutes thrashing the life back into his solidified hands.

The descent was an adventure in itself. Hoping to avoid rappelling back down the route, we followed some tracks that led off to one side of the falls. We thrashed down through small trees and rubble not really knowing where we were headed. Eventually we were confronted by steep precipices and were forced to rappel after all. By this time the daylight was rapidly fading and once or twice we were forced to backtrack to find a feasible route. Eventually, with our keen sense of which way was down and the assistance of a headlamp, we made the bottom and traversed the trail out with great caution, not wishing to slip into the drink and, as it were, over the brink.

After a few celebratory beers in Banff (the Professor was our first Grade 4) we set out to Lake Louise and spent the night in the VW Hotel there, which; was located in the ski resort parking lot. The next morning, not being able to face the prospect of another "foul brew of lumpy porridge" we went to the little mall for muffins and coffee and were grudgingly served by the illhumoured wench who had served us on previous occasions. I might add that everyone we met in this little mall was rather illhumoured except for the man in the Post Office who was friendly and informative - how's that for a change.

After breakfast we set out leisurely (as had become our custom) to climb Louise

Falls - yesterday Grade 4, today Grade 5, I'm worried about tomorrow. You begin at the Chateau and walk along the right - hand side of the lake. The climb, consisting of four pitches, is easily visible. Our late start put us well ahead of any other parties and we had the first pitch to ourselves - which turned out to be a good thing. It really didn't look that steep, and the ice looked solid enough, so in the interest of speed we decided to third class. Mistake - the climbing was steeper than we thought and in the interest of safety we progressed dead slow. Ken was about 30 feet to the right of me and though he was out of sight I could hear him hacking away, sending down chunks of rotten ice and mumbling oaths of defiance. Half - way up my line, I hit a section of rotten ice which I spent probably 20 minutes clearing away until I reached something solid enough to move off. My calves were screeching and it was a relief to move up again. When Ken mentioned third classing the second pitch we both fell into fits of hideous laughter and put on the rope immediately. And a good thing it was because the second pitch was long - a full rope length - and getting steepest at the top. More weird logic - probably the lunar influence - suggested the next pitch was mine. The dreaded pillar - I dawdled in the ice cave as long as possible. The trick was to traverse out and into an ice chimney and then out again onto the pillar. I huddled in the chimney for a while, wondering if playing on a demanding golf course would be anything like this - probably would. I gulped hard, the echo returned from over the lake and I set off. Once on the pillar I placed screws every ten feet, hang dogging from my tools a la Chouinard - picks sunk into the hilt. It's really not that bad if you abandon your ethics. The pillar went really well and it was a new high for both of us. Ken took the last pitch and I didn't envy him. It was a steep, gradual traverse over awkward bulges on inconsistent ice ending in vertical powder, dirt, and bush - a disgusting, almost coastal end to what was otherwise a classic route. Down, down, down we rappelled, traversed the lake, and hauled ourselves to the Post Hotel pub for a drying session - and maybe a beer too.

We didn't feel all that bad about hanging our ropes, slings, boots, liners, mitts, socks, jackets, sweaters, underwear and toques on chairs, tables, chandeliers, pianos and coat hooks throughout the bar - but the manager did, and he damn near threw us out into the snow. In fact he would have if it weren't for our charming and devoted barmaid who defended us, pleading with him that we had no place to go but the VW Hotel. He saw the light and let us stay. She brought us beer, French onion soup, and offered to thaw our gloves in the microwave, all of which we graciously accepted. We were eventually made to feel welcome by the customers and staff alike, and we returned their warmth and hospitality by performing trapeze maneuvers on the chandeliers, and walking across the bar on our hands and other such acrobatic feats much to their amusement and joy. However, it all came to an end, and we awoke the next morning in the Takakkaw Falls parking lot.

Feeling a little chilly and hungry, we headed into Field in search of a cafe and, finding nothing, questioned the local constable who pointed us in the direction of the railway bunkhouse. There, we sat and drank coffee with the local railway workers who identified us as ice climbers immediately. One of the fellows asked us...Why? and to our own disturbance, we couldn't come up with a good answer for him. For the next ten

minutes this rough lot proceeded to discuss the climbing fatalities that had occurred in the area over the last few years. But in the end we were reassured, as one of them said, "but we like you guys commin' here - 'cause we can bet on ya! Heh, Heh!" The cheerful waitress sent us off with shots of some kind of Swedish herbal extract designed to liberate us from any ailment of spirit, mind or body. It was bound to be a good day.

As we were sorting gear by the side of the road a truck approached pursued by the local constable, who wasn't getting out of his car, came over the loudspeaker "Come 'ere, and bring yer license 'n registration, - did you boy's get your coffess?" We gave an affirmative gesture and he made out a ticket to the unfortunate lass from the other vehicle.

Finally our tardiness caught up with us. When we got to the base of Guinness Gully there was already a couple on the first pitch. Luckily the gully is quite wide and we were able to climb up alongside them - though they had the preferred line. The third pitch was the steepest and longest sporting a vertical section in the middle. This was the first pitch I used up all the eight screws that I brought along and when I ran the rope out I still had about 30 feet to go before reaching the belay, so Ken started up while I finished. We only completed the first four pitches, but the climbing was superb and I would highly recommend this route. We rapped off and caught the Rocky Mountain Express to Golden hoping to get a room at the Chez Bruce.

Bruce must have known we were coming because he had lamb chops sizzling on the stove when we arrived. We offered to supply a tin of sardines and some trail mix to the feast, but he wouldn't have it. We ate well, had hot showers, and spent the rest of the evening listening to Baroque Masterpieces and pouring over Bruce's edition of The Origin of Consciousness and the Bi-Cameral Mind. Sleep came easily.

We departed early and headed back up toward Field. This being our last day, we planned for our grand finale to take a bash at Carlsberg Column, a grade 5 sporting a 60 meter vertical section. But again, when we got to the base of the climb, there were already a couple of climbers already there. These guys had the rough looks and filthy language of really experienced climbers. The column was wide and they didn't mind us climbing along side them, but after looking up at it, we weren't really sure if we wanted to. The climb looked horrendous, very chandelieri like a billion ice octopi piled vertically one on top of the other for 20 stories with each tentacle dripping - the overall effect was that of one of those cold pressureless showers. We decided to give it a try. By pure, sound logic, the lead was Ken's. He went up ten feet, the other guy went up ten feet - and they both backed off. Everywhere the ice was mushroomed; all you could do was to clear away icicles only to find more icicles and nothing solid behind. To make it worse, there were no possibilities for a solid screw placement. Some finale! We trudged back down to the Sports Loaf and zoomed off back towards Golden. On our way we stopped beside the highway, did a greasy railroad approach, and climbed some unaesthetic and anticlimactic three pitch route that overlooked a river and was named after a mental institution.

Participants:

Ken Legg

Bruce Fairley

Tom Hamilton

Christmas Down South, Again

(Wish I'd had skin)

Alice Waterman

Christmas 1990

It seems that at this time last year, I sat at the corresponding kitchen table in the corresponding shared house. . . (or was it a basement suite? . . .) and wrote an article about my corresponding Christmas trip to the corresponding parts of this continent. (i.e. WARM parts, or so I thought). We often hear of VOCers making yearly pilgrimages to the revered Joshua Tree, which is what last year's article recounted. However, this year I decided that J.T. at Christmas time really wasn't warm enough. There was only one way to solve such a problem. Afterspending a week at J.T. and confirming that, temperature-wise, we could do better, assorted companeros and I rolled over the Mexican border. Several plans had been made - beaches near St. Somebody-or-other, neat desert near El something-else, and (most importantly of course) we were to bag the obligatory peak, "El Picacho del Diablo". I should have known better. Chris and Brad were on their 3rd attempt, but somehow I still had faith in our good luck. The 100 km gravel road was amazing; slowly winding from the sea level to the mountainous spine of Northern Baja. Shortly before reaching the road's end (an observatory) we stopped, turning off the "main" road about 300 metres.

It took the rest of the day to organize gear: 4/5 days food, experimental testing of "2-man tent as 3-man bivy sac" (an entertaining party trick), and all our rock gear for that beautiful J.T. granite just waiting for us. The evening was perfectly calm and clear. We hiked by moonlight for a couple of hours, bits of snow amiably crunching, and spirits were high. But then - could we have offended the coffee gods somehow? Before dawn the wind started to howl and then came the snow. Big Juicy, Snowflakes. Just what all Vancouver was praying for. I stayed in my sleeping bag all morning getting wetter each time the tent opened. By noon there was no chance of clearing, drying or climbing. Worst of all, getting back to the van was ten times harder and longer. Then WORSTER of all, we couldn't face extracting the van from its foot or two of snow in the dark. I won't detail the lengths we went to in order to warm up, nor next morning's saga of those 300 metres (2 hours, with chains). Suffice to say, we were glad the observatory people had ploughed their road and we were on our way back down to heat. Yes, I was disappointed, but you know? - on the way back down, I saw my first ever Vermillion Flycatcher!

The Treacherous Hotsprings

Tom Baumann

Winter 1990

It was winter in B.C., we had just had the coldest coldspell behind us and it was getting warm again. Just about the right time to head for the hotsprings. Early morning saw us driving up to Harrison Hotsprings and in hindsight this is where we should have stayed all day instead of pushing on. But, taking a right and driving along the east side of Harrison Lake we encountered snow on the very good forest road. Well, just put 4-wheel drive in and off we went again. It's a long way around the lake, but views of the lake and the mountains around make this rather enjoyable. After some 35 km we drove through a logging camp (usually you have to register here) and soon after turned off the good road along Clear Creek.

There has been recent logging in the area and the road therefor much improved. The wet snow and slush on the road was getting quite heavy by now and we had to make our way slowly around the corners. The road itself was still frozen, which is good, as I've been here when the mud was so deep, one couldn't drive the road at all. Then I remembered, this is the last downhill stretch before the washout, when we would have to start walking the rest of the way. Rob just said, so let's park here, and I didn't hear my answer any more, which went something like Oh, no!!!!, or something less polite.

This is when it all started. It went slow, very slow, the truck started turning on the narrow road and any attempt with and without brakes to control this downward acceleration proved futile. But it all was very slow. Halfway down, Rob jumped out, I got ready to do the same, as there happens to be a cliff at the end of this slope. But wait, I have done something like this before in snow. The still turning truck, we must have made three complete turns thus far, was now pointing downhill, I pushed in reverse and gently pressed on the gas. All four wheels helped to maneuver the truck into the uphill bank of the road, which finally stopped the sliding. Quickly Rob and I braced rocks and branches under the tires to stop any further movements. Then we just collapsed on the side of the road.

What a journey. This all took only 2 minutes and the slide wasn't longer than 60 meters, but we did stop just at the last possible spot. Getting our nerves together again, we examined what had happened and found that five centimeters of snow were hiding a sheet of ice all across the road. There must have been a major stream here just before the big freeze that year. This meant, we had to get the chains out and drive up there and then go to the hotsprings. After the chains are on we decide to, just in case, attach the winch cable to some tree. I'm glad we did, the chains were absolutely useless on the solid ice. Well, maybe now we could try to chisel a way up. After the shovel was broken, we had to give up that idea. So why not use the winch, that's what you got it for anyway, right. Ok, let's try that. Ten minutes later the truck had moved up about twenty meters and the battery was dead.

I guess it took a bit of energy to winch up the truck, even with running motor. Rob was surprised at how many english swearwords I had picked up in the last few years. Just to

help you picture this, we had to move the cable every few meters and walking was nearly impossible as I had forgotten my skates. I fell across the cable several times and I can still see the scar on my knee from sliding under the truck on one occasion. Some very nice people on tricycles appeared with the usual loud and stinky machines. My request for some help was answered with some even louder laughter at our misfortune and, maybe when we come back, first we got to have some fun. Thanks guys! The battery was slowly recharging after I managed to get the engine going again and we limped upwards, three meters at a time, every 15 minutes. This was going to take forever at this rate. Rob finally discovered the comealong that I usually take along in the truck, why didn't I think of this before. Quickly we rigged everything up with ropes and cables and start winching by hand during the powerwinch breaks. Can you imagine how glad we were after 2.5 hours, when we collected all the gear and drove back home? By that time it was already getting dark and our friends with the tricycles had still not appeared. Maybe they are still there.

So we didn't get to the hot springs that day, but I certainly got very hot trying to move my truck up the road. We had sleeping bags and food with us, could have made a fire. Would they even have noticed at work on Monday that we were missing?

Participants:

Rob Favrin

Tom Baumann

Larabee State Park

Eric Clemson

Winter 1990

Having not been able to find a ride for a ski trip this weekend and in addition not being able to find a climbing partner for Squamish, I opted for the solution that never fails - Larabee. Larabee State Park is a small seaside park located about ten minutes south of Bellingham, Washington on the Chuckanut Drive. In it are many sandstone outcroppings providing a wide array of boulder and top rope problems. Because of the unique nature of the rock, climbing problems of virtually all types can be found. Crack, overhangs, smearing, pocket, edging, mantelling, and other techniques are often called upon in this area. The predominant style of ascent is pure, ropeless bouldering, some of it being on the bold side, while for certain routes, a top rope would be more than just psychological help. A few lead routes do exist, but these are not particularly aesthetic and don't lend themselves well to the novice leader, as protection can be a bit dubious. However, if you do have the burning desire to lead something, there are a couple of bolt protected, thirty foot, 5.7 ish routes on the large slab near the boat launch which might be worth trying.

As for the boulder problems, which is really the only reason worth coming here for, they lie alongside the BNR railroad tracks and by the ocean, heading south from the parking lot. The seaside routes are very aesthetically located amongst arbutus and fir trees and are generally within spitting distance from the water. This can sometimes be a

problem at high tide, (such as today's was), so consider this when planning a trip. Heading south along the beach, one will find a continuous supply of problems, so just go for it. Notable routes are "The Point", 5.9 - 5.10 ish, "Pump Tour" 5.19+ (Washington ratings!) and the classic and beautiful "Desperation Overhang" rock which contains fairly tough top-rope problems ranging from 5.10 to B.1+. Scattered along the way and beyond are numerous other routes, both moderate and severe.

Up above on the tracks, one can boulder almost all of the routes without risking much in the way of physical injury. Ego spraining, however, is a potential occurrence. Walking south along the train tracks, one will find "The Grey Wall" which sports a nice, varied low level traverse requiring many diverse techniques; underclings, smearing, edging, and finger cracks exist. A few laps of this should leave most forearms howling. If not, then hop in the car and continue south to Index! Walking further south one will find "Extractor Slab" a small, but neat looking formation with routes from 5.5 to a weird 5.10 crackless dihedral - definitely worth a try. Further south still, one reaches the "Pink Wall" which also has some cool reach and traverse problems - some which look hard but are not too bad, and some the opposite.

And so the list goes on. Many, many more routes and outcrops exist at Larabee, most of which I have not seen. It's really a quite unique area for this part of the continent, so if you're ever in the neighbourhood, take a stop and look around. You will probably like what you see. But be warned, as this area is not the least bit "developed" and you will probably not see many signs of previous ascents, except for the odd chalkmark or another climber passing by. But perhaps that's what gives the area its attraction. So if you want to beat the Smoke Bluffs' crowds for a day, check it out. Actually it's probably an ideal place to stop on the way back from a mountaineering trip in the Cascades, as it's a complete contrast from the cold, glacier clad peaks. Try it!

P.S. By the way, if you plan on going to Larabee, let me know, as I have a copy of the latest "Guidebook" to the area which could be handy.

Participants:

Eric Clemson

Desert Rats

Eric Clemson

March 10-11 1990

Yeah man, the desert. Yeah that's right, it never rains there; supposed to be good rock too! With that style and level of encouragement, 3 sturdy members of the VOC set off one Friday night for central Washington to check out some newly reported rock climbing areas. After a quick stop in Bellingham at Freddy's to pick up some tortilla chips and a case of Henry, we cruised almost non stop to Vantage, Washington with only a slight delay of speed crossing the blizzard infested Snoqualmie Pass. (Ever seen a semi-

truck tear its tire chains off while driving along in the slush? Lotsa sparks, eh!

By Vantage our English had deteriorated to this state, but somehow we managed to find the right turn off for the old Wanapum Dam Road. This road is really funny 'cause it doesn't really go anywhere except to some neat crags and the river; but it's paved, eh! Somehow we pitched the tent in the howling desert wind and after a henry each, found our way to sleep - sort of.

The next morning was very cool; really cool, but sunny and windy too. After eat'in stuff we decided to climb something. Our route list suggested something called "Jesus Saves", a 5.9. Thing was, there was "Jesus Saves" written on all sorts of pieces of rock. We chose the one with the bolts on it. Scott led it, Charlie seconded it and I thirded it.

Awesum root mon! But Hey, Man, how do we get down from here? This was a free standing pillar with a bunch of knarly slings tied 'round the top. We had to rap. Scott forgot his eight and I had to use a cinch plate, but we all got down somehow.

I felt sorta honed, even after a crummy sleep, so decided to try this 5.11+ with bolts called "Dance of the Shaman". A local told us it was 5.9. Like shit, eh! It was steep; overhangin' in fact. Scott and I took turns trying it and falling off it and hanging like Greyhounds. Twas not 5.9! Cool route though!

After some good air on "Dance", I decided to lead this 5.8 called "The Uprising". It was really good, eh! Good pro, good moves, heck it made me feel like I was a climber again. The other guys tried it and then we jumped into the car to look for the "Rod of God", obviously another freestanding pinnacle. After a lot of terrible jokes and after Scott's Subaru bottomed out on a "mini-rod", we found "The Rod". It was up another coulee and to the left, sorta hidden (if you can hide such a thing!) It was quite big; very big in fact and it looked steep and hard. (Oh shut up!) It was getting late and we didn't have geer with us, so decided to split and check out the town of Vantage. The gunshots from shotguns and semi-auto's over the hill were also scarin us a lot. Never know what those Yanks might think of us gettin near their Rod!

Vantage was a hole. One store, one gas station, one restaurant, and no night life. We had dinner at the "Golden Harvest", an "okay" restaurant. Lotsa neon though. Scott had a large plate of spaghetti, Charlie had a "Harvest Burger", and I had "Chicken for Five", five grease coated parts of bird. Too much grease; made me feel kinda ugly. After having totally absorbed the culture of Vantage [Except for watchin TV with the fat guys in the gas station (too much chicken!)] We headed back to our tent at Frenchman Coulee. When we got there, the wind had totally stopped, so we built a fire and Scott played guitar, while we partied with our guest Henry Wienhard. Charlie thought this was pretty cool, being out in the sagebrush covered desert with a campfire, the sounds of coyotes, Scott playin the guitar, lotsa dark beer, and not too many people to share it with. Charlie's from London, England! No sagebrush there! We told Charlie this was rattler country - in July. After a while, Henry left us, so we decided to become horizontal. There was no wood left either.

Next morning we felt pretty tired. Scott soloed up a pinnacle ("God's Roid") before breakfast. After eatin some granola and stuff, we decided to go for a hike, then drive over to Teiton River near Yakima and check out this other climbing place. We had a good hike

around the desert and saw zillions of gun shells all over the place. This was the 'real' Wild West, we told Charlie. He was impressed. We also saw ash on the level parts of the ground, still left from the Mt. St. Helens eruption ten years ago. Pretty neat! After getting tired of the hiking, we got in the car and headed Southwest to Yakima. By this point in the trip, we had acquired the true desert rat look and talk - stringy hair, dirty hands, dirty face, lip scum, and bad English. Felt good though.

Soon enough, we reached royal columns, 20 miles west of Yakima. This place was really neat. Excellent rock, lots of it, and cool climbs. Columnar Basalt, sorta like Devil's Tower except shorter. There were lots of edges on the faces as well, so this made good face climbs between the cracks and enabled you to use them while stemming from a crack climb. Scott led a nice corner which we assumed to be about 5.8ish. (We had no guidebook) By the time all three of us had done it, it became time to go, even though I still wanted to lead this nice looking face climb up a pillar. Next time. As we hiked down to the car, it became real shady and cold, so we were best to be on our way. On the way back we stopped so I could take pictures of some giant supercells in the distance. These were the biggest and most well formed cumulonimbus (Thunderclouds) that I had ever seen. The other guys didn't have the same sort of fascination about clouds as me, so I gave them a lecture on why clouds are so exciting, (I'm in atmospheric Sci.) but they still weren't impressed. Oh well. How can you impress an organic chemist and an engineer? (Buy 'em beers!) Anyways, other than the clouds, it was an uneventful 4.5 hour drive home, except for me "trying" to learn the guitar in the back seat. Good weather, good times, great climbs. An excellent 2 day getaway. Hey hey, I'm writin poultry!

Participants:

Eric Clemson

Scott Phillips

Charlie Mowbray

White Christmas on the Equator

Saskia Acton

Christmas 1990

When people in the mountaineering world think of Africa, they think of Kilimanjaro, the "Roof of Africa", subject of legend and mystery. But Mt. Kenya, the second highest in Africa, has a lot more to offer the climber with its solid rock and outstanding ice lines. Mt. Kenya also has the history, dating back to its first ascent by Sir Halford Mackinder, Cesar Ollier and Joseph Brocherel in 1899 and later a training ground for Shipton and Tilman, the great Himalayan explorers.

To me, Mt. Kenya also has incredible appeal because it sits virtually right on the equator. Its glaciers flow down into some of the most bizarre country imaginable, and, after my first visit there in 1986, I had to return and actually get up the thing. Fortunately, a 6 week elective within fourth year medical school in Botswana and a bit of extra planning brought me and Rob to Kenya just in time for Christmas. We approached the peaks from

the East side via the Chogoria route, by far the most impressive of three major approaches. It was a long first day, starting at 3000 m., to get above the clouds, but the most spectacular mountain scenery I've experienced to date.

The following account of our climb is based on excerpts from both of our diaries:

3:45 am the alarm sounds, but I'm already awake in anticipation of the day ahead. It's a cold, clear night with plenty of stars but only a thin sliver of a dying moon to light the way. We eat breakfast in silence and stop at Curling Pond at the foot of the glacier to fill our water bottles. The sound of the cracking ice is deafening in the still of the night. By 4:30 we are making our way across the glacier walking in the footsteps of previous parties. We quickly ascend the scree, a huge jumble of precariously placed boulders. It's still dark when we find the foot of the climb, just left of a snow-filled couloir. As we sort out our gear and rope up the firststreaks of light are painting the sky crimson and we can see hikers on the top of Pt. Lenana, [the 3rd summit] celebrating the dawn. Gazing up at the face I wonder at its steepness and pause before committing myself to the climb. As soon as I start moving up the first pitch the mountain's features become prominent, the rock warm and solid. We climb together when we can, trying to be swift, but climbing at altitude demands so much energy that we're forced to rest frequently. We reach the 3rd pitch, a series of ledges which lead us meandering around on the face wondering where to go. The SE face route is not exactly a direct line, rather, it winds its way up the face picking various cracks and gullies for ascent but often requiring long traverses and descents to link them up. Getting lost is easy and was a big concern to us.

It's my turn to lead and I gladly take up the challenge to get us back on track. We have some fine, easy scrambling on the blocky face and some interesting maneuvering through the "One O'Clock Gully" until Rob moves out onto the steep face for some challenging but beautiful climbing. We move together once we hit the easier slabs leading up to a bivy site about a third of the way up. The shelter's like a giant tin refrigerator and we don't hang around for long. Rob is concerned about making good time and he constantly interrupts my daydream urging me on. The crux of the climb comes to meet us -- "Shipton's crack", a beautiful 5.7+ overhang with good pro and solid jugs. It takes us up to "Windy Gap" rightly named and memorable for its panoramic, mind-swirling view to the glacier below. It's 8:45 am and cloud is already boiling around the peak. It's my turn to lead again and I lunge out into an awkward, airy traverse around the back of a huge amphitheatre. I'm flying in the coliseum of the gods.

Rob keeps on leading up some more strenuous and exposed rock feeling the summit beckoning him. I feel the rope tugging at me wanting me to hurry join Rob on the summit [5188 m.]. But the summit is a bit of a letdown. Batian, the highest summit by 11 m. stands 150 m. across the "Gate of the Mists" and we can't see it. I know Rob's disappointed in not getting the chance to climb down and over to it. But there's no decision to be made; we're almost an hour behind schedule. We content ourselves with photos against the grey backdrop, a monumental chappati toss into the clouds, and a snoop around the summit shelter. We decide it's time to get the hell off the mountain before some demonic African god gets angry with us. It's no use praying now, though, it's already starting to hail on us as we start the first rappel.

I've never rappelled off a major climb before --time to learn quickly! A near rope jam sends me to my senses and I key in. It starts to snow, thick and wet, blowing upwards up the face. Icewater runs down my sleeve and sprays my face as the rope feeds through my figure-8. Snow and ice pile up on the ledges. We have only one 9 mm rope, a bit hairy when the rappels are designed for double ropes. So Rob would go, off into the blizzard, unsure if he would reach another station or be left hanging in mid-air while I stand clipped into the station, shivering and wet, trying to keep my right hand warm so it can hold onto the rope. I grapple with fear, swallow hard before I send myself sliding down the icy rope.

Time is running; we are crawling. Dark comes with the fast finality that you see on the equator and the scree below disappears into the black abyss. I see lights across the glacier twinkling at us and wonder what it would be like to spend the night on this ledge. My world becomes a pool of light emitted from a headlamp precariously perched on my helmet. Everything seems in slow motion. We are so cold we can barely move and actions become slow and clumsy. Our last rappel (we hope) is down a very steep wall, difficult to control on the slick rock. Rob takes off into the gloom and soon shouts up "Saskia, one end of the rope is way longer than the other!" He had just about rappelled off the end the one time we had not tied a knot in the end of the rope, but fortunately he was able to stop on a small ledge and put in a friend. Soon enough we are greeted with the welcome sound of ropes hitting the ground and are safely down to the scree. Relieved we walked forward only to find ourselves at the top of a sheer drop. I am not prepared for another rappel at this point. Fortunately, we find an easy way down and continue on with the interminable retreat to our camp. We are both silent in our concentration, so exhausted that it is an effort to keep standing. We had been away for over 15 hours, had eaten virtually nothing and drank less than 1.5 l. each.

Back at camp I think back to the blurr of the day. I feel so relieved to be through with this mountain, so proud for accomplishing what was the biggest, mountaineering project I have done and so humbled by the unforgiving nature of the mountain, and by the accomplishments of other climbers that make this look like a children's game.

Participants: Rob Driscoll and Saskia Acton

McGillivray Christmas Trip

Mark Nielsen

Christmas 1989

December 26

We took the scenic route for the first leg of our trip, choosing to reach Lillooet via the Duffy Lake Road which winds along the Lillooet River. A late start to the day not helping matters, it was nightfall by the time we started heading to Goldbridge. We were stopped short of our goal when Martin's van suffered a flat after running along a sharp rock.

Not only did he lack a spare, but all the gas stations in Goldbridge were closed.

Fortunately, after contacting a station owner we were able to locate an air pump, and within a couple of hours, Martin and passengers were back on the road. Meanwhile, six of us procured a room at the Goldbridge Hotel for the night. The rest decided to drive further up the road before calling it quits.

December 27

We reunited at Martin's van and Jan's truck which were located across the road from an old mining town consisting of rows upon rows of abandoned houses obviously set aside for the workers and their families. We saw much of the on the up meeting point.

We reached the trailhead at 10 a.m. where there was enough snow to ski on. Some pulling crazy carpets or toboggans loaded with gear, in addition to packs we made our way to the cabin within two hours. By the time we reached the highest point of elevation on the trail, the snow conditions had improved drastically. There was about six inches of powder on top of a base of approximately one foot.

We spent the rest of the day the rest of the day gathering firewood, using the sleds to pull out the logs protracted from the trees we fell. Meanwhile, four of the group discovered they could all play bridge, and put the cabin table to use for what turned out to be the rest of the week. Dinner that night was tuna casserole.

December 28

Two days of frustration behind us, most of the group released their pent up urges to ski by undertaking an ambitious trip up McGillivray Peak. Ski machine Peter Stone bagged a couple other peaks in the process. In marked contrast, hedonist-wimps Mark Nielsen, Rob (), and Jim Gates made it only so far at the valley ridge before finding a powder bowl to play in.

Dinner that night was a mistake. The kidney beans for the chili weren't completely soaked, making them soft on the outside and hard in the middle. As well, we boiled the hamburger to defrost it, which didn't help the texture. By about 3 a.m. pretty well everyone's stomach was rumbling. The only person who seems have gone unscathed was Dave Robinson, who had just spent a year in India.

December 29

Clouds had settled into the valley, not only providing white out conditions, but creating a climate which much reflected our mood. Still feeling the effects of last night's culinary fiasco, most of us ventured only so far as a slope at McGillivray Pass itself where we took a few runs down before heading back.

People noticeably cringed at the food that night, but it turned out to be safe.

December 30

The sun was out once again, and with optimism in our hearts we went up Royal Peak. From the top we could see our cars. They looked very small. While most of us made our way back down along the approach route, Jan Palaty and Greg () took a few runs

down the face of Royal first, looking tres cool in their powder suits.

Throughout the trip, Skookum and Chuck, two puppies Phillip and Heather () brought along, provided a bit of a side show. When they weren't busy growling and fighting with one another, it was usually a matter of time before a yelp could be heard because someone in the cabin had stepped on one of them. Finally Chuck lived up to his namesake by bringing back up his lunch for everyone to see. From then on, the two puppies became the butt of cruel dog jokes (i.e. Hear about the new Chinese cookbook? It's called "FiftyWays to Wok Your Dog").

December 31

Being our last day before heading back, we went our separate ways. While some simply went up and down nearby slopes practicing telemark turns, others stuck to the flats down below. And still others went back up Royal Peak.

Throughout the week we ran into a lot of ice and corn snow. But at the same time we were far from trapped in our cabin by avalanche conditions. Besides, when we really looked for it, there was some decent stuff to ski on anyway. Overall, given what McGillivray Pass can be like, conditions couldn't have been much better.

That night we got as far as New Years Eve in Saskatchewan before we were all too exhausted to continue on. New Years was at 10 p.m. in McGillivray Pass.

January 1

We were safely back at the cars by about noon, but once again we had to call up a gas station owner, this time because some of the vehicles didn't have enough gas. We more than made up for causing the inconvenience by both topping off all our gas tanks and buying a load of junk food, some of which looked past the expiry date.

After stopping for Chinese food in Lillooet, we divided up what proved to be a vast excess of food and headed back home. This time we took the less scenic (especially at night) but much faster highway through the Fraser Canyon, braving a snowstorm on our way back home.

Participants

Jan Palaty	Jim Gates	Rob
Mark Nielsen	Brian	Sheryl
Brian	Greg	Peter Stone
Phillip Stone	Heather	Martin
Dave Robinson		

The VOC Telemark Ski Clinic

Craig Hollinger

January 14, 1990

A cry was heard throughout the land: "The Hordes are coming, the Hordes are

coming!" (Or was that "the British"?). First it was the Smoke Bluffs during the Annual VOC Longhike, then it was Smith Rocks during the Thanksgiving weekend, next it was Cerise Creek at the Annual VOC Glacier School, and now it was the Mt. Baker Ski Area with the Annual VOC Telemark Ski Clinic. Another huge group of eager VOC'ers descends upon a local, North American outdoor recreation venue.

Mt. Baker was chosen because of its snow (the local hills didn't have any), and the two hour drive was made up for by excellent skiing conditions. Thirty students and five instructors arrived in typical VOC fashion (late-ish) and things got under way soon after.

For the first part of the morning, the secrets of the telemark turn (passed down through generations from our ancestors) were explained to the students. After the lessons, they spent the rest of the day honing these new-found skills.

Now was the time for the instructors to break loose from the confines of perfectly (read slowly) executed turns and cut up the slopes. The antics of some of these skiers caught the attention of the local snowboarders. One such impressed 'dude' was heard to remark, "You guys are rad man, most telemarkers are wimps." After the day's deeds were done ("No snow shall be left unturned."), a tired but happy group of skiers converged on Graham's. Here we amused ourselves by cooking burgers on the self-serve grill and playing games of Rat Race.

Many thanks to Bruce Dupuis (who couldn't join us due to illness) and Michelle Cirenciowe, who took the time I didn't have, to phone everyone and organize the rides. Also, thanks to Darlene, Dean, Lynn, and Michelle Read for helping with the teaching.

Participants:

John Omielan	Robert Van Woudenberg	Scott Phillips
Andy Burkert	Anya Waite	Andrea Matthews
Charlotte Von Trebra	Darlene Gould	Elise Kahrs
Isobel Booth	Evelyn Nodwell (Eric's Mom)	Jens Elberling
John Paul Sweeney	Michelle Cirenciowe	Martin Bell
Peter Arthur	Sue Drinnan	Tanya Behrisch
Ted Uhrich	Brandon Konoval	Greg Jackson
Andy Drinnan	Brian Smith	Eric Nodwell
Mark Nielsen	Marilyn Noort	Patric Ouellette
Ted Nodwell (Eric's dad)		

and Eric, Steve, Dean, and John who came along just to ski

Instructors:

Darlene Anderson	Dean Watts	Lynn Mitenko
Michelle Read	Craig Hollinger	



SPECIAL FEATURES

Strength vs Finesse

A Case Study Comparing Climbers of Different Morphologies

Paul Kao

The purpose of this short article is to compare and contrast the different styles, techniques, and abilities determined by the body build and psyche of varying rock climbers. Several well known VOC climbers were chosen; the criteria was to pick well known climbers in the club (that people can identify), climbing for a few years, and interested in training to improve their climbing. Hopefully, this will give people an idea of what steps they can take to improve their rock climbing¹.

The four participants involved are Jeff "Finesse" Greenwood, Kwon "Too Strong" Kim, Eric Clemson, and Andy Pacheco. Kwon and Jeff are a dream to write about²; they are perfect foils in terms of strength and mindset. Jeff is tall and lanky, but lacking in upper body strength, and prefers to climb conservatively, choosing not to hang or TR really hard climbs. Kwon, on the other hand, is shorter and much stronger in the upper body, and will TR routes to work them out, in addition to leading hard climbs. Andy prefers the mountains, but climbs to keep in shape for mountaineering, while Eric does everything, and is reasonably strong.

Some anthropometric measurements are taken, including height, weight, and arm span. Body measurements include the circumference of the waist, chest, biceps, and forearms³. The difference in thigh and calf girth between the four climbers was not significant, and consequently not reported. Six skinfold thicknesses were measured from the abdomen, front thigh, triceps, biceps, buttocks, and lower back to determine body fat percentage⁴.

Four flexibility tests were performed:

- F1) Standing on a box, legs together and straight, bend forward and reach fingers past toes. Reported score is distance reached past feet. If the subject can't touch toes, the distance from fingertips to feet is measured, and the score is negative.

¹ I don't profess to be an expert in training; however, I have tried different things for training, and have talked and observed many excellent climbers.

² Not in that sense! Besides, both are attached.

³ The average of the right and left measurements are reported for simplicity; for right dominant people, the right girth is marginally larger.

⁴ The Durnin and Rahaman method where
percentage fat = $29.481 \log_{10} (\text{sum of six skinfolds}) - 40.101$
The percentage error is approximately $\pm 3\%$

This is a measure of flexibility in the lower back and hamstrings.

- F2) Lying flat on back, body and legs straight, bring one leg straight up and measure angle with floor-90 degrees is average, 150+ good.

This is again for the hamstrings, but is a good indicator of high step ability, especially while keeping the body aligned with the rock (right Eric?).

- F3) Side splits against a wall-lie on the floor with body bent 90 degrees and legs straight against the wall. Bring legs apart to side split and measure angle of split-110 is average, 150+ is good.

This flexibility test determines the ability to stem or raise the leg to a hold to the side, while keeping the body against the rock (right again Eric?).

- F4) Shoulder flexibility-hold stick with arms apart and rotate stick behind back with arms straight. Keep bringing arms closer together, keeping arms straight. Measure distance between arms on the stick, and divide by arm span. A ratio of 0.5 or less is good.

Shoulder Flexibility is overlooked in climbing, but was an eye opener for those taking the test. Good shoulder flexibility means the ability to hang off a hold using less strength by moving the body closer to the rock. On a hold overhead, shoulder flexibility translates into being able to align the pull of the arm with the body and legs; it also means that there is less tension in the side torso (lats), and requires less strength to keep the arm above the head.

The strength and endurance tests are

- S1) Arm and back strength-single pullup of maximum weight.

This is a test of pure arm and back power, and gives the climber an idea of what one arm can pull alone (usually less than half the total weight, because some strength is used to balance the use of only one limb), although one side will normally be stronger than the other.

- S2) Finger strength-maximum number of pullups on a small sloping edge.

Pure finger strength gives an estimate of finger isometry and the ability for the fingers to transfer the strength in the rest of the body to the rock.

- S3) Finger endurance-maximum hang time on a small sloping edge.

Maximum hang time is an estimate of contact strength and endurance. The ability to hang onto a small finger hold as long as possible as obvious applications to climbing.

I would like to stress that these tests are by no means complete; many more could be performed to examine areas such as endurance, diet, psyche, and motivation, to name just a few. Secondly, these following comments are by no means criticism aimed at the climbers themselves. I have simply tried to pinpoint their weak spots, and give my opinion on their strengths and weaknesses, and how I would improve them.

Here are the results for the four climbers; one can almost identify the climbers from the statistics of their body profiles.

Climber	<u>Jeff</u>	<u>Kwon</u>	<u>Eric</u>	<u>Andy</u>
Weight (kg)	73	68	72	66
Height (cm)	182	172	176.5	170
Arm Span (cm)	188	177	184	174
<u>Body Girth (cm)</u>				
Waist	80	76	77	78
Chest	93	99	94	88
Bicep	26	30	30.5	28
Forearm	24.5	28	28	25.5
<u>Skinfold (mm)</u>				
Abdomen	11.9	16.6	10.5	14.7
Front thigh	10.9	11.3	9.4	21.1
Triceps	12.2	11.6	6.9	14.4
Biceps	7.4	6.6	7.9	6.2
Buttocks	19.6	21.5	18.8	17
Lower back	25.8	22.9	22	17.6
Body % Fat	16.9%	17.5%	15.2%	17.6%
<u>Flexibility</u>				
F1 (cm +/-)	+9.5	+6	+5	0
F2 (R/L deg)	90/101	109/104	71/72	71/73
F3 deg)	113	122	103	111
F4 (length cm)	125	111	132	102
(ratio)	0.665	0.627	0.717	0.665
<u>Strength</u>				
S1 (kg, est.)	90	105	110	94
S2	4.5	12	11.5	7
S3 (sec)	50	52	55	57.5

The tests show that on paper, the climbers do not vary as greatly as they would believe. The most serious flaw in the climbers is their glaring lack of flexibility, not only in the hips and legs, but also in the upper body (shoulders) and back/torso. They could all improve their flexibility; for example, Eric is stronger than Andy in the upper body, but is much less flexible in the shoulders, and incorporates a biomechanically inefficient form in climbing, and hence has to use more strength to hang off a hold.

Jeff may consider himself to be stereotypically weak; however, he has good contact strength (he could hang as long as Andy and Eric), and was of average flexibility in the inflexible four. He should develop some more arm strength, and perhaps equally important, train his back (lats) and shoulders (deltoids) so that he has a strong base to pull from. His long limbs make it inefficient for him to pull with his arms, so he should try to maximize his reach advantage, and strive to use his legs to push, rather than his arms to pull. His technique is adequate for his climbing ability, and Jeff has better than average footwork. Since Jeff depends on his feet so much, he may want to train his feet and toes by climbing in slippers; his sensitivity and edging will also improve as a result.

Kwon is a bit of an enigma; he is very strong in his arms, shoulders, and chest, but does not climb to his full potential. Because of this strength, his fingers form the weak link between him and the rock, and he should train his fingers for endurance, interspersed with power workouts, so that he will be less prone to injury. He is inflexible in the shoulders, and probably wastes precious energy when hanging off the rock. However, he is fairly flexible in his legs, although he does not take advantage of it. He does not like high steps, and does not use his turnout enough when edging. Kwon should try to improve his footwork and technique; again, slippers may help improve his sensitivity for the rock, and may instill some confidence in his footwork. He climbs sporadically, and needs to put more time on the rock and not expect immediate gains in his climbing performance.

Eric is strong but does not use his legs as much as he could, and lacks some technique. He has average footwork, but is too stiff, again in the shoulders. His weakest link is his flexibility, but he could also stand to improve on his already better than average finger strength and endurance to match his upper body strengths. Eric can climb hard, but lacks balance and fluidity when climbing; this may be a direct consequence of being inflexible. Perhaps he should strive to improve his climbing style by being more precise in his footwork, and preserve some precious finger/arm strength. Although Eric uses high steps and stems, he is not flexible enough to carry out these maneuvers efficiently on hard climbs.

Andy is well rounded in terms of strength and technique; certainly, he does not have the height or reach advantage of Eric or Jeff, but compensates for this by better technique. His shorter limbs and lack of bicep bulk make it easier to pull and lock off, and he has sufficient upper body flexibility to make the best use of his strengths. He could stand to improve his hip flexibility to get his body closer to the rock, but would then need to change his style of climbing. As he stands, he would probably want to work on whole body fitness; a little more flexibility (in the hips, high step, and torso/shoulders), strength and endurance in the arms, back, and forearms. Perhaps he may want to try some finger endurance training, with a few power sessions periodically spaced.

This study does not take into account the many other factors that need to be considered when evaluating athletic performance. Two important factors are cardiovascular fitness, and mental training. This test predisposes a certain amount of aerobic fitness; if one is lacking in this area, training it could show gains in the anaerobic threshold level, and consequently improve climbing performance.

Many thanks to the participants, who volunteered their time and bodies with very little coercion on my part. Any initial fears of embarrassment were quickly allayed when they saw that they were not that different in the tests; in fact each one excelled in a particular area.

Access to the Skypilot Area from Britannia Beach

A Beginner's Guide

Nick Polkard

This is a detailed description of the route leading up Britannia Creek towards Skypilot, et al. It is intended for people unskilled in the interpretation of ancient maps and telegraphic instructions (of the Fairley variety) - that is, people like me. Hopefully it will save somebody from the delights of exploring every overgrown logging road except the one taking "short cuts" through impenetrable bush, and generally taking all weekend to get anywhere near the mountains.

Follow the road from the gate at the top end of Britannia Beach townsite as it climbs past the town dump and other scenic delights. At the first confusing fork, after maybe 5km., follow the left branch slightly downhill to the creek bank, where you will be greeted by the sight of a very washed-out bridge. Cross the creek here, and scramble up through the trees just to the left of the very steep bare bank on the far side to find the road continuing uphill.

Stay with the road as it passes the Mt. Sheer townsite (barely noticeable on this side of the creek - there's much more of it on the south side). Bear left at all forks, including one 2km. past Mt. Sheer townsite, where the right fork appears much broader, less overgrown and generally nicer. A little way after this, cross Marmot Creek. (If you can find the Marmot Creek trail, you must have a tracker somewhere in your ancestry. Please flag the thing.)

Continue up the very overgrown road until it emerges right on the creek bank and disappears into the creek bed. Directly across the creek is a grassy, boggy area which marks the continuation of the road. It leads almost invisibly through thick alder until it once again emerges into daylight and disappears into the creek.

From here, follow the creek bed all the way up to the Park Lane dam, which has a great big hole in it. Do not be tempted to circumnavigate boulders or other obstacles by heading for the bush. You'll regret it. Follow the bottom of the dam to its north end (left looking upstream), where you will find the road leading up to Utopia Lake in reasonably good shape. Utopia Lake and Park Lake are both indescribably ugly.

Hop over the Utopia Lake dam, walk around the left side of the lake a little way, and gaze in horror at the gully you're supposed to climb. Head for the forest just to the right of the gully and prepare for an unpleasant interlude.

At the top, however, you'll be practically in the alpine and will see Skypilot looking very large right in front of you. Congratulations! You've done the hard bit.

These directions were correct in August 1989. Further wash-outs, slide alder growth and other acts of God may well have conspired to alter things somewhat. Good luck

Why Do You Golf?

Paul Kao

Winter 1990

The query "why do you climb?" is often asked, but rarely answered satisfactorily. If you consider rock climbing as a sport in its own right, the question becomes mute. Climbing, in its purest sense, is about facing unknown dangers. Take away the objective hazards that surround mountaineering, alpine and expedition climbing, and climbing becomes a sterilized endeavour. Certainly, climbers are not seeking artificial dangers, but the thrill of climbing is being in a situation that you can't fully control, a chance to test your limits, a chance to appreciate life.

The pursuit of technical excellence in rock climbing requires an immense variety of skills; muscular endurance and strength, flexibility, balance, and mind control, all combined into the ability to coordinate a series of powerful but delicate moves. There are no excuses in sport (rock) climbing; either you can do the moves on a route or you can't. If you can't, you can train by spending time in the gym, bouldering, or developing flexibility. In any sport, the combination of so many skills would provide plenty of interest; however, rock climbing adds another dimension by allowing the freedom of movement in the vertical plane.

Comparisons of climbing to gymnastics or other sports are inadequate; gymnastics uses a prerehearsed routine, while climbing, in its strictest form, is a *vue*. No two climbs are identical; flashing an unknown route can invoke a strong feeling of accomplishment. Flashing hard climbs demands great physical ability, but equally as important, requires individual creativity. Climbing is not only a physical outlet, but a cerebral challenge; originality and imagination, whether conceiving a new route or on a climb, becomes *sine qua non*.

Ignoring physical aspects for a moment, rock climbing is most akin to golf. Yes, golf. Unlike team sports, or sports pitting you in direct competition against an opponent, golfing is an individual sport, like climbing. Although you golf with friends, how well you play depends on your ability, not your opponents; you may play against them, but you are always trying to improve on your personal best. Every hole you play is different in golf, just like every route you climb is different. Once you are familiar with the course/climb, you try to golf/climb as best you can. If you've never played a particular course and are

Paul Kao...er...er...Patrick Ellinger at Snowbird

Photo by Paul Kao



unfamiliar with the layout, (traps, bunkers, breaks in the green, etc.) you must play creatively, coping with problems as they arise, a situation similiar to onsite climbing.

The comparisons between professional golf and competition sport climbing are even more striking. Remember years ago when golfing tournaments were first televised ? The idea of professional golfers trying to better each other with a lower score for prize money seemed ridiculous. Now, look at the sport, with a year long tour that provides dozens of tournaments with million dollar stakes. In sport competition climbing, the goal is much the same; to climb higher than the other competitors. There is no subjective judging; again, how well you perform depends on your ability, not your competitors. Golfing doesn't even demand the extreme level of physical ability that climbing does. Nor does sportfishing, monster truck and tractor pull, or snowmobile racing, which seems to be televised as legitimate sports with ever greater frequency. So if somebody asks you "why do you climb ?", ask them "why do you golf ?"

Poems

Written while working on a salmon troller as a deckhand between Brooks Peninsula and Cape Scott on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

BY LAURIE NEWELL

La Verdure

sweet stillness
in cool after-rain's
delicate
light
soft pungent innocence

waiting

Here

where the
colours of night
paint my thoughts
deeply quiet
where strong hands
are silent
and money
means nothing
where sunset's flame
fades
and clouds cool
to ash fall
where the palor
of evening
is filled with
your absence
where cold ripples
on stone
lick the edge
of an always
It is here
in the still ness
that alone
becomes
wanting

**Evanesong
(for whales)**

ancient ballet
choreography timeless
the dance liquid
majestic
on velvet-green stage

Kindred sorceress
mystic keeper of knowledge
teach me strength grace
and gentleness
and I'll follow your ways

**Joy
(My Grandmother was an Albatross)**

Play
touch the white sea
launch
no stillness
but starness
soar
dive
seize the wave crest
no shrouds
on bright rapture
perfection
in clumsy grace
come dance with the sea
vibrant winged passion
on wind's altar
take honour
vital beacon
eternal
embody my dreams
our collision
this one world
occupied
doubly
I, meeting myself
in clear swift
of true eyes
enticing myself
to be
me

OOPS !





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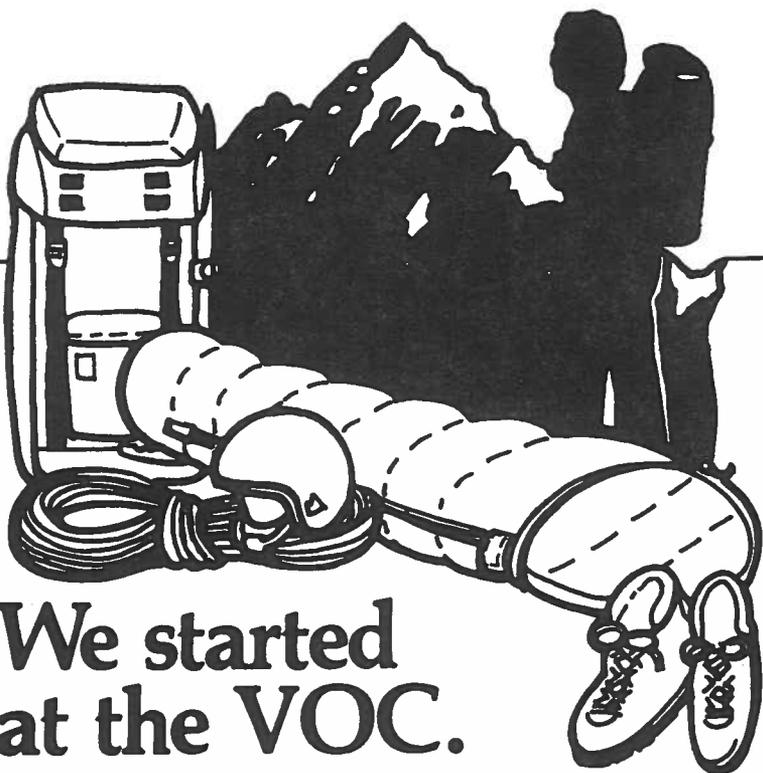
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